A STUDY ON STUDENTS' SATISFACTION WITH ENGLISH COURSE AT UNIVERSITY F IN SHAANXI PROVINCE, CHINA

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Abstract: This study aimed to understand the current situation of course satisfaction in English classes at the University of F in Shaanxi Province, China and the variability of satisfaction under different demographic background variables. Through a questionnaire survey, 357 sample students were selected from 5042 people at University F in Shaanxi Province, China to participate in this questionnaire activity through convenience sampling according to the requirements of the questionnaire scale. The students' satisfaction with the university English Course was compared among students of different genders, places of origins, majors, grades and class positions in the University of F. The results showed that the satisfaction with the university English Course was high. Significant differences were found except for the place of origin and class position. In the dimensions of overall satisfaction with the university English course and the course content, students' learning effect and teachers' teaching effect, the seniors' satisfaction was higher than that of the freshmen, the sophomore and the junior. Finally, discussions and recommendations are made based on the characteristics of their different majors and future career needs, so as to provide better and more accurate academic assistance to the students.

Keywords: University Students, University English, Course Satisfaction

Introduction

Under the background of globalization, the scope of English usage is expanding, Zhang (2024) pointed out that with the acceleration of economic globalization and the increasing frequency of international educational exchanges, more and more students choose to study abroad to broaden their international horizons and improve their comprehensive quality. At present, English has become a tool for international communication among different native speakers (Burnaby & Sun, 1989). Wang (2024) pointed out that international education is not only the transfer of knowledge, but also

the communication and integration of different cultures. Zhang (2024) believed that English education in China showed a diversified development trend, the social demand for English education is also more diversified, which not only requires students to master the basic knowledge of English but also pays attention to the application of English in practical work and life.

Zhang et al. (2003) also mentioned that in the context of the new era, students to improve their English proficiency, the "Professional English" course is a very

important part of higher education. The Ministry of Education advocates that all universities actively respond to the opening of the corresponding university English audio-visual speaking course, i.e., the independent learning course for college students (Zhang, 2021). The English teaching team is also growing, and the professionalism and teaching level of teachers are gradually improving, and advanced teaching methods and concepts, such as multimedia teaching and interactive teaching, have been introduced to improve the quality and effect of English teaching (Li, 2023).

Research Objectives

(1) To understand the demographic background information of students at University F in Shaanxi Province, China, including their profiles in five areas: gender, place of origin, major, grade, and class position.

(2) To determine the current status of satisfaction with the university English Course among the students at University F, Shaanxi Province, China.

(3) To analyze the differences in satisfaction with college English courses among students at University F in Shaanxi Province, China, based on different demographic background factors.

Literature Review

Research on Course Content

Teachers will encounter the phenomenon that students' cooperation varies greatly and is even polarized when preparing for college English courses, while college students are mature individuals with independent personalities, strong self-concepts, and are able to take control of the learning process and make choices and take responsibility on their own, and the existence of this correlation makes it easier for mature students to take responsibility for their learning on their own, and be more enthusiastic about their learning activities (Sun, Tsai, & Finger, 2008).

Course content is closely related to the actual needs and interests of students is the key to improving satisfaction. When the course content can be close to the students' lives, specialties or future development direction, students are more likely to resonate with the learning motivation, so we should effectively meet the needs of online students to avoid repetition of learning, incomplete learning, shallow learning. Intercultural elements can be integrated into the course so that students can actively integrate, spontaneously acquire knowledge, and really develop an interest in the course to

complete the course training with a positive attitude (Wang, 2014).

From the perspective of basic language knowledge, the course content should cover vocabulary, grammar, phonetics and other basic knowledge modules. Rich and diversified course contents can satisfy the learning styles and interests of different students. Solid vocabulary accumulation is the foundation of language learning, and the course should reasonably plan the vocabulary and vocabulary depth according to the needs of students of different majors. For example, for students majoring in science and engineering, in addition to general vocabulary, the teaching of specialized English vocabulary can help them read specialized literature in the future. In addition to basic language knowledge, the vocabulary should also cover culture, literature, oral communication, listening, reading, writing and other aspects (Liu, 2004).

