

# The influence of learning motivation on employment competitiveness of Chinese college students mediated by learning engagement: Basis for strategies to improve students' competitiveness in employment

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## Abstract

The purpose of this study was to explore the relationship between learning motivation, learning engagement and employment competitiveness, and put forward some suggestions to improve employment competitiveness. Self-made questionnaire was used as a data collection tool in this study. The subjects were undergraduates from colleges and universities in Shandong, Beijing, Jiangsu, Hebei and Tianjin. The study motivation was weighted and ranked from four aspects, learning interest, learning ability, reputation acquisition and altruistic intention. It also assessed learning engagement in terms of behavioral engagement, cognitive engagement, and emotional engagement. The employment competitiveness was evaluated from four aspects knowledge understanding ability, business skills, personal quality and cognitive ability. As part of the non-parametric test, Spearman rho was used to examine the significant relationship. All analyses were performed including learning interest, learning ability, reputation acquisition and altruistic using SPSS version 28. The participants agreed with the positive role of learning motivation, intention. Respondents agreed that learning engagement was assessed by behavioral engagement, cognitive engagement, and emotional engagement. The respondents agreed to improve the comprehensive employment competitiveness of college students by improving their knowledge understanding ability, business skills, personal quality and cognitive ability. The study also found that there was a very strong direct relationship between learning motivation and employment competitiveness. There was also a very strong direct relationship between learning motivation and learning investment, and there was a very strong direct relationship between learning investment and employment competitiveness. In addition, this study developed strategies to strengthen the employment competitiveness of college students.

**Keywords:** learning motivation, learning investment, employment competitiveness, college students

## **The influence of learning motivation on employment competitiveness of Chinese college students mediated by learning engagement: Basis for strategies to improve students' competitiveness in employment**

### **1. Introduction**

As the cornerstone of people's livelihood, employment has a vital impact on the long-term prosperity of the country and social harmony and stability. At present, China's economy is in a critical transition period from relying on external market expansion to strengthening internal structural adjustment. In the process of this transition, there are significant imbalances and conflicts between the supply and demand ends of the labor market. It is worth noting that the global impact of the novel corona virus epidemic has led to a slowdown in the pace of global economic growth, and market players are generally facing the dilemma of declining vitality, which makes the situation of the job market become particularly severe and challenging.

Meanwhile, the employment situation of college graduates is also worrying. The number of college graduates in China is expected to climb to a new high of 11.58 million by 2024, marking a historic peak in the total number of college graduates. This trend has intensified the employment pressure of graduates, making the employment problem more prominent. Admittedly, external factors such as the severity of the overall employment situation and the orientation of employment policies have an impact on the employment situation of graduates, but the most fundamental reason still lies in the competitiveness of graduates themselves in the labor market, that is, whether their comprehensive quality, professional skills and abilities can meet the diversified needs of society and employers. The employment competitiveness of college students is an important assessment standard for their learning achievements in college. In the current severe employment situation, college students must keep a clear head, recognize the form of employment, fully analyze their own conditions, correct learning attitude, increase professional quality, and strive to improve their employment competitiveness. However, at present, there is a widespread phenomenon in China that college students' interest in learning declines and motivation for learning is insufficient after entering the university, which directly leads to the decline in employment competitiveness, and problems such as "having a degree but no ability," "and unemployment upon graduation".

The employment competitiveness of college students is an important assessment standard for their learning achievements in college. Learning motivation refers to the inner driving force that drives individuals to actively participate in learning activities, set clear goals and be willing to work hard for them. Accordingly, learning engagement reflects the total amount of mental resources (such as concentration and interest) and behavioral efforts (such as time management and task completion) that students put into the learning process. For college students, the strength of their learning motivation directly and significantly affects their level of learning engagement. Specifically, the more motivated students are to learn, the higher their executive power and attention in learning activities will be, thus prompting them to be more focused and effective in the learning process (Zhao, 2024). Both affect one's academic performance, which further affects one's employability competitiveness. According to the current in-depth investigation and analysis of the learning situation of college students in our country, the results show that the learning situation of college students is not optimistic.

