

# The comparison of the undergraduates' learning values on the basis of different educational systems

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## Abstract

The "Learning theory" of General Secretary Xi Jinping has pointed out the way for us to encourage the undergraduates to learn and establish right learning view under the new situation. Compare and analyze the undergraduates' learning values on the basis of different educational systems through questionnaire, to provide reference data for these universities to be qualified and put forward some considerations and suggestions on how to cultivate undergraduates to set up correct learning values.

**Keywords:** newly-upgraded undergraduate universities, different educational systems, learning values

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## 1 Introduction

In recent years, with the major development of the higher education in China, many colleges have been upgraded to undergraduate universities successively after established. How to transform to undergraduate education from college education is the major task that the newly-upgraded undergraduate universities are facing [1]. In most cases, at the same time of transforming to undergraduate education from college education. The newly-upgraded undergraduate universities need to focus on undergraduate education and run college education concurrently. But due to the conventional thinking of running college education still exist and facing many difficulties after upgraded [1, 3] such as:insufficient development funds; unreasonable faculty structure, backward opinions, ossified system, strong administrative color, deficient academic atmosphere and unclear orientation etc, the newly-upgraded undergraduate universities often face a good deal of problems on their own development path.

The former studies about newly-upgraded undergraduate universities often take the school orientation, faculty, teaching and research, communication, management and other aspects as the breakthrough points instead of paying more attention to students [4]. Seeing from the perspective of development psychology, "From teenager to the early stage of adult is the critical stage of values tending towards stability and gradually forming value system" [5], undergraduates are the principal part of the university, timely know and master the students' demands, pay attention to the changes brought by the transformation of educational system to undergraduates' values, [6] especially the changes of learning values, are helpful to the newly-upgraded undergraduate universities to grasp and explore the construction rules of undergraduate universities, realize the transformation and upgrading smoothly and lay a good foundation for constructing qualified undergraduate universities.

## 2 Survey overview and instructions

The survey is launched against the freshmen and sophomores from the three-year system and freshmen, sophomores and juniors from the four-year system in a certain newly-upgraded undergraduate university, 9700 questionnaires have been distributed in total, and 9650 copies are taken back, among them 9500 questionnaires are effective. The contents involve the learning goal, professional interest, reading list, library utilization, academic forum and the participation of all kinds of activities of the undergraduates of different educational systems. The SPSS 12.0 version statistical software is adopted to conduct data processing and analysis for the survey result. It is important to note that the different educational systems mentioned in this paper mainly refer to three-year and four-year systems of universities.

## 3 Comparison and analysis of undergraduates' learning values of different educational systems of newly-upgraded undergraduate universities

The students' learning values refer to their cognition of learning goal, meaning and role. It is the drive that simulates the students' learning motivation [7]. The undergraduates' learning values of different educational systems of newly-upgraded undergraduate universities have intercommunity as well as differences, mainly manifested in the learning value and goal, cognition of the profession, the influence factors of learning, learning time, reading content and the attention paid to academic forum and other aspects.

### 1) The understanding of learning goal.

When answering the question "what is your learning goal", more than half of the students from three-year and four-year systems chose "for better employment and establishing a business", the percentages respectively reached 57.83% and 59.45%, and this indicated that most students had already felt the enormous pressure on

employment, and take employment and establishing a business as the main learning goals. What is different is that the percentages of students from three-year systems choosing “for obtaining the diploma successfully” and “for improving my own quality comprehensively” are the same, 17.9%, while the percentage of students from four-year system choosing “for improving my own quality comprehensively” is 22.35%, and 16.8% choosing “for obtaining the diploma successfully”. This shows that the students from the four-year system pay more attention to the improvement of their own quality than that from the three-year system. The results of Learning goal questionnaire is shown in Table 1.

