

# **THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN LEARNING MOTIVATION AND OCCUPATIONAL EXPECTATION OF STUDENTS AMONG ART AND DESIGN MAJORS AT SOUTHERN VOCATIONAL COLLEGE, CHANGSHA CITY, HUNAN PROVINCE, CHINA**

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**Abstract:** This study adopted a questionnaire survey method to explore the relationship between learning motivation and occupational expectation of students among art and design majors at Southern Vocational College in Changsha City, Hunan Province. The research results showed that learning motivation and occupational expectations of students were generally above moderate. There were significant differences in learning motivation regarding gender, birthplace, whether only child or not, and volunteer to fill in the intention. There were also significant differences in occupational expectations regarding birthplace and volunteer to fill in the intention. There was a significant positive correlation between learning motivation and occupational expectation. Finally, based on the research results, identify the existing problems and propose targeted suggestions to help students improve their learning motivation and establish correct occupational expectation.

**Keywords:** Art and Design Majors at Southern Vocational College, Learning Motivation, Occupational Expectation

## **Introduction**

Since the reform and opening up, China's economy has continued to prosper, and people's living standards have significantly improved, which has led to an increasing demand for education in society. In this era, higher vocational education (referred to as vocational education) has developed rapidly as an essential component of higher education popularization. Vocational education has made effective attempts to construct the vocational education system and carefully designed a five-year teaching plan to ensure the smooth connection of secondary and vocational education (Chen, 2022). As one of the essential forms of vocational education, vocational education focused on cultivating many professional

and technical talents. These talents not only possess solid technical knowledge, but also had application abilities, making significant contributions to the development of the economy and society. With its unique advantages, vocational education has gradually gained widespread recognition from society and continues to grow, becoming a powerful driving force for the sustainable development of the national economy (Wang, Tang, & Wang, 2019).

With the vigorous development of higher vocational education, the situation varies from place to place, and some problems to be solved gradually emerge. On the one hand, with the rapid development of the economy, the demand for vocational college graduates in society was increasing daily, mainly due to the urgent need for highly skilled talents (Lan, 2018). However, on the other hand, we must also face reality: due to various factors such as social concepts, family expectations, school education methods, and students' interests, many students lack interest in learning, particularly among vocational college students. Such contradictions affect the quality of vocational education and restrict its potential to deliver more high-quality skilled talents to society (Hu & Hong, 2020).

Due to their unique characteristics, most vocational college students have experienced failures in the college entrance examination, weakened learning confidence, lack of initiative in learning, and some have even developed a sense of learning fatigue. In other words, students have low or missing learning motivation (Wang, 2019). Currently, the management of vocational college students is facing significant challenges, and many teachers found it difficult to cope. Some teachers even suffer from this and occasionally express the feeling that "one generation was not as good as another". The core issue was that the learning motivation of vocational college students has been decreasing year by year, which has led many teachers to believe that even if they try to manage, it might be difficult to achieve practical results, resulting in the idea that "managing was useless". This situation has led to a vicious cycle in the education work of vocational schools, making it difficult to effectively improve the quality of teaching (Li, & Li, 2021).

In vocational education in China, higher vocational education was the education level with the most significant number of schools and students on campus. According to the 2022 China Vocational Education Quality Annual Report, there were 29.7698 million vocational education students, accounting for 39.44% of the total number of high school students and 44.4% of higher education students. With the expansion of enrollment scale in higher vocational schools, the number of students in higher vocational colleges continues to increase, and their employment quality has become one of the essential standards for measuring the level of higher vocational school education. However, in the context of high employment rates, there were still many problems with the employment quality of Chinese higher vocational colleges. The most common phenomena were mismatched majors, vague career ideals, low alignment of occupational expectation, poor job adaptability, and inability to apply what was learned (Zhou, Wang, & Wang, 2021).