After entering the university stage, many college students are generally faced with the problem of insufficient motivation due to the lack of the tightness of parents' daily supervision and the strict management of teachers, which directly leads to a significant decrease in their level of learning engagement. For some college students, college study is just to get a diploma, get a degree, learning is a passive participation process, not to mention investing a lot of time and energy, some college students began to feel comfortable "mixed education". The relevant survey found that the truancy rate of college students in China is far more than that of Western

countries, even when they come to class, some students are not invested in class learning, but addicted to mobile phones. In 2018, the Ministry of Education of China released the "Notice on the implementation of the spirit of the National Conference on Undergraduate Education in Colleges and Universities in the New Era", and universities introduced a series of measures: canceling the exam clearance system, transferring undergraduates with substandard credits to specialized colleges, strengthening the assessment of the learning process, etc., and reasonably "increasing the burden" on college students.

Learning motivation plays an important role in determining academic performance and enhancing employment competitiveness. Students with high motivation tend to work harder, have greater self-control, and are more confident in their academic and job achievements. Learning motivation guides students' behavior and attitudes in pursuit of academic goals, makes students more energetic and hardworking, and improves students' cognitive processes, thereby improving their workplace competency. Therefore, studying learning motivation is an important process for professional development and enhancing employability competitiveness. There is a close and interrelated relationship among learning motivation, learning engagement and employment competitiveness. Learning motivation is directly related to the individual's effort level and goal orientation in learning. A high degree of motivation is usually accompanied by a more positive attitude towards learning and higher academic performance, which is essential for demonstrating one's abilities during the job search process. Learning motivation is also closely related to an individual's career interests. The interest and enthusiasm for one's future career will motivate him to further study in related fields, develop more professional skills and improve his competitiveness in the workplace. Learning engagement includes aspects such as learning time, learning strategies and learning depth, all of which directly affect a person's level of expertise in a particular field. Through deep learning and practice, individuals can develop skills that are actually available in the workplace and improve their competitiveness in employment. Learning input also includes efforts to participate in academic research, internships, and projects. These experiences can be a powerful point of reference in a job search and support an individual's ability to stand out from the competition.

A high degree of motivation and commitment to learning reinforce each other and can foster a positive career attitude. This attitude manifests itself in enthusiasm for the job and the pursuit of professional development, which results in a stronger display of competitiveness in interviews and workplace performances. A combination of motivation and commitment to learning can produce individuals who have not only deep attainments in their professional fields, but also comprehensive qualities. This is important for adapting to the diversity and complexity of the workplace. Overall, learning motivation and learning commitment are important building blocks of individual employment competitiveness. By stimulating students' strong interest in learning, prompting them to explore the knowledge field more deeply and broaden their learning horizons, they can effectively pave a solid path for personal career growth. This kind of education process not only enhances the students' professional ability, but also improves their comprehensive quality, making them more outstanding in the workplace competition and occupy a favorable position.

In summary, based on the perspectives of human capital theory, self-determination theory and social constructivism motivation theory, this study deeply analyzes the internal relationship between learning motivation, learning input and employment competitiveness. By constructing a model that focuses on the learning process, this study aims to illustrate how learning motivation influences and shapes students' employability competitiveness. In order to verify the validity of this model, we adopted the method of empirical analysis and collected 480 valid questionnaire data, aiming to fully reveal the dynamic relationship between current college students' learning status and their future career competitiveness. This research focused on exploring effective strategies to stimulate and maintain strong motivation in the learning process of college students, encourage them to increase their learning investment in their learning career, and cultivate high-quality talents with high adaptability and competitiveness, and provide strong support for the continuous development of the university.

