

The Effect of Perceived Campus Learning Environment on Students' Self-determined Motivation in Vocational Studies

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This study investigates the unidirectional relationship between IVE students' perceived campus learning environment, their satisfaction of basic psychological needs, and self-determined motivation, using Deci and Ryan's self-determined theory (Deci and Ryan, 2002) and Vallerand's (1997) integrated motivational sequence. In addition, the impact of four campus environmental factors (i.e. teacher involvement, teacher support, students collaboration, and a supportive campus environment) on students' satisfaction of basic psychological needs and their subsequent self-determined motivation is compared to reveal the importance of the outside-classroom environment.

A total of 847 IVE students from eight IVE campuses participated in the study. There were 564 males and 245 females, 411 Year-1 students and 436 Year-3 students, as well as 391 in business courses and 456 in engineering courses. Year-1 students got a significantly higher mean score in the self-determined index (SDI) than Year-3 students, and business students were higher than engineering students in SDI.

The mean score of SDI for the whole sample was 1.42 (SD = 3.64), maximum score at 10.3 & minimum at -12.06, and media at 1.57. The relatively low mean and the limited range of scores might suggest that IVE students' SDI score was lower than other populations examined by the AMS (Chen and Carey, 2009; Fairchild, Horst, Finney and Barron, 2005; Vallerand, Fortier and Guay, 1997). This highlights the need to discover which campus environmental factors affect IVE students' academic motivation and how this happens, as a way to solve the problem of low motivation.

Structural equation modeling (SEM) was employed to find that Vallerand's (1997) integrative motivational sequence could be applied in the Hong Kong vocation educational context and to find that supportive campus environment, student collaboration, and teacher involvement had positive and significant effects on students' self-determined motivation through the mediation of basic needs satisfaction. Teacher support also exerted a positive but insignificant effect on self-determined

motivation via the satisfaction of basic needs. Additionally, the supportive campus environment was found to have the highest direct effect on students' satisfaction of basic needs and indirect effect on SDI, with student collaboration and teacher involvement ranked the second and third respectively. Teacher support had a positive but insignificant impact. Year-3 students shared the same rank order about the relative importance of the four environmental factors but Year-1 students did not perceive any significant difference among them. This is possibly explained by the characteristics of IVE students and IVE's course arrangements.

The present study is important because it provided empirical evidence to perceive IVE students' motivational problems from a person-in-context perspective and to explore the possibility of a more proactive approach to solving motivational problems through the manipulation of campus social contexts. The findings also suggested that more emphasis should be put on supportive campus environments and student collaboration, areas which have often been neglected in previous SDT studies.

References:

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