In summary, with the continuous deepening of higher vocational education reform nationwide, it was essential to cultivate and stimulate learning motivation of students, optimize and improve their occupational expectation in the face of the particular group of vocational college students. Therefore, this study took art and design majors at Southern Vocational College in Hunan Province as the research object. Through empirical research, a survey was conducted on current learning motivation and occupational expectations of students, analyzing the relationship between the two variables. Through analysis and discussion, targeted suggestions were proposed to enhance learning motivation of students and plan their occupational expectation reasonably.

### **Research Objectives**

(1) To analyze the differences in learning motivation of students at Southern Vocational College in Changsha City, Hunan Province, with different demographic backgrounds such as gender, birthplace, whether only child or not, and volunteer to fill in the intention.

(2) To analyze the differences in occupational expectation of students at Southern Vocational College in Changsha City, Hunan Province, with different demographic backgrounds such as gender, birthplace, whether only child or not, and volunteer to fill in the intention.

(3) To explore the relationship between learning motivation and occupational expectation of students among art and design majors at Southern Vocational College in Changsha City, Hunan Province.

### **Literature Review**

#### ***Research on Learning Motivation***

The concept of learning motivation emerged in the 1930s, before which behaviorist theorists overly emphasized the stimulation of individual behavior by external factors (such as success or failure, rewards and punishments, etc.), while ignoring human subjective initiative, learning motivation referred to the psychological state of learners, which was the adjustment of their mentality during learning activities, which in turn affects their learning attitude, learning behavior, and learning outcomes (Elif & Uzuner, 2017).

Learning motivation was the motivation of learners in learning, developed from the concept of "motivation". Scholars at home and abroad have conducted relevant research on the definition of learning motivation. Qian's (1986) study pointed out that learning motivation was a force deep within the learner's heart, which drove them to complete learning tasks and strive to achieve learning goals. This motivation stems from the subjective will and intention of learners and was a key factor for them to persist in learning, overcome difficulties, and achieve learning outcomes.

Omari & Moubtassime et al. (2018) believed that learning motivation was the driving force

behind learners, including several orientations. Firstly, learning goal orientation referred to learners having clear personal goals they achieve through learning, such as finding a good job or improving vocational skills. Secondly, learning activity orientation referred to learners viewing learning as a social activity, where they enjoy interacting and communicating with others during the learning process. Finally, the learning orientation stems from a thirst for knowledge, and these learners enjoy exploring new expertise and satisfying their curiosity. From the level of motivation, learning motivation could be divided into several different types. Shallow learning motivation was usually related to external rewards or punishments, such as learning to achieve good grades or avoid punishment. Deep learning motivation was more intrinsic, stemming from the learner's interest and love for the learning content, which could bring lasting learning motivation. Achievement-oriented learning motivation was related to pursuing personal achievement and success. Learners hope to showcase their abilities and values through learning (Wang, & Zhan et al., 2021).

British psychologist Biggs (2011) developed the Learning Motivation Questionnaire (SPQ) in his research, which consists of 18 items and divides learning motivation into three dimensions: surface, deep, and achievement. Surface motivation mainly reflected the psychological state of learners when coping with exams. Deep motivation reveals learners' genuine interest and hobby in learning. Achievement motivation reflects the learning goals set by learners and demonstrates their pursuit of learning outcomes.

Gjedria's (2015) research suggested that learning motivation was the intrinsic motivation of learners, which could stimulate their interest in learning, guide them to develop learning behavior, and generate learning initiative. Huang & Zheng (1999) divided human needs into six main categories in their research: physiological, safety, respect, social, contribution, and development. A learning motivation questionnaire was developed based on these different levels of needs research. This questionnaire contained 26 items and researched individual learning motivation from six levels: material pursuit, the seeking knowledge and progress and progress, personal achievement, social orientation, fear of failure, and small group orientation.

Motivation was composed of needs and incentives, and seeking personal development and realizing self-worth were the internal sources that drove students to engage in learning activities. External factors such as employment pressure and parental expectations encourage students to build higher external learning motivation, and students with substantial learning motivation were less likely to experience academic burnout (Chen, Xu & Zheng, 2019).

