

Investigation and Analysis of the Current Situation of Autonomous Learning of Western College Students in the New Era

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Abstract: In this study, a questionnaire survey was conducted to analyze the problems of students' autonomous learning in Western Universities. It is found that students' autonomous learning awareness is weak, learning motivation is insufficient, learning self-monitoring ability and learning environment need to be optimized; students of different grades show significant differences ($P < 0.05$) in their autonomous learning status, and learning attitude is the main factor affecting students' autonomous learning ability in Western Universities. In order to improve the current situation of autonomous learning among college students, this paper puts forward the following suggestions: first, to strengthen ideological education and guide students to establish the concept of lifelong learning; second, to cultivate students' interest in learning and improve their learning motivation; third, to establish an effective monitoring and evaluation mechanism and provide targeted learning suggestions and guidance; fourth, to improve the learning environment and create a good learning atmosphere.

Keywords: Western College students; Autonomous learning; A problem; Strategy

1. Research methods and research objects

In this study, XZ University was selected as a case sample. The content of the questionnaire mainly includes two major parts: first, the basic situation of students, mainly including gender, grade, major and other content; second, the current situation survey, for the current situation of autonomous learning survey includes four dimensions, each dimension 4-7 entries, its content includes four aspects of learning attitude, learning motivation, learning strategy and learning environment.

A total of 2304 questionnaires were returned in this study, of which 2195 were valid, and the rate of valid questionnaires returned was 95.3%. The reliability of the questionnaire data was tested by SPSS20.0 software, and the reliability coefficient of the questionnaire was 0.726; the KMO value was 0.904, and the reliability of the research data was high.

The basic information of the respondents is shown in Table 1:

Table 1: Distribution of students' basic information

name	option	frequency	Percentage (%)
gender	male	1078	49.11
	female	1117	50.89
grade	First grade	1169	53.26
	Second grade	513	23.37
	Third grade	317	14.44
	Fourth grade	122	5.56
	Graduate student	74	3.37
major	Literature and history	548	24.97
	science	544	24.78
	engineering	315	14.35
	Journalism arts	41	1.87
	Economics and management	245	11.16
	other	502	22.87

2. Analysis of the current situation of students' autonomous learning

2.1 Design of sub-dimensional indicators of students' autonomous learning ability

2.1.1 Learning attitude level

Learning attitude, as one of the non-intellectual factors that affect the success or failure of students' learning [1-2], exerts a non-negligible influence on learners from within. The survey data show that only 48.29% of students like learning (as shown in Figure 1); only 43.74% of students have a strong interest in their majors, while the percentage of students who feel average or even no interest in their majors reaches 56.26%. It can be seen that students' interest in autonomous learning is average.

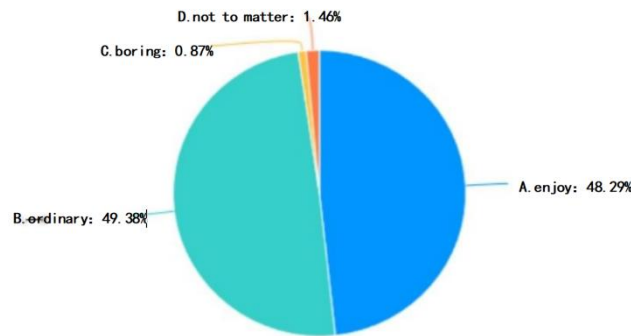


Figure 1: Current situation of learning interest

2.1.2 Learning motivation level

The survey data show that students' motivation for autonomous learning is weak and single. 46.01% of students have average motivation, 40.27% of students have sufficient motivation, and 13.72% of students feel a lack of motivation or even no motivation (as shown in Figure 2).