What calls for special attention is that the selected portions of the options chosen by students from different grades are not the same. The percentage of choosing “for better employment and establishing a business” by freshmen and sophomores from the three-year system ranks the first place, the second is “for improving my own quality comprehensively” and the third is “for obtaining the diploma successfully”. But when this comes to the juniors, what ranks the first place is “for obtaining the diploma successfully”, the second is “for better employment and establishing a business” and “for improving my own quality comprehensively” follows closely; the situation of freshmen, sophomores and juniors from the four-year system is the same with the previous, only the percentage of choosing “for better employment and establishing a business” by seniors ranks the first place, and “for obtaining the diploma successfully” relegated to the second place.

TABLE 1 Learning goal questionnaire

	For better employment and establishing a business	For obtaining the diploma successfully	For improving my Own quality comprehensively
Three-year system	57.83%	17.9%	17.9%
Four-year system	59.45%	16.8%	22.35%

The survey data shows that, most students from both three-year and four-year systems pay more attention to employment and improvement of their own quality in the first two years after enrollment, and haven't had much cognition of obtaining the diploma. The importance of “obtaining the diploma successfully” is continuously becoming prominent with the increase of schoolwork pressure, except for after standing up to the schoolwork pressure in junior year, the undergraduates re-orientate the learning goals on “better employment and establishing a business” in the senior year.

## 2) Interest in professional learning.

When answering the question of “Are you interested in your own major?”, the total percentage of students from three-year students choosing “Interested” and “Quite interested” was 62.13%, choosing “Not interested” and “Don't care” is 37.87%; while 64.23% of students from four-year system choosing “Interested” and “Quite interested”, 35.77% of them choosing “Not interested” and “Don't care”.

The survey results of Professional learning interest questionnaire are shown in Table 2.

Compare and analyze from the perspective of grade division, the portion of students from three-year system choosing “Interested” and “Quite interested” showed a trend of decline according to grade division, while the interest increases 10% from freshmen to sophomores from four-year system, as for juniors and seniors, their professional interest is continuously diminishing. It can thus be seen that the peak point of interest of most students from three-year system occurred during the first year, while the occurrence of peak point of interest of most students from four-year system has been delayed to the second year. This may be related to the curriculum setting of different educational systems. Some professional curriculums of three-year system will be set in the first year, therefore students can know the situation of professional curriculums earlier, while general education curriculums are established in the first year of four-year system, and the professional curriculums are started from the second year, so as to compared to the students from three-year system, that from the four-year system know and access to their profession one year later.

Generally speaking, the professional interest of students from both education systems shows a trend of decline. The reasons are as follows: the first is the undergraduates' misunderstanding of professional theoretical knowledge. Most students focus a lot on improving their own quality; they think they need to participate in more practical activities both inside and outside the university, and it is non-related with the theoretical knowledge. With their deepening understanding of their professions, their interest points gradually turn to grading tests, obtain certifications and other aspects, and lose their interest in professional courses little by little, especially in the professional courses with strong theoretical property. Another case is that after some students knew the professional situation, they thought the employment prospect of their professions is not ideal, they couldn't find great jobs even worked hard on it, so rather than learning the professional knowledge conscientiously, seek some other ways is a better choice. The second is the insufficient psychological preparation to cope with academic pressure. During the period of middle school, many students thought learning in university is easy, free and attractive, moreover, the number and degree of difficulty of the curriculums

Established in the freshman year is easy for student to accept. But along with the grade growth, the number and degree of difficulty of the curriculums established are increasing and has exceeded the original imagination of most students, the significantly insufficient psychological preparation to cope with academic pressure is significantly insufficient, this results in the constant reduction of learning interest while facing enormous pressure.

TABLE 2 Professional learning interest questionnaire

		Interested, Quite interested	Don't care, Not interested
Three-year system	Freshman	71%	29%
	Sophomore	69%	31%
	Junior	46.3%	53.7%
Four-year system	Freshman	63.3%	36.7%
	Sophomore	73.2%	26.8%
	Junior	54.6%	45.4%
	Senior	50%	50%

### 3) Attitude towards participating in academic lectures.

Academic lecture is an important platform for undergraduates to obtain knowledge, know frontier science trends and lift up thoughts outside the classroom, the attention and participation of undergraduates in academic lectures have reflected their eager degree of their intellectual development. Please ensure that affiliations are as full and complete as possible and include the country. If the authors are at different addresses, numbered superscripts should be used after each surname to reference an author to his/her address.