**Objectives of the Study** - This study seek to explore the complex and interactive relationship among learning

motivation, learning engagement and employment competitiveness. Specifically, the study determined the level of learning motivation from the aspects of the pursuit of learning interest, the pursuit of learning ability, the acquisition of reputation, and the intention of altruism. Evaluate learning engagement, in relation to these aspects, namely behavioral engagement, cognitive engagement and emotional engagement. It also determined the employment competitiveness in terms of knowledge understanding ability, business skills, personal quality, cognitive ability This study also tested the complex relationship between learning motivation, employment competitiveness and learning engagement. Lastly, it proposed strategies to improve students' competitiveness in employment.

## 2. Methods

**Research Design** - Descriptive research methods were used in this study. Descriptive research is a systematic means of inquiry aimed at extensively collecting and analyzing detailed facts, data and information about current states, phenomena, people or events. The core of this method is to describe the selected object in depth and detail, and to present the real face of the research object comprehensively and accurately by describing its characteristics, states, processes or relations in detail. This is a fact-finding study with sufficient and accurate data. Inferential statistics refers to the method of inferring measures of population quantity from sample data. In this study, it was used to describe the latest experience of Chinese college students' learning motivation, learning engagement and employment competitiveness. The researchers adopted the method of distributing questionnaires to respondents in order to efficiently get the required information from them. This approach, as a descriptive research strategy, was shown to be able to quickly aggregate feedback from respondents and help identify and analyze possible associations between study variables, thus providing strong data support for research.

**Participants of the Study** - The survey sent 350 questionnaires to undergraduates at Chinese universities via the Internet. Respondents were randomly selected from 10 public universities in five Chinese provinces (Shandong, Beijing, Jiangsu, Hebei and Tianjin), with 70 undergraduates randomly selected from each university. This study focused on Chinese college students. By collecting and analyzing questionnaire data and using empirical research methods, this study deeply explored how learning motivation affected and shaped the employment competitiveness of college students, aiming to reveal its internal mechanism and path. This paper focused on the group of college students, focused on the perspective of learning engagement, aimed to deeply explore how learning motivation played a role in the employment competitiveness of college students, and analyzed its internal influence mechanism. By systematically reviewing and sorting out the existing literature studies on the relationship between college students' learning motivation, learning engagement and employment competitiveness, this paper initially constructed a theoretical model, which explained the mechanism path of how learning motivation exerted a profound impact on college students' employment competitiveness by influencing learning engagement.

**Data Gathering Instruments** - Questionnaire survey was used as a data collection tool in this study. This study uses Likert scale to evaluate college students' learning motivation, learning engagement and employment competitiveness in different degrees. Three sets of carefully designed questionnaires were used as the primary data collection tools for this study, which were independently compiled based on in-depth understanding of the literature and published research on the three variables of current learning motivation, learning engagement, and employment competitiveness. Each item in the questionnaire was presented in the form of a clear and descriptive statement designed to guide respondents to respond according to their actual situation. In order to quantify the attitudes and opinions of the respondents, a four-level Likert scale was used in this study, where 4.00 represents "strongly agree", 3.00 represents "agree", 2.00 represents "disagree", and 1.00 corresponds to "strongly disagree". Such a design helped to accurately capture the subjective feelings and cognitive degree of the respondents.

The learning Motivation questionnaire contained 28 items across four dimensions. Learning interest included 7 items, and Cronbach  $\alpha$  value was 0.884; Ability pursuit included 6 items with Cronbach  $\alpha$  value of

0.894; Reputation pursuit had 5 items with Cronbach  $\alpha$  value of 0.901; And altruism orientation had 6 items with a Cronbach  $\alpha$  value of 0.893. The learning motivation questionnaire had 3 dimensions and 19 items in total. Behavioral engagement included 5 items, with Cronbach  $\alpha$  value of 0.907; Cognitive input had 7 items with Cronbach  $\alpha$  value of 0.934; Affective engagement had 7 items with Cronbach  $\alpha$  value of 0.923. The questionnaire of employment competitiveness had 4 dimensions and 21 items in total. Among them, comprehension ability had 5 items, Cronbach  $\alpha$  value is 0.917; Business skill had 6 items, Cronbach  $\alpha$  value was 0.896; 5 items of personal quality (Cronbach  $\alpha$  value is 0.886); Metacognition had 5 items with Cronbach  $\alpha$  value of 0.922. Cronbach's alpha indicates that the items have good internal consistency. Reliability results for calculations of learning motivation (0.894), learning engagement (0.922), and employment competitiveness (0.905) suggest strong internal consistency across the rule of thumb for these items.