The difficulty of the course content should be moderate, according to the existing level and cognitive ability of the students to make reasonable arrangements, such as grammar exercises can get rid of the traditional boring mode of explanation, through vivid example sentences, real-life situations, so that students can understand the logic of grammatical rules in the practical application. Voice training should not be ignored, as standard pronunciation can improve students' confidence in speaking and listening comprehension. Gradually increasing the difficulty, students can make progress in the learning process, thus increasing their satisfaction (Shuang, 2004).

In terms of language skill cultivation, the balanced development of the five major skills of listening, speaking, reading, writing and translating is crucial. Listening courses should cover materials with various accents and different speeds, from daily conversations to academic lectures, to gradually improve students' listening comprehension. Oral teaching content should create rich communication scenarios, such as simulated business negotiations, group discussions, etc., so that students have ample opportunities to express themselves. Reading teaching should not be limited to textbook articles, but should introduce a large number of English newspapers, academic papers and other authentic materials to cultivate students' critical reading thinking. If the content of the course is biased in the development of skills, such as emphasizing reading and writing over listening and speaking, students will have shortcomings in the actual use of the language, thus reducing their satisfaction with the course (Lei, 2022).

Research on Student Learning Effect

Knowledge mastery is the basis of learning effectiveness. Students' understanding and memorization of English vocabulary, grammar, culture and other knowledge through classroom learning and after-class review directly affects their evaluation of the course. If students can master what they have learned and get good grades in all kinds of tests and assignments, they will think that they have gained something in the course and thus have a positive evaluation of the course. For example, if students can skillfully use newly learned vocabulary for writing and accurately understand complex grammatical structures after a period of study, they will feel their progress, which will

enhance their satisfaction with the course (Li, 2017).

Students with different learning abilities will have different levels of adaptation to the course and different learning effects, which will affect their satisfaction with the course. Students with stronger learning ability can master knowledge and skills more efficiently in the course, they can better adapt to the difficulty and pace of the course, and thus can get a sense of achievement more easily, and their satisfaction with the course is relatively higher; on the contrary, students with weaker learning ability may encounter more difficulties in the learning process, such as having difficulty in understanding complex concepts, not being able to keep up with the teaching progress, and so on, which may lead to their lower satisfaction with the course. This may lead to lower satisfaction with the program. Therefore, educators should pay attention to the differences in students' learning abilities and adopt targeted teaching strategies to improve the satisfaction of students with different learning abilities and enhance the overall quality of teaching (Zhao, 2022).

The obvious improvement of students' language skills (listening, speaking, reading, writing, and translating) after an English course is one of the important indicators of satisfaction. If students can be more fluent and confident in oral expression and make progress in reading comprehension and writing, when students' oral skills improve, it will enhance their recognition of the course (Wen, 1999).

If the university English Course can help them improve their English proficiency and lay the foundation for realizing their personal goals, they will rate the program highly. Similarly, for students with academic research aspirations, the academic English reading and writing skills acquired through the university English Course can help them read international cutting-edge literature and publish academic papers, which will undoubtedly make them appreciate and recognize the program; on the contrary, if the students feel that there is no obvious improvement in their own abilities during the learning process, and there is no obvious help to their future development, they are bound to feel disappointed with the program. If students gradually discover the charm and practicality of English in the process of learning the course, and their enthusiasm for English learning increases, then the course is successful in this respect, and it will also increase students' satisfaction (Hu, 1996).