Many researchers study the relationship between learning motivation and psychological capital, believing that learning motivation could drive learners' persistence and enthusiasm for learning. Xia & Wang et al. (2020) found that cultivating and enhancing psychological capital could stimulate learning motivation. Dai (2021) believed that students have different needs and were driven by other motivations

for learning. There was no clear and unified goal orientation. Once learning motivation was not well guided, endogenous motivation was lost, and exogenous motivation weakens, leading to a sense of fatigue in students towards learning (Ding & Hu et al., 2022). People with different levels of motivation have various levels of academic activity. Overall, there was a significant positive correlation between learning motivation and learning motivation, and a significant negative correlation with academic burnout (Li & Chen, 2022).

### ***Research on Occupational Expectation***

Psychologist Fromm was one of the earliest to delve into occupational expectation and propose corresponding theories. He believed that people need to stimulate their expectations for work tasks fully, and only when they suspect that this behavior could help them achieve specific goals would they ultimately act and persist in achieving that goal (Liu & Zhao, 2017). Gottfredson believed occupational expectation was the constant coordination of individual and environmental factors, including corporate values, hobbies, biases, abilities, etc. Environmental factors mainly referred to social needs and employment opportunities (Xu & Lu, 2018).

Chinese scholars had different perspectives on occupational expectation and definitions, but most studies start from the standpoint of career values. Ling & Fang et al. (1999) believed that occupational expectation was a person's expectation and demand for the desired job, as well as a personal self-attitude and belief in the task. At the same time, they regard occupational expectation as the scope within which an individual could perform specific behaviors, which was the embodiment of various attitudes of this person. Wu & Guo et al. (2019) found that occupational expectation represents an individual's career values and influences their career choices, which were the internal driving force for individuals to aspire to a specific job. Based on this research theory, other scholars had also made a series of supplementary studies in the theoretical and empirical research of occupational expectation. Zhao & Guan et al. (2019) mentioned in their research that occupational expectation was a concrete manifestation of people's attitudes toward work, which not only reveal people's professional values, but also had a crucial impact on choosing their career development. The above scholars regard occupational expectation as the driving force behind actions, just like needs.

When foreign scholars explore the concept of occupational expectation theory, they usually base their research on the group of college graduates. Meanwhile, in the study of occupational expectation, foreign scholars mainly focused on the income expectations of graduates (Guccione & Bryan, 2023). The research methods and methods used to explore the issue of occupational expectation vary, but the research conclusions tend to be consistent. That was, most college graduates have excessively high expectations of their income. College graduates were influenced by various demographic backgrounds in their occupational expectations, which could lead to different preferences and tendencies in career choices.

The research on occupational expectation by Chinese scholars began in the 1970s and 1980s. A psychological survey and analysis report on students' career views, learning motivation, and learning interests was released in 1982. It was regarded as the pioneering work of studying occupational expectation among young people in China. This study laid an essential foundation for further exploration of occupational expectation (Wang, 2017). Ling & Fang et al. (1999) further delved into the measurement research of occupational expectation. They developed a occupational expectation scale and divided individual occupational expectation into three main dimensions: reputation status, stability, and self-development. This scale provides a multi-dimensional perspective for understanding the individual's expectations in career choice and was compiled by combining the actual situation of Chinese college occupational expectation of students and China's national conditions. It reflected good reliability and validity in practical application and was widely used by research scholars. Liu (2007) drew on existing research results in her research and re developed a occupational expectation questionnaire. The questionnaire would conduct relevant research on individual occupational expectation from three levels: status and reputation, intrinsic and extrinsic value. The scale has shown good reliability and validity, providing a specific degree of validation for the research hypothesis.

In sociology, scholars mostly start from the perspective of social stratification and attach importance to the impact of external factors such as social environment and social structure on occupational expectations of students. Chaves & Diemer et al. In a study conducted in 2015 on the relationship between socio-economic status and occupational expectation, it was found that due to underage students still being at the lower level of the educational hierarchy, their social capital and education level largely depend on the family's social capital and socio-economic status. Therefore, their future career development expectations were more likely to be influenced by social, political, and economic factors.