**Data Gathering Procedure** - Firstly, the research background and current situation of learning motivation, employment competitiveness and learning engagement were summarized through literature review, so as to identify practical problems and study existing problems. After the preliminary completion of the questionnaire design, in order to ensure the effectiveness and accuracy of its content, this study invited experts in related fields to conduct strict review and verification of the questionnaire content. Then, through a small-scale pilot test, we further the consistency was confirmed among the three variables involved in the questionnaire, namely, learning motivation, learning engagement and employment competitiveness, which laid a solid foundation for the reliability of the data. After reliability testing and satisfactory results, data collection was officially started. Questionnaires were distributed to target groups through various means, such as email, online platform submission and on-site direct distribution. In this process the support and cooperation of the heads of organizations were sought to ensure the smooth collection of the required data from their employees, namely the undergraduate respondents in this study. This step not only demonstrated the rigor of the research, but also ensured that the data collection work was carried out smoothly.

**Ethical Considerations** - Ethical principles have been placed at the core of this research throughout to ensure that all data collected were used in strict accordance with the purpose of the research, so as to maintain the objective fairness and academic integrity of the research. In the process of data collection, the principle of anonymity and confidentiality was strictly enforced as well as strict confidentiality measures for the identity information of the interviewees to ensure that they did not need to disclose any information that may identify them when completing the questionnaire. In addition, The voluntary will of the respondents was fully respected and ensured that each participant knew and agreed to participate in the survey before filling in the questionnaire, which reflected the principle of voluntary participation. The safety and well-being of my research participants was of paramount importance, so throughout the course of the research, their protection from harm was a top priority and ensured that research activities did not have any negative impact on the physical and mental health of the participants.

**Data Analysis** - The weighted mean and rank method were used to determine the level of learning motivation in the pursuit of learning interest, ability, reputation acquisition and altruistic intention; The levels of learning motivation were determined in the aspects of behavioral participation, cognitive participation and emotional participation; From the knowledge understanding ability, business skills, personal quality, cognitive ability. The results of Shapiro-Wilk test clearly pointed out that the data distribution of all variables in this study did not meet the standard of normal distribution, specifically, the P-value of each variable was significantly lower than the significance level of 0.05. In view of this non-normal distribution, Spearman rho was used as part of the non-parametric statistical method to more appropriately analyze the correlation between variables and determine whether there is a significant correlation between them.

### 3. Results and discussion

Table 1 summarizes the overall evaluation of learning motivation, and its comprehensive average value was 3.07, which reflected the respondents' overall evaluation of learning motivation at a high level in the evaluation

system. This means that respondents generally believed that learning motivation was of significant importance in promoting personal learning and development, and their evaluation showed consistency and clarity on the whole. Ability pursuit ranked first in learning motivation (3.19). Learning interest and altruism came in second (3.07), and reputation acquisition came in third (2.95).

**Table 1**

*Summary Table on Level of Learning Motivation*

Key Result Areas	Composite Mean	VI	Rank
Learning Interest	3.07	Agree	2.5
Ability	3.19	Agree	1
Reputation Acquisition	2.95	Agree	4
Altruistic Intention	3.07	Agree	2.5
Grand Composite Mean	3.07	Agree	

*Legend: 3.50-4.00=Strongly Agree; 2.50-3.49=Agree; 1.50-2.49=Disagree; 1.00-1.49=Strongly Disagree*

To explore learning motivation, two theoretical bases needed to apply namely self-determination theory and social constructionism motivation theory. Ryan et al. (2000) proposed self-determination theory in the 1980s. They believed that self-determination means that individuals fully collect environmental information in the early stage, clear their own needs, and then make behavioral choices independently according to their own experience. This is a kind of potential that can stimulate the individual's interest and improve the individual's ability in the process of acting.