Research on Teachers' Instructional Level

Teachers with solid professional knowledge of English and good teaching skills are the basis of student satisfaction. Professionalism is the core of teachers' teaching level. Teachers need to have solid English language skills, with standard pronunciation, good grammar and rich vocabulary, in order to be able to teach with ease. When explaining complex linguistic knowledge, if teachers can answer students' questions in an in-depth manner with their profound professional knowledge, students will naturally have admiration for teachers, which will enhance their goodwill towards the course. Teachers are able to impart knowledge accurately, explain in a clear manner, and stimulate students' interest in learning with a variety of teaching methods and means, such as multimedia

teaching, contextualized teaching and so on (Zheng, 1999).

Teachers' positive teaching attitude and high sense of responsibility have a significant impact on student satisfaction. Caring about students' learning and growth, answering students' questions in a timely manner, and encouraging students to actively participate in classroom activities can create a favorable teaching atmosphere and increase students' motivation and satisfaction (Li, 1991).

Constantly innovating teaching methods and adapting to students' learning characteristics and changing needs are the keys to improving teachers' teaching level and course satisfaction. For example, when analyzing long and difficult sentences in English, teachers' precise grammatical analysis and logical interpretation can help students quickly grasp the sentence structure and understand the meaning of the sentences. At the same time, teachers should also keep abreast of the cutting-edge dynamics of the discipline, constantly update their knowledge system, incorporate the latest language research results and teaching methods into the classroom, so that the teaching content is always fresh and scientific, or they can adopt new teaching modes such as project-based learning, flipped classroom, and so on, to improve the students' learning initiative and participation (He, 2014).

Teaching methods and strategies have a direct impact on the effectiveness of classroom teaching, and diversified teaching methods can meet the learning styles and needs of different students. For example, using task-based teaching method, teachers can design a series of tasks related to the course content, such as group cooperation to complete the English project planning, production of English microfilm, etc., so that students in the process of completing the task to take the initiative to use the knowledge of English, to enhance the ability to use the language comprehensively, the situational approach to teaching through the creation of realistic language situations, such as simulating the airport waiting for the plane, restaurant ordering and other scenarios, so that the students feel the actual use of English, enhance the learning of interesting and practical (Shang, 2019).

The contextual teaching method allows students to experience the actual use of English by creating realistic language situations, such as simulating the airport waiting for a plane, ordering food in a restaurant and other scenes, so as to enhance the fun and practicality of learning (Li, 2016). Reasonable use of modern educational technology, such as online learning platforms, multimedia teaching software, etc., can enrich teaching resources and expand the teaching space.

Teachers' classroom management and communication skills should not be neglected. Good classroom management can create a positive classroom atmosphere and ensure that teaching activities are carried out in an orderly manner. Teachers should be good at guiding students to participate in classroom discussions, encouraging students to express different opinions, and dealing with unexpected problems in the classroom in a timely manner. At the same time, effective communication skills allow teachers to establish a good teacher-student relationship. Teachers should pay attention to the students' learning progress and psychological state, give timely encouragement and guidance, so that students feel the care and support of teachers. On the contrary, if the teacher's classroom

management is chaotic, the communication between teachers and students is poor, and the problems encountered by students in the learning process cannot be solved in time, it will certainly affect the satisfaction of the course (Wang, 2012).

Differences in Satisfaction with English Courses Across Demographic Background Variables

Gender and Satisfaction with University English Courses: Different genders have different attitudes towards English learning. In terms of English course learning, Ellis (1990) believed that in the development of language ability, women tend to have certain innate advantages in the perception and expression of language, while men, though they may start a little later in the development of language ability, have their own potentials for the logical use and expansion of language, and that women have better figurative thinking and good abstract logical thinking ability than men. Women have better image thinking and good abstract logical thinking ability than men, and women are more satisfied with the rich oral practice and cultural communication and interaction in language learning, while men are more inclined to the more applied and logical content.