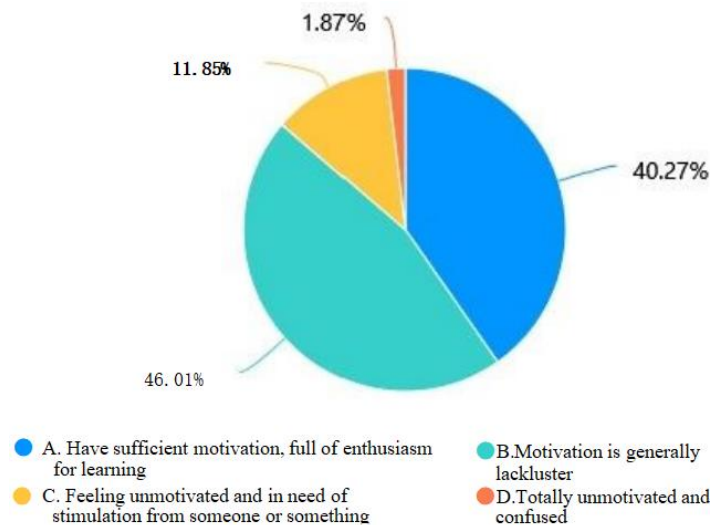


Figure 2: Current situation of learning motivation

2.1.3 Learning strategies level

Learning strategies are the action strategies taken by students according to their own learning situation [3], the results of the survey show that students are generally not clear about their learning goals and plans, and believe that they mainly lack persistence, self-awareness, and autonomy in learning; when asked "whether they would summarize themselves after each study", only 22% of the students chose to do so (see Figure 3).

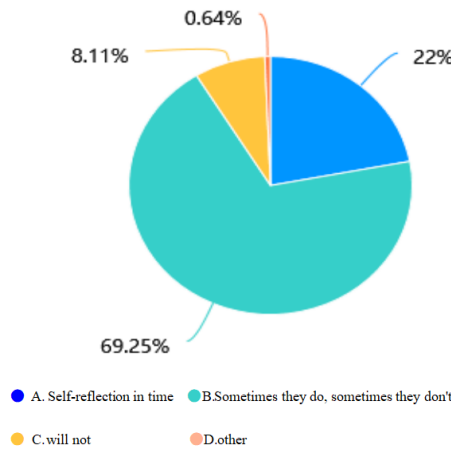


Figure 3: Status quo of learning self-reflection

2.1.4 Learning environment level

According to the survey, 46.7% of the students spend 1-2 hours on autonomous learning every day, and 48.1% of the students study independently in the evening. It can be seen that students' time for autonomous study still needs to be improved.

In terms of hardware facilities, students are not satisfied with the hardware conditions provided by the school. Only 27.74% of students are satisfied with the learning place. 28.34% of students are satisfied with multimedia.

2.2 The difference of demographic variables in college students' autonomous learning

Table 2: Crossover analysis of demographic variables and college students' autonomous learning status

		Status of autonomous learning			χ^2	p
		poor	good	total		
gender	male	866	212	1078(49.11)	1.646	0.649
	female	881	236	1117(50.89)		
grade	male	981	188	1169(53.26)	104.907	0.000**
	female	412	101	513(23.37)		
	First grade	231	86	317(14.44)		
	Second grade	77	45	122(5.56)		
	Third grade	46	28	74(3.37)		
major	Fourth grade	431	117	548(24.97)	20.034	0.171
	Graduate student	443	101	544(24.78)		
	Literature and history	237	78	315(14.35)		
	science	35	6	41(1.87)		
	engineering	202	43	245(11.16)		
	Journalism arts	399	103	502(22.87)		

The data were cross-tabulated using SPSS 26.0.(Table 2)There were significant differences in the autonomous learning status of different grade samples in the process of autonomous learning ($p=0.000<0.01$), it can be seen that the percentage of first-year students choosing autonomous learning was 53.26%, which was significantly higher than other grades, and there was an overall inverse trend; different gender samples and different major samples do not show significance ($p>0.05$) for the autonomous study status of XZ University students.

2.3 Regression analysis of students' autonomous learning status

As shown in Table 3, the regression coefficient of learning attitude on the overall change of autonomous learning status is 0.131 ($t=2.723$, $p=0.007<0.01$), the regression coefficient value of learning motivation is 0.072 ($t=2.495$, $p=0.013<0.05$), and the regression coefficient value of learning environment is 0.112 ($t=3.025$, $p=0.003<0.01$), Therefore, they have a significant positive effect relationship on the change of self-study learning status.