The motivation of an individual's decision to do something depends not only on external factors, but also on internal factors (Liang et al., 2022). The two do not exist in isolation. There is a medium that can effectively connect the internal and external motivations. This medium is a material formed by the three psychological needs of autonomy, ability and belonging. Among them, autonomy refers to the individual's independent decision to do something or participate in a certain event in the big environment, which belongs to the internal motivation; Ability need refers to the ability of an individual to judge himself and obtain satisfaction or a sense of achievement through the continuous behavior of learning. The need for a sense of belonging refers to the satisfaction that an individual feels after being praised by his superiors or peers for doing something or completing something, and after being motivated, thus generating dependence on the organization, that is, a sense of belonging (Guo et al., 2019). If these three psychological needs cannot be met, individuals will have a sense of frustration, which will reduce work efficiency and weaken the motivation to continue to do this thing. Therefore, when autonomy, competence, and a sense of belonging are present, the individual will generate a steady stream of motivation to complete the task successfully.

There are two schools of social constructivist motivation theory, Vygotsky's theory and Piaget's art school, which are developed on the basis of the research results of cognitivism. It holds that each person has his or her own unique cognition and a different view of the social environment, and therefore, the motivations behind each person's actions are different. Students' learning activities are also dominated by motivation. Students think about the reasons for doing something according to their formed cognition and concepts, then decide whether to do it or not, and finally make unremitting efforts for it. The three-stage motivation model of social constructivism provides a theoretical basis for the study of learning motivation. This model, created by William and Durden in 1997, emphasizes three stages of students' learning activities and explains the motivations behind these three stages: the first stage is the reason for doing something, interest and desire for knowledge can all explain why students want to learn, that is, the motivation of students' learning; The second stage is the decision to do something, which is determined by the motivation of the first stage; And the third stage is unremitting effort, which builds on the first two stages to produce the act of continuous effort. These three stages fit neatly into the logic of this study.

From the perspective of composite mean value, college students were most focused on the improvement of self-employability (3.19), that is, the development demand for self-improvement. In the context of social

situation and media communication, college students have a clear understanding of the current grim environment. In the context of China's economic growth slowing down and the prospect of economic development facing many uncertain factors, the employment situation of college graduates will be more complicated and severe. Many fresh graduates have to face the embarrassing situation of "unable to find a job after graduation" and "unemployment upon graduation" (Zhong et al., 2020).

In the "difficult employment" environment, college students can find their own lack of ability, so that their own employment competitiveness, workplace competency, interpersonal skills and other conducive to the ability to quickly get a job and adapt to the job has further requirements. As educates, college students hope to improve their academic achievement, employment planning ability, interpersonal communication ability, social practice ability and entrepreneurial literacy ability, which is reflected in the development needs of self-improvement. Therefore, in the process of personnel training, colleges and universities should keep continuous interaction with the market, analyze the demand of the job market, and train professionals to adapt to the development of the market. In addition, colleges and universities should make use of and develop social resources, understand the needs of employers, invite experts to analyze students' employment prospects, and at the same time give career planning guidance to college students, so as to fully tap their potential and improve their employability. The development demand of self-improvement is the demand of college students throughout the period of school, and the ways and methods of self-improvement and self-development have been highly concerned and popular among college students.

In the second place is the demand for knowledge dominated by learning interests. In the increasingly fierce competition, college students no longer have the honorable status of "God's favored students". Every year, millions of graduates go to the talent market for multiple rounds of competition, competition and elimination. Therefore, college students must "arm themselves", through constant knowledge, learning, improve their competitiveness. There are some hot words of "auditing" and "charging" in the university campus. It is the college students who use their spare time to learn professional extra-curricular knowledge and go to the library to read and "charge" themselves. In addition, the "certificate fever" has been popular on campus, and various IELTS, TOEFL, psychological counselors, computer advertisements and training institutions have become increasingly hot, which also confirms the popularity of college students' certificates (Chen et al.,2020). College students are no longer limited to learning by teachers, but can also learn relevant knowledge with the help of Internet mobile phones, digital magazines, newspapers and websites, and experience the integration and collision of various disciplines, which greatly enriches their learning world. At the same time, in a society where knowledge and ability converge, the acquisition of knowledge is no longer limited to the study of textbook theoretical knowledge. College students pay more attention to the study of practical knowledge, and participate in community activities, service learning, skill competitions and other ways to enhance the practical value of knowledge. When meeting the demand for knowledge of college students, colleges and universities should pay attention to the correct guidance of college students' demand for knowledge, and do the following work:

First, strengthen the ideological education of college students and set up a correct view of knowledge seeking. The correct view of knowledge can guide college students to form the correct behavior of knowledge seeking, and shape the ideal and enterprising social successors. On the one hand, give play to the guiding role of thought to behavior, and carry on ideal and belief education to college students. On the other hand, guide college students to set up the correct value orientation and choice. Through the integration of classroom teaching and moral education, college educators can make college students receive value education imperceptibly. Through positive guidance, ideological education can be accepted and realized by college students, and students can be scientifically guided to establish correct values, get rid of utilitarian and individualistic tendencies (Li, 2024), clarify the relationship between knowledge seeking and job hunting, correct their learning motivation and attitude, and "study for the rise of China".

Second, the education and teaching in the information age should be innovated to stimulate college students' demand for knowledge. Interest is the best teacher. In the age of information technology, colleges and

universities should fully recognize the opportunities and challenges of new media technology, constantly innovate education, and stimulate the students' demand for knowledge. First of all, the establishment of teacher optimization training mechanism, improve teachers' comprehensive quality ability, can use network information technology, improve teaching quality, good teaching interaction with students, feedback and promotion, cultivate profound teacher-student affection. Make students happy to learn, eager to learn, willing to learn, feel the fun of learning; Secondly, actively innovate teaching methods, through developed network media, reform classroom teaching and learning, combine traditional and classroom teaching with "flipped classroom", "micro class", "MOOCs" and other novel teaching, combined with the characteristics of colleges and universities, targeted teaching to students, imparted learning; Finally, expand the way for college students to seek knowledge effectively. Various types of "service learning", such as volunteer service, public welfare, community activities, skills internship, should be carefully designed and properly used. In the in-depth social practice, students can feel the occupation and responsibility, acquire some practical skills and experience, and enhance the social responsibility and ability of learning.

Third, promote the construction of campus spiritual culture to meet the spiritual life of college students. Promoting the construction of campus spiritual culture cannot be separated from the guidance of network public opinion. Colleges and universities can make use of new media technology to guide online and offline, and use campus radio and website to carry out positive public opinion dissemination, so as to create a good campus learning environment and the campus spirit of devotion to learning. At the same time, they can make reasonable use of the interactivity of the network, timely feedback students' thoughts and mental states through the network information platform, and timely psychological education and communication with "problematic" students, so as to grasp students' thoughts and learning dynamics. At present, the subject consciousness of college students continues to enhance, while meeting and guiding the demand for knowledge, we must also consider other multifaceted spiritual needs, to achieve the comprehensive and healthy development of college students' spiritual life. Colleges and universities must attach importance to the construction of campus spiritual culture: establish campus cultural brand activities in major colleges and universities, set up a variety of courses, organizational salon activities and special lectures, so as to enrich college students' knowledge seeking life; Hold "Challenge Cup" entrepreneurship competition, reading club, skill competition and sports meeting to improve the self-realization needs of college students. In short, through the construction of various campus cultural activities, to attract a wide range of college students to participate in and meet the spiritual life of college students in the interaction.