Nationality and Satisfaction with College English Courses: There is a significant difference in the satisfaction with college English courses among college students of different nationalities. Zheng (2006) argues that students of different origins have different cultural backgrounds and learning habits, which affect their needs and expectations of university English courses and produce some substantial differences. Students' satisfaction with university English courses is more affected by the quality of teaching, the level of teachers' lectures, the qualification of teaching and other factors. For example, students in Guangdong and Shanghai, due to the high degree of internationalization and frequent exchanges with foreign countries, have more chances to come into contact with English since childhood and may be more deeply immersed in the atmosphere of English learning. Growing up in such an environment, their acceptance and understanding of English culture is relatively high, and they are more likely to integrate into the Western culture teaching content involved in the university English courses; while some students from inland or economically underdeveloped areas may have limited exposure to English culture in their growing up process, and they may be unfamiliar with the cultural connotation carried by English. This may cause them to have difficulties in understanding or lack of interest when they are faced with the rich cultural content in the university English Course.

The satisfaction of majors and college English courses: the needs and goals of college students in different majors are different, Lu (2007) thought that the satisfaction of English majors is higher than that of other majors, because English majors have been in the professional learning of English knowledge for a long time, and they have higher pursuit and expectation for the depth and breadth of knowledge, and they have more needs and goals for their learning level, while the students of other majors will regard English as a practical tool more, focusing on the cultivation of basic application ability such as the four or six level examination. Students of other majors' regard English

as a practical tool and focus on the cultivation of basic application ability such as the four or six level examination. This kind of differentiated needs due to different professional backgrounds has led to the significant differences in their satisfaction with the university English courses.

Grade Level and Satisfaction with College English Courses: There is a significant difference between students' satisfaction with college English courses at different grade levels. According to Yang (2004), in terms of English course learning, lower grade students have higher satisfaction than higher grade students because lower grade students are full of freshness to all kinds of courses when they first enter the university, they will actively participate in the classroom, and have higher demand for English courses in the university; however, as the grade rises, students face pressure from graduate school and employment, and they choose to ignore the importance of the courses, and they expect the courses to provide more targeted help. They expect the courses to provide more targeted help, and when the existing curriculum cannot fully meet these needs, it will lead to a sharp decline in the satisfaction of this group of students with the university English Course.

Class Positions and Satisfaction with College English Course: There is a significant difference between students' satisfaction with college English Course in different class positions. Students' class positions are divided into class cadres and non-class cadres, and most of the class cadres are elected to be class cadres because of their high level of professional learning ability.

According to Wang (2023), class cadres have more initiative and sense of responsibility in the learning process, they have strong communication skills and sense of responsibility due to the daily organization of class affairs, these qualities make them actively cooperate with the teacher to carry out classroom activities, take the initiative to participate in the English discussion, group presentations, etc., and they can grasp the rhythm of the course better and serve the class better with the help of the knowledge base of English, while non-class cadre students are more concerned about the content of the course itself and whether it is good or bad, but they are more concerned about the content of the course. Students who are not class officers pay more attention to whether the course content itself is interesting and practical for themselves, and at the same time, they have poor initiative in acquiring course resources and communicating with the teacher, which makes them think that the course experience is not enough, so the difference between students' satisfaction with the university English course and their satisfaction with the class position is obvious.

Methodology

This study takes the students at F University in Shaanxi Province as the research object and focused on the satisfaction of the students at F University with the university English Course. As of October 29, 2024, there are 5,042 students in University F of Shaanxi Province, and the study was conducted by distributing electronic questionnaires to the students through the student group of the university. 370 questionnaires were determined to be distributed, and 357 questionnaires were validly

recovered, so the number of valid questionnaires could meet the statistical requirements.

The questionnaire of this study was adopted from Li's (2011) article "Exploring Student Satisfaction in College English Audiovisual Speaking Courses", to which demographic variables were added to form the questionnaire of this study. The questionnaire consists of 15 questions, including three dimensions: course content, students' learning effect, and teachers' teaching level.