Another group of scholars believed that the impact of family background on individual occupational expectations was lasting and would not decrease as children move up the educational hierarchy. Smith & Brian (1990) also found in their study on student occupational expectation that after controlling for the father's income, there was a negative correlation between parental education level and children's income expectations. The study also pointed out that compared to children with higher levels of education from their parents, children with lower levels of education from their parents have higher expectations of income after graduating from college. Tong & Yao et al. (2019) found that gender, work experience, teacher attention, and parental attention were four factors affecting occupational expectation of students. Zhu & Li et al. (2021) found through investigation that family background significantly impacts occupational expectations of students.

In addition to family factors, scholars had also explored the impact mechanisms of factors such as school and peer groups on adolescents' occupational expectations in the socialization process. Xue

& Zhao (2014) found that school rankings significantly impact adolescent occupational expectation. The better the school ranking, the more teenagers were willing to work in prestigious professions such as government officials, scientists, and engineers, and were less willing to work in less prestigious categories, such as workers and farmers. Zhang & Yan (2020) analyzed the factors related to the occupational expectation of Chinese university students, and the results showed that the degree of fit between the majors offered by the school and social needs, the reputation of the school, and the level of professional development would all affect the occupational expectation of students.

Some scholars were also studying the impact of internal factors such as individual development and characteristics on their occupational expectation in psychology. Xu (2011) mentioned in his research that interests and hobbies were closely related to one's profession. If the two could be unified, it could bring joy to the body and mind and enhance personal abilities. For students, career choices were often guided by their interests and skills. Therefore, interests and hobbies could also affect an individual's occupational expectations.

#### ***Research on the Relationship between Learning Motivation and Occupational Expectation***

Sang & Wang et al. (2019) set the research perspective as a group of nursing graduate students and explored in depth the relationship between occupational expectation, self-efficacy, and learning motivation. Research has found that occupational expectation positively impacts learning motivation, and self-efficacy partially mediates the relationship between occupational expectation and learning motivation.

Ye & Zhang (2021) found that the professionalism and professionalism of vocational education positively impacted learning motivation of students. Vocational education emphasizes students' career awareness, identity, planning, and guidance, which could serve as targeted motivations to improve their professional learning performance. In short, students who were well prepared regarding occupational expectation often achieve better results in their professional studies.

According to Su's (2021) research, vocational college learning motivation and occupational expectation of students could significantly affect their learning efficiency during the learning stage. Generally, vocational college students with solid learning motivation and high occupational expectations have higher learning enthusiasm and dedication.

#### **Methodology**

The overall research subjects were art and design majors at Southern Vocational College in Hunan Province. The design major of the school had a total of 1200 students. According to Krejcie & Morgan's (1970) research sample size standard, 300 was considered reasonable. Input the collected questionnaire data into Excel, filter, and organize it to obtain 293 valid questionnaires, the effective return rate reached 97.67%. Then, they were imported into SPSS statistical analysis software for project

analysis.

Regarding learning motivation, this study ultimately used the learning motivation questionnaire developed by Huang & Zheng (1999) as the research tool for this survey. The scale had six dimensions, namely seeking knowledge and progress, social orientation, material pursuit, fear of failure, personal achievement, and small group orientation.

Regarding occupational expectation, this study ultimately used the occupational expectation questionnaire developed by Liu (2007) as the research tool for this survey. The scale consists of 21 questions and included three dimensions: status, reputation, intrinsic value, and extrinsic value.