When answering the question "Do you pay attention to and take part in the academic lectures of the university?". The survey results is shown in Table 3. 12.86% of the students from three-year system expressed great attention was paid and took part in them. 70.06% were a little concerned but paid less attention on them, while 17.1% were not concerned and didn't take part in any of them. For the same question, 15.4% students from the four-year system expressed great attention was paid and took part in them, 69.9% were a little concerned but paid less attention on them, while 16.6% were not concerned and didn't take part in any of them.

TABLE 3 Questionnaire of attitude towards taking part in academic Lectures

	Pay great attention and take part in	A little concern but pay less attention	Pay no attention and don't take part in
Three-year system	12.86%	70.06%	17.1%
Four-year system	15.4%	69.9%	16.6%

The survey shows that students from three-year and four-year systems in newly-upgraded undergraduate universities are concerned about the academic lectures, but the degree of participation is not high. There are many reasons for this, the first is that in order to successfully hold a lecture, the school authority usually adopt mandatory approach to force students to take part in, completely ignored the students' willing and interest, most student strongly feel disgusted with this and resistance to academic lectures are created; the second is that some lectures are not attractive enough due to some deficiencies, such as monotony in format, lack of interactivity and innovation. The third reason is that the contents of some academic lectures didn't fit in with the undergraduates' interests, as well as the poor correlation degree with their professional and career development, which is hard to attract the students'

attention.

Seeing from the perspective of different scholastic year system, the degree of participation of students from four-year system is 3% higher than that of the students from three-year system. If exclude the hypothesis of passive participation, the undergraduates from four-year system pay more attention to academic lectures than the junior college students. There are several reasons for this: the first is because of the difference of higher education program, the undergraduates will learn more knowledge than junior college students during the academic year, their demand for expanding knowledge in academic lectures is greater than the junior college students; the second is the selection system of college entrance examination, undergraduates are superior to the junior college students in learning ability and self-discipline quality, and the probability for them to take part in academic lectures is higher than that of junior college students; the third reason is that, due to the different cultivating objectives, undergraduates are more inclined to the accumulation of theoretical knowledge, while junior college students tend to develop practical skills. Comparatively speaking, the academic lectures are more attractive to undergraduates.

### 4) Library utilization.

Library is the place for undergraduates to continue learning within spare time and the second class in the university, the frequency of going to the library can reflect their dedication degree in learning. When answering the question "How often do you go to the library?" 36% of students from three-year system chose going there every week, while the percentage of undergraduates from four-year system choosing this option reached 38%. The survey indicates that the undergraduates from four-year system spend more time and energy in learning than junior college students. Have interest in reading which kind of books will reflect people's learning attitude and thinking taste. And the selection of books can reflect the students' thinking trend. In the option of "What are the books you often read?". Which is shown in Table 4 according to the reading rate, from high to low, the top four kinds of books are fiction, literature and art, motivational type and humanities and social sciences. Among them the fiction reading rates of students from three-year system and four-year system respectively are 30.6% and 30.4%, the reading rates of literature and art respectively are 17% and 20.3%, 18.1% and 19.2% for motivational books, and 13% and 17.6% for humanities and social sciences books.

TABLE 4 Questionnaire of "What are the books you often read?"

	Fiction	Literature and art	Motivational type	Humanities and social sciences
Three- year system	30.6%	17%	18.1%	13%
Four-year system	30.4%	20.3%	19.2%	17.6%

### 5) Attitude towards classroom discipline.

The compliance of classroom discipline can be reflected in the "truancy rate". The results are shown in Table 5.