Results

Demographic Analysis of Questionnaire Participants

Among the places of origin of the students of University of F, there are 145 cases in Shaanxi region, accounting for 40.6%, and 212 cases in other regions, accounting for 59.4%; among them, there are 129 cases majoring in English, accounting for 36.1%, and 228 cases majoring in other majors, accounting for 63.9%; and the grades are concentrated in the sophomore year, accounting for 42.3%, and the freshman year, accounting for 12.4%, are much lower than the sophomore year with only 44 cases, which is much lower than the sophomore year with only 44 cases. Far lower than the sophomore, only 44, the third year and the fourth year of the relatively equal, the third year of 86, accounting for 24.1%, the fourth year of 76, accounting for 21.3%; in the class position, as class cadres accounted for 25.5% of the students, compared to non-class cadres accounted for 74.5% for a relatively small group.

English Course Satisfaction of Students in University F, Shaanxi Province, China

According to the research purpose of this study, the authors collectively analyzed the information of 357 questionnaires collected by SPSS in order to better test the hypotheses. According to Table 1, 2, 3 below, students' satisfaction with the English language program at the university is high. From the point of view of the items of each sub-dimension, the mean values of content curriculum, students' learning effect and teachers' teaching level are all higher than 3.51, so the satisfaction level of students' English courses in Shaanxi Province F University is high.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistical of Curriculum development

Dimension	N	M	SD	Interpretation
Diversification of the content of the teaching materials used in audiovisual speaking courses	357	3.59	1.143	High
Difficulty of the content of the materials used in the audiovisual speaking course	357	3.58	1.115	High
Time allocation for each element of the audiovisual course	357	3.52	1.077	High
Learning computer room environment for audio-visual and speaking courses	357	3.63	1.127	High
Equipment for learning rooms for audio-visual and speaking courses	357	3.57	1.138	High

According to the analysis of the mean values, the highest score appeared in "learning room environment of audio-visual speaking course" and the lowest score appeared in "overall English knowledge". The details are shown in the following table:

Table 2: Descriptive Statistical of Student learning outcomes

Dimension	N	M	SD	Interpretation
Audio-visual and speaking courses to improve students' listening skills	357	3.52	1.195	High
Audio-visual and speaking courses to improve students' speaking skills	357	3.41	1.166	Moderate
Audiovisual and speaking courses to improve students' reading skills	357	3.44	1.131	Moderate
Improving students' English writing skills	357	3.44	1.168	Moderate
Overall knowledge of English	357	3.38	1.154	Moderate

Table 3: Descriptive Statistical of Teaching level of teachers

Dimension	N	M	SD	Interpretation
The general learning atmosphere of the audiovisual speaking program of study	357	3.49	1.184	Moderate
Progress in English language practice and communication	357	3.55	1.199	High
In-class tutoring for teachers in audiovisual speaking courses	357	3.48	1.090	Moderate
The level of subject knowledge of the teaching staff	357	3.52	1.176	High
Professional ethics of appointed teachers	357	3.52	1.219	High

Differences Analysis on the differences in satisfaction with English Courses at F University among different demographic variables.

There is a significant difference in satisfaction with college English Course among students at University F under different gender variables. There is a significant difference in the satisfaction of college English courses among students at University of F with different major variables. There is a significant difference between University F students, who are satisfied with their university English courses under different grade level variables.

Discussion

Based on the above findings, this paper will discuss the following aspects:

The findings of the present study revealed that there was not much difference between the male and female ratio, with the number of females being slightly higher than that of males. There was

a predominance of sophomore students in this study. On the whole, the satisfaction of higher mathematics courses was high.

From the 1980s to the present, the reform of university English teaching in China has been limited to policy adjustments and curriculum changes, that is, to deal with the issue of what should be taught in university English and the replacement of teaching tools. The Ministry of Education of China has clearly pointed out that it is necessary to promote the reform of university English teaching and improve the practical application ability of the students and has also emphasized the importance of foreign language education in the Outline of the National Medium- and Long-term Education Reform and Development Plan (2010-2020).