## **Results**

### ***Demographic Analysis of the Respondents***

This study focused on art and design majors at Southern Vocational College in Hunan Province and conducted demographic backgrounds analysis on 293 valid data. The specific situation of the sample size of the research subjects in different demographic backgrounds was as follows: regarding gender, there were 75 males, accounting for 25.6% of the total sample size, and 218 females, accounting for 74.4% of the total sample size. Regarding the birthplace of students, 89 students from cities accounted for 30.4% of the total sample size, and 204 students from rural areas accounted for 69.6%. Regarding whether only child or not, there were 67 only-child, accounting for 22.9% of the total sample size, and 226 non-only-child, accounting for 77.1%. Regarding filling out volunteer intentions, 235 students filled out their preferences based on personal preferences, accounting for 80.2% of the total sample size. 35 students filled out their preferences based on the opinions of their parents or others, accounting for 11.9% of the total sample size. 23 students followed the adjustment of their preferences, accounting for 7.8% of the total sample size. In summary, based on the analysis of demographic backgrounds of the research subjects, the proportion of female students was relatively higher than that of male students regarding gender, and there were more students from rural areas than from urban areas. Among them, the proportion of non-only-child was higher than that of only-child, and most students filled out their preferences based on their personal preferences.

### ***Descriptive Statistical Analysis***

(1) Descriptive statistics on the current status of learning motivation of students among art and design majors at Southern Vocational College

This study used descriptive statistical methods to analyze the current status of learning motivation of students among art and design majors at Southern Vocational College in Hunan Province. As shown in Table 1, the overall learning motivation of students among art and design majors at Southern Vocational College in Hunan Province was  $M=3.71$ , with  $M$  values in each dimension ranging from 3.43 to 3.82, indicating that the overall learning motivation of students was above moderate.



**Table 1:** Descriptive Statistical Analysis of Learning Motivation of Students in Southern Vocational College (N=293)

Dimension	Mean	SD
Seeking knowledge and progress	3.79	0.67
Social orientation	3.78	0.71
Material pursuit	3.82	0.75
Fear of failure	3.43	0.72
Personal achievement	3.59	0.83
Small group orientation	3.75	0.74
Overall learning motivation	3.71	0.55

(2) Descriptive statistics on the current status of occupational expectation of students among art and design majors at Southern Vocational College

This study used descriptive statistical methods to analyze the current status of occupational expectations of students among art and design majors at Southern Vocational College in Changsha City, Hunan Province. As shown in Table 2, the overall occupational expectation of students among art and design majors at Southern Vocational College in Hunan Province were  $M=3.71$ , with  $M$  values in various dimensions ranging from 3.53 to 3.84, indicating that the overall occupational expectation of students was above moderate.

**Table 2:** Descriptive Statistical Analysis of Occupational Expectation of Students in Southern Vocational College (N=293)

Dimension	Mean	SD
Status and reputation	3.53	0.71
Intrinsic value	3.84	0.68
External value	3.77	0.70
Overall occupational expectation	3.71	0.61

### *Differential Analysis*

This study conducted statistical analysis on the differences in learning motivation and occupational expectation of students among art and design majors at Southern Vocational College in Hunan Province, using independent sample t-tests and one-way ANOVA, based on different demographic backgrounds (gender, birthplace, whether only child or not, and volunteer to fill in the intention). There were significant differences in the learning motivation of students among art and design majors at Southern Vocational College in Hunan Province, regarding gender, birthplace, whether only child or not, and volunteer to fill in the intention. There were significant differences in occupational expectations of students regarding birthplace and volunteer to fill in the intention.

### *Correlation Analysis*

This study used Pearson correlation analysis to analyze the relationship between learning motivation and occupational expectation of students among art and design majors at Southern

Vocational College in Changsha City, Hunan Province. As shown in Table 3, the overall correlation coefficient between teacher learning motivation and occupational expectation was  $r=0.420$ ,  $p<0.01$ , reaching a significant level. In the correlation analysis between learning motivation and occupational expectation, except for a few dimensions where there was no significant correlation, all other dimensions show varying degrees of significant positive correlation. Overall, there was a significant positive correlation between learning motivation and occupational expectations of students among art and design majors at Southern Vocational College in Hunan Province.