TABLE 5 Questionnaire of undergraduates' truancy rate

	Once a week or longer	Once two to three weeks	Once or twice per semester	Never
Three-year system	13.36%	26.8%	42. 2%	17.64%
Four-year system	11.92%	29.5%	43.45%	15.13%

It can be seen from the above table that, the truancy phenomenon exists for students from both three-year system and four-year system, and most students chose the option of "Once or twice per semester". There are many reasons causing the students skip classes, the first is the undergraduates' interest in classroom learning is reduced and the thought of skipping class was thus created. The second is the truancy phenomenon has not been strictly managed by the school authority and teachers; their laissez-faire attitude indulged the truancy phenomenon. The third is teachers' classroom teaching is monotonous and lack of interactivity and attraction, students feel disgusted with classes.

In this option, the truancy rate in a semester of students from four-year system is lower than that of the students from three-year system. It's worth noting that the percentages of students choosing "Once a week or longer" and "Never" from three-year are higher than that of the students from four-year system, it shows that compared with the students from four-year system, the truancy rate of students from three-year system is much higher, and also there are more students never skip classes.

###### 6) Attention degree on all competitions.

Participating in all kinds of competitions is the significant platform of undergraduates' exercising their own quality, which should be respected by all parties. However, about the answer to the question "Do you pay attention to or participate in the various kinds of competitions in college?", most three-year or four-year students choose "paying a little attention", it shows that the degree of participation of the students from newly-upgraded undergraduate universities is low, the students who pay no attention to or do not participate in the competitions reach more than 10%. The possible reasons of this phenomenon are shown as follows: First, undergraduates have not realized the importance of participating in competitions. Second, the students who have realized the importance of participating in the competitions are unwilling to accept the challenge of competitions, they have embarrassed emotion. Third, the competitions are lack of attraction. Students think participating in the competitions is a waste of time and it's unnecessary to participate in them. Fourth, the competitions are not very relevant to employment. Participating in the competitions is inferior to spend time on attending various professional examinations and achieving more certificates. Fifth, some students just drift along and muddle along in college.

TABLE 6 Questionnaire of Undergraduates' Attention Degree on All Competitions

	Pay great attention and take part in	A little concern but pay less attention	Pay no attention and don't take part in
Three-year system	13.2%	68.1%	18.7%
Four-year system	15.9%	73%	11.1%

As for the different educational systems, the proportion of three-year students who pay no attention and don't take part in the competitions reach 18.7%, which is apparently higher than 11.1% of four-year system. It shows that four-year undergraduates pay more attention to the various competitions than three-year junior college students, which is shown in Table 6.

## 5 Summary

Because the undergraduates and the junior college students of the newly-upgraded undergraduate universities are in the same college and have the common campus culture, the common teachers, the common library, and the roughly similar teaching management rules and regulations, they have lots of things in common such as the value tendency of learning, hobbies, participation in academic forums and various competitions, skipping classes, etc. Meanwhile, due to the different training objectives and the quality of students, there are also some differences between the three-year and four-year students on the study of value. The above-mentioned investigation has proved this point.

Hereby, about the newly-upgraded undergraduate universities' cultivating undergraduates to set up the correct learning values and constructing qualified undergraduate, I propose the following suggestions:

1) Perfect college rules and regulations, create excellent learning institutional environment.

The sound and effective college rules and regulations are the guarantee of the excellent learning environment. At ordinary times, it is necessary to strictly enforce the series of rules and regulations that college has prescribed, such as attending class, examination, dropping out, graduation, etc., organically combine ideological education and the system of incentives and penalties, unify incentive and restriction, and make the undergraduates and the junior college students self-conscious, self-exciting, and make progress continuously.

2) Accomplish the task of transforming the junior college codes and standards to the undergraduate codes and standards.

The newly-upgraded undergraduate universities are in the conversion period of transforming the junior college standards to the undergraduate codes and standards. Since the original junior college codes and standards gradually weaken their influence and constraining force, and the new undergraduate college codes and standards are not completely established and have not go deep into the heart

of teachers and students yet, through boosting the undergraduate teaching work proficiency assessment and construction work, let students feel and experience the undergraduate codes and standards, thereby forming the power of learning consciously in accordance the new codes and standards.