In the second place is the need for responsibility to home and country corresponding to altruistic intention. Although employment is an individual behavior of college students, in their professional values, college students show a sense of responsibility to the country, hometown, parents and family, which is called the need for responsibility. Most college students' choice of employment space is less influenced by their families, and the primary factor they consider is their own development, which indicates that college students have a strong sense of independence. At the same time, college students also believe that their work place should be close to home in order to take care of their families. Some college students with poor family economic status are eager to get out of campus and enter the workplace to achieve their own economic independence and reduce the burden of their families, all of which show their sense of family responsibility. Serving the motherland, considering the contribution and value of their major to the society, and considering how to better serve the industry should also be the issues that college students need to consider. The responsibility of caring for the family and the motherland is also an integral part of the employment demand of college students.

Ranking third was reputation acquisition, corresponding to emotional needs. When college students face academic pressure and interpersonal pressure on campus, they are prone to depression, loss of learning motivation and interest, and even boredom. At the same time, in the face of severe employment environment and confused future, college students are more likely to feel helpless. Therefore, college students need comfort and support from all sides. The essence of the need for spiritual comfort is the manifestation of college students' need for belonging. When facing high pressure and causing emotional distress, college students need care,



understanding and support from the surrounding environment or others to make them experience a sense of belonging, ensure that they fully feel positive emotions and maintain a high motivation for learning.

**Table 2**

*Summary Table on Learning Engagement*

Key Result Areas	Composite Mean	VI	Rank
Behavioral Engagement	3.06	Agree	3
Cognitive Engagement	3.05	Agree	1.5
Emotional Engagement	3.05	Agree	1.5
Grand Composite Mean	3.05	Agree	

*Legend: 3.50-4.00=Strongly Agree; 2.50-3.49=Agree; 1.50-2.49=Disagree; 1.00-1.49=Strongly Disagree*

Table 2 describes the assessment of the indicators of learning engagement, with a combined mean of 3.05, which was verbally interpreted as agree. The survey results showed that respondents agreed more with behavioral engagement, with a comprehensive average of 3.06, followed by emotional engagement and cognitive engagement, with a comprehensive average of 3.05. The overall situation of college students' classroom learning involvement in specialized courses showed the state of college students' classroom learning in specialized courses, and the level reflected the effort of college students in specialized courses, as well as the learning level and learning effect of college students in specialized courses as a whole. Table 10 describes the overall situation of learning engagement. The comprehensive average value was 3.04, and the comprehensive evaluation was highly identifiable. The analysis showed that the overall learning input of college students was at a medium level, and there were significant differences in each dimension.

The highest score of behavioral input was 3.06, which was slightly higher than the comprehensive average, indicating that students' behavioral input played a dominant role in learning input, and behavioral input was an important step in the learning process of college students' professional courses. As an important part of the measurement of classroom learning engagement, the level of behavioral engagement directly affects whether college students really participate in the classroom learning of professional courses. According to the research on learning behavior involvement, behavioral involvement is higher than cognitive and emotional involvement. However, through the analysis of various problems in behavioral involvement, it is found that students' regular involvement is dominant, and initiative input is relatively low. A small number of students do not stimulate their internal driving force, but follow and participate in learning. In addition, through further interviews with the interviewees, it is found that students' learning behavior presents polarization, which is mainly manifested in the first place, there is a large difference between behaviors. Some students come to class out of thirst for knowledge and interest in learning. In class, they listen carefully, actively interact with teachers, and are willing to participate in class discussions. The overall behavior is active participation and active involvement. The other part of the students are passive attendance, and often do something unrelated to study in class, so they will choose to stay farther away from the teacher, making themselves the marginal people or even invisible people in the class. When the teacher conducts classroom activities or asks questions, they often choose to escape. Second, different kinds of students show great differences in learning. Among them, the most obvious performance is that the students who serve as student leaders have stronger initiative and better learning effect in professional learning, while a large part of the students who are not student leaders have unsatisfactory learning input and often show passive participation or negative avoidance in class.