About the significant difference in the satisfaction of university English courses among different genders of University F students.

The main reason may be that, for the difference of personal habits and preferences, there is a great difference in the method of expression and the difference in the way of using words, and the differences are also determined by the opinions and perspectives of things, behaviors and so on (Ratna, 2017), and in classroom learning, most of the language of the girls' answers seems to be more formal and formal, and most of the boys' answers are more colloquial, and the sentences are shorter, so there is a significant difference between genders in the satisfaction with the full of college English courses. sentences are shorter, so there is a significant difference between genders in satisfaction with the fullness of English courses at university.

About the significant difference in the satisfaction of university English courses among students of different origins in the University of F.

The reason for this result may be due to the fact that university English courses are highly valued and widely used in China, and the provinces in China are tightly focused on the implementation of the courses, and there is no significant difference in satisfaction with university English courses between the Shaanxi area and the other areas in comparison in this environment.

About the significant difference in the satisfaction of the university English Course among the students at the University of F with different majors.

The main reason may be that students majoring in English have a strong motivation to learn college English courses, and students majoring in this field can complete the learning tasks assigned by their teachers well, and in the process of achieving the expected learning goals, it will make students' self-confidence stronger and make them more satisfied with their learning (Vi Thi Tuong Pham &Anh Tuan Pham, 2010). The students of other majors are only interested in getting credits for their English courses.) Students of other majors, however, mostly study the college English courses only with the idea of getting credits, and most of them choose to be moderate or even perfunctory in accomplishing the tasks issued by the teachers.

About the significant difference in the satisfaction of the university English Course among the students of different grades in the University of F.

Satisfaction is higher in all dimensions in the fourth year than in the other years, and lower in all dimensions in the first year than in the other years. Satisfaction was higher in the junior year than in the sophomore year. Unlike freshmen, sophomores and juniors have more adaptability and control in all aspects than freshmen after experiencing the university learning mode, and their English thinking and comprehension tends to be more mature in English learning methods (Ma Diem, 2014), and the high level of satisfaction of senior students may be due to the fact that they have already completed most of the courses, have a complete knowledge of the knowledge system, and are able to see that this discipline in their further education or work.

About the significant difference in the satisfaction of the university English Course among the students at the University of F in different class positions.

The reason for this result may be that the course content, teaching methods and assessment standards are unified for all students, who learn the same theories, complete the same difficulty of assignments and exams, and the reasons for mastering the college English course are mainly focused on obtaining credits, completing the academic requirements and successfully passing the exams, so there will not be a big difference because of the class position of the class cadre or not. In terms of learning experience, all of them are in the same environment, receive the same teaching resources, and the common learning experience makes no significant difference in their satisfaction with the university English Course.

Conclusions

1). In the present study, the number of female students was slightly higher, but there was little difference between the sexes. The largest number of respondents was in the second year of study, at 42.3 per cent, while there was little difference in the number of respondents in the other grades.

2). Overall, the satisfaction of students with the English Course at the University of F was high.

3). There was a significant difference in the satisfaction of university F students with their English courses by gender. Female students were more satisfied than their male counterparts in all dimensions of overall satisfaction with the university English Course, as well as in the dimensions of course content, students' learning effectiveness and teachers' teaching level.

4). There was no significant difference in the English Course of the students at the University of F with different places of origin.

5). There was a significant difference in the satisfaction of English courses among students majoring in different majors at the University of F. In terms of overall satisfaction with the English course, as well as in the dimensions of course content, students' learning effect and teachers' teaching

level, the satisfaction of other majors was higher than that of English majors in all dimensions.

6). There was a significant difference in the satisfaction of English courses among university F students of different grades. In terms of overall satisfaction with the English course, course content, students' learning effect and teachers' teaching level, freshmen's satisfaction was lower than that of other grades in all dimensions, while senior students' satisfaction was higher than that of other grades in all dimensions.

7). There was no significant difference in the English Course of U of F students in different class positions.

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