### 3) Promote the quality and attraction of academic forum.

As the effective carrier of colleges and universities' academic activities, academic forum is the important constituent part of campus culture, and also the important way for students to understand and expand their own knowledge. Aiming at the current reality that the undergraduates and the junior college students generally concern but not particularly participate in the academic forums, the newly-upgraded undergraduate universities shall take the following measures: Firstly, adjust the content of the academic forums properly, closely link the content of the forums with students' majors, hobbies and interests, and future development. The investigation found that forums that are closely relevant to students' own interest have much higher approval rate. Secondly, further enrich the forms of the academic forums. In general, most of the forums adopt traditional teaching method, which do not give rise to the undergraduates' interests in most cases. While diversified forums forms can not only enhance the attraction of the academic forums, but also weaken students' misunderstanding about that attending a lecture is equal to the terms task and boring.

### 4) Reinforce the library constructions.

With the increasing undergraduate majors and undergraduate quantity, in order to adapt to the needs of new situation, the newly-upgraded undergraduate universities' library collection is in urgent need of adjusting and updating the structure. For this purpose, first, the books collecting and editing personnel shall extensively solicit the opinions of the vast numbers of teachers and students, let the course teachers and students participate in collecting and editing books, ensure that the purchased books and materials can closely combine with the development direction of discipline construction, meet the crying needs of teaching and scientific research. Second, because the libraries of the newly-upgraded undergraduate universities are underdeveloped on the electronic resources construction while the database resources demand of teachers and students is increasing, the libraries, besides increasing the reserve of electronic resources, shall also enrich the document resources through inter-library loan, consequently serving the teaching and scientific research better. Third, improve libraries' reading guidance service. As for the situation that college freshmen mainly read novels and literature and art books, the libraries can positively recommend the relevant competitive books to them, and guide them establishing the correct reading view through the methods such as carrying out reading contest and communicating reading. As for the senior students, teachers can guide them to read relevant professional books to further promote their professional learning level. [8]

### 5) Boost the teaching reform of career planning course.

Nowadays, many undergraduates feel confused and lost about their future after enrolling into the college. To some extent, this thought influences the establishment of their learning value. Therefore, most colleges and universities have established the relevant courses of career planning, to help students establish the employment objectives that both fit to them and accord with social need. In view of the employment education to undergraduates, let students objectively understand the current employment situation, and strive to better themselves, finish school by combining with the reality, make efforts to promote integrated development, play a positive role in forming correct learning value.

### 6) Further enhance the attraction of classroom.

Constructivists attach importance to construct knowledge through sense organ or interaction; they think that this is the only main form of study. Because the traditional education has neglected students' subjective initiative, greatly bruised their learning interest, students orientation must be realized during the teaching process, let students participate in the teaching process, while teachers mainly play the auxiliary roles, by which can motivate students' learning interest, and reduce the occurrence of skipping classes as far as possible.

### 7) Train students the conception of life-long learning and study hard, perfect the learning value.

Quite a few students think that after laboriously getting to university, they should be relaxed and enjoy the campus life. However, they do not realize that university is also an important learning period during their life. Whether one can succeed in the learning tasks in this period will have a significant influence on his lifetime. General Secretary Xi Jinping emphasizes in the Zhijiang Neologism, "Facing the severe reality that is not in accordance with our knowledge, ability, quality and demands of the time, we must intensify the thought of live and learn, and initiatively carry out a 'learning revolutionary'" [9]. Actually, that is warning us that building up lifelong learning value. At school, we should do as told by General Secretary Xi Jinping: In terms of study, we should have the pursuit of high aspiration like "I can only see the winding road stretching into vanish", resist the cold and cheerless time like "Westerly winds withered trees up last night" and the loneliness like "Alone on the high-rises", settle to read through and swot; we should work hard, study assiduously, be willing to be dedicated, be indomitable, make real efforts, make painstaking efforts, careful efforts, have no regrets even though unbound our garments, be most willingly even though we are haggard [10].

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