**Table 3:** Correlation Analysis of Learning Motivation and Occupational Expectation

	Correlation	Occupational Expectation
Learning Motivation	Correlation Coefficient	0.420**
	P value	0.000

## Discussion

### *Current Status of Learning Motivation and Occupational Expectation of Students among Art and Design Majors in Southern Vocational College*

This survey and research showed that the overall learning motivation of students among art and design majors at Southern Vocational College in Hunan Province was above moderate. Firstly, the education system and teaching methods might also impact learning motivation of students. Excessive emphasis on exam results and competition might lead to negative emotions among students towards personal achievement and fear of failure. Secondly, schools' teaching atmosphere, educational philosophy, and incentive mechanisms could also impact learning motivation of students. If schools emphasize personal achievement and provide corresponding incentives, it might encourage students to perform better in this area.

The results of this survey showed that the overall occupational expectation of students among art and design majors at Southern Vocational College in Changsha City, Hunan Province were above moderate. Firstly, let's start with the education system. Schools and the education system were also crucial in shaping occupational expectations of students. Schools focus on cultivating students' interests and intrinsic motivation, which might encourage them to pay more attention to intrinsic value. Secondly, different students have different individual differences, and some students might focus more on intrinsic value, that is, their interest and satisfaction in the job itself, while their pursuit of status and prestige was lower. This difference might be related to an individual's talent and interest direction.

### *Differences in Learning Motivation and Occupational Expectation of Students among Art and Design Majors in Southern Vocational College*

This survey showed a significant gender difference in the learning motivation of students among art and design majors at Southern Vocational College in Changsha City, Hunan Province, with

female students having significantly higher levels of learning motivation than male students. There was no significant gender difference in student occupational expectation. This study analyzed this. Firstly, it might be due to the profound influence of social culture and gender roles on individual behavior and expectations. In some cultures, women might be more encouraged to pursue knowledge, focus on social orientation, and pursue personal achievement, leading to significantly higher levels of learning motivation among females than males. Secondly, schools' educational environment and teaching methods might impact male and female students differently. Schools that focus on stimulating students' curiosity and encouraging social interaction might be more conducive to female students exhibiting higher learning motivation.

This survey and research showed significant differences in learning motivation and occupational expectation of students among art and design majors at Southern Vocational College in Hunan Province. Students from cities have significantly higher learning motivation and occupational expectations than those from rural areas. Firstly, urban families were usually more likely to provide better educational resources due to different family backgrounds. Students usually have richer educational resources and more advanced teaching equipment, which might encourage urban students to be more curious and focus more on personal achievement. The open family atmosphere among urban students might help cultivate their interest in learning and career aspirations. Secondly, social and cultural differences and different cultural values might affect learning motivation and occupational expectation of students. Urban areas might place more emphasis on social orientation and personal achievement, while rural areas might place more emphasis on practicality and material pursuits.

***Relationship between Learning Motivation and Occupational Expectation of Students among Art and Design Majors in Southern Vocational College in Changsha City, Hunan Province***

This survey shows a positive correlation between learning motivation and occupational expectations of students among art and design majors at Southern Vocational College in Hunan Province. This study analyzed this. Firstly, from the perspective of schools, the teaching atmosphere and culture of schools or majors could also impact learning motivation and occupational expectation of students. Schools focus on cultivating students' design abilities, emphasizing practical operations and creative thinking, which might encourage students to actively engage in learning and form motivation consistent with occupational expectation. Secondly, regarding teachers, an excellent team of teachers and mentors might stimulate students' academic interest and enhance their sense of identification with the design profession, which helps establish correct and positive expectations for future career planning. In addition, students might have a strong interest in the design profession, which could encourage them to demonstrate stronger motivation for knowledge and progress in their studies. At the same time, their interest in design work might significantly affect their occupational expectations, making their

expectations for intrinsic and extrinsic values more consistent.

### Conclusions

1) The overall learning motivation of students among art and design majors at Southern Vocational College in Hunan Province, was above moderate. The overall occupational expectation of students was above moderate.

2) There were significant differences in the learning motivation of students among art and design majors at Southern Vocational College in Hunan Province, regarding gender, birthplace, whether only child or not, and volunteer to fill in the intention. There were significant differences in occupational expectations of students regarding birthplace and volunteer to fill in the intention.

3) There was a significant positive correlation between learning motivation and occupational expectations of students among art and design majors at Southern Vocational College in Hunan Province.

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