Table 3: Linear regression analysis results (n=2195)

	Nonstandardized coefficient		Standardization coefficient	t	p	VIF
	B	Standard error	Beta			
constant	1.980	0.125	-	15.829	0.000**	-
Learning attitude	0.131	0.048	0.058	2.723	0.007**	1.010
Learning motivation	0.072	0.029	0.059	2.495	0.013*	1.235
Learning Strategy	0.049	0.040	0.029	1.224	0.221	1.243
Learning Environment	0.112	0.037	0.067	3.025	0.003**	1.095
9F	F (4,2190)=9.716,p=0.000					
D-W value	1.926					
Dependent variable: self-study status						
* p<0.05 ** p<0.01						

3. Problems and Causes of autonomous Learning of Students in Western Universities in the New Era

3.1 Weak awareness of autonomous learning

According to the survey statistics, although 80.73% of students agree with the importance of autonomous learning, only 32.03 % of students have a positive attitude toward learning, probably because they are accustomed to passive acceptance when receiving traditional education methods and lack the ability and willingness to learn actively.

3.2 Lack of learning motivation

The survey found that there were significant differences in students' autonomous learning status by grade level, and that students' autonomous learning motivation was insufficient and difficult to maintain. The main factors that lead to the lack of motivation of students are as follows: First, the difference between secondary school and university education philosophy. The examination-based education philosophy in secondary school over-stimulates students' external motivation and weakens their internal motivation; secondly, the subjective role of students' learning is neglected in teaching, leading to a decline in their interest in autonomous learning.

3.3 Unreasonable learning strategies

The survey results show that in the process of autonomous learning, 66.25% of students lack sufficient willpower, which leads to their inability to persist in learning and to develop reasonable learning strategies, specifically: many students make unattainable learning plans, leading to their inability to fully commit to learning; lack of learning goals and clear action plans, leading to their inability to achieve progress and a sense of accomplishment in the short term.

3.4 Learning environment to be improved

The learning environment of college students is one of the most important factors that affect the learning effectiveness of students^[4]. The survey results show that, firstly, 74.85% of the students think that academic style is the key external factor affecting autonomous learning, and 69.48% of the students think that the school's academic style is poor; secondly, there are 24,000 students of all kinds in the university, and the number of library seats is only 1,474, so the study place obviously cannot meet the students' needs.

4. Strategies for cultivating students' autonomous learning ability in the new era of Western Universities

4.1 Strengthen ideological education and guide students to establish the idea of lifelong learning

Schools can set up relevant courses, lectures to introduce methods and skills of autonomous learning to students; encourage students to set up autonomous learning files to record their learning plans, learning difficulties, self-study methods and learning experiences; organize autonomous learning activities to guide students to expand their learning fields and cultivate their autonomous learning

ability and awareness of becoming lifelong learners.

4.2 Cultivate students' interest in learning and increase their learning motivation

Barbara Fredrickson's extended-construct theory explores the effects of positive and negative emotions on various functions of the individual^[5]. Interest can make people show safe and novel cognitive emotions towards the current environment, thus affecting the tendency of thinking and action. Therefore, schools should take the strategy of "breaking the silence of the classroom" and promoting university teaching reform as the entrance to promote the transformation of college students' learning style^[6-7], use classroom group discussion, thematic scenario simulation and other teaching means to strengthen the interaction between teachers and students in college classrooms, so that stimulate students' intrinsic learning initiative.

4.3 Establish an effective monitoring and evaluation mechanism, and provide targeted learning suggestions and guidance

Schools can help students establish effective monitoring and assessment mechanisms by: first, schools can clarify learning goals and assessment criteria in their teaching plans, and help them develop targeted learning plans; Second, schools can provide students with tailored learning advice and establish effective monitoring and assessment mechanisms for students' strengths and weaknesses by providing personalized counseling services; Third, schools can introduce and explain to students some effective learning strategies and methods by conducting some study skills courses and method lectures.

4.4 Improve the learning environment and create a good learning atmosphere

To provide students with quality external environment support, improving the learning environment of college students can start from the following aspects: firstly, the school should provide students with sufficient comfortable learning space, and at the same time, the school can also provide students with a large number of learning resources through the Internet or other means; secondly, the school should carry out modern digital transformation of traditional classrooms, and explore a hybrid teaching method combining Internet and classroom teaching; finally, to establish a good teacher-student interaction and communication mechanism, to urge teachers to conscientiously perform their teaching duties.

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