It can be seen from Table 2 that cognitive input ranks second and the overall level of input is medium, which indicates that most students have a good level of cognitive input in learning to some extent, but there is room for improvement. In the analysis of factors affecting learners' cognitive engagement, researchers explored the degree of influence on learners' cognitive engagement from the micro level of individual learners and learning environment (Li, 2021). From the perspective of individual influencing factors, when students with high cognitive engagement encounter learning difficulties, they can actively cope with negative emotions, dare to accept learning challenges, can comprehensively analyze problems, and are more likely to reach a high level of

thinking engagement. From the perspective of learning resources, learning resource support is an objective factor outside of individuals that can affect cognitive input. Positive learning resource support on campus can promote learners' knowledge learning and exploration and help improve learners' cognitive input. From the perspective of learning atmosphere, learning atmosphere refers to the good learning atmosphere formed in the school for a long time, as well as the good academic atmosphere between teachers and students. In a good learning atmosphere, learners can have a better learning experience in the spiritual level and have a higher cognitive input. From the perspective of teachers, when learners have problems in the cognitive process, such as lack of concentration and weak interest in learning, teachers need to act as guides in the learning process, so teacher support has a certain impact on learners' cognitive input (Sha et al.,2020).

As can be seen from Table 2, emotional engagement ranked second, and the overall level of engagement was in the middle. Emotional engagement plays a crucial role in learning engagement, which is directly related to students' learning status. At present, college students need to face employment pressure, academic pressure, interpersonal relationship and other problems independently, which is easy to produce tension and anxiety, which is not conducive to their own development. For individuals with different levels of emotional regulation, the degree of emotional adjustment and adaptation is also different: Individuals with a high level of self-regulation are more likely to use efficient adjustment strategies in these negative emotions, construct positive mental resources, adjust to normal mental states, and have stronger emotional stability (Hong et al.,2022).

**Table 3**

*Summary Table on Employment Competitiveness*

Key Result Areas	Composite Mean	VI	Rank
Knowledge Understanding Ability	3.07	Agree	3
Business Skills	3.05	Agree	4
Personal Qualities	3.14	Agree	1
Cognitive Power	3.10	Agree	2
Grand Composite Mean	3.09	Agree	

*Legend: 3.50-4.00=Strongly Agree; 2.50-3.49=Agree; 1.50-2.49=Disagree; 1.00-1.49=Strongly Disagree*

Table 3 presents the overall assessment of employment competitiveness, with a composite average of 3.09, which can be interpreted verbally as a level of "consent". Among the assessment indicators listed, personal quality received the highest weighted average of 3.14, followed by metacognitive ability (3.10), subject understanding ability (3.07), and professional ability (3.05), all of which reflected relatively high positive ratings on these specific dimensions. This paper uses USEM theory to help college students improve their current and future employability awareness through four aspects: subject understanding, skills, personal qualities and metacognition. At the same time, it provided theoretical guidance for college students' career education and employment guidance courses, helping college students to have a reasonable cognition of their own ability in different levels.

After college students have a scientific cognition of themselves, they can carry out targeted ability training for the occupation or post they want to engage in, so as to improve their employability. To help college students have more opportunities to get their own desired positions, but also enable college students to more reasonably plan their career goals, find the most suitable for their own occupation, to achieve professional high-quality employment. The four elements in USEM model are interrelated and influence each other, and have a complex interaction relationship. Self-efficacy directly affects the subject understanding, comprehensive skills and metacognition, and then directly affects the improvement of the overall employability of college students, which plays a key basic role in the whole model. Subject understanding, comprehensive skills and metacognition have a relatively loose interaction relationship, and subject understanding, comprehensive skills and metacognition also affect the formation of employability respectively.

**Table 4**

*Relationship Between Learning Motivation and Learning Engagement*

Variables	rho	p-value	Interpretation
<b>Learning Interest</b>			
Behavioral Engagement	0.680**	<.001	Highly Significant
Cognitive Engagement	0.697**	<.001	Highly Significant
Emotional Engagement	0.732**	<.001	Highly Significant
<b>Ability</b>			
Behavioral Engagement	0.714**	<.001	Highly Significant
Cognitive Engagement	0.722**	<.001	Highly Significant
Emotional Engagement	0.748**	<.001	Highly Significant
<b>Reputation Acquisition</b>			
Behavioral Engagement	0.640**	<.001	Highly Significant
Cognitive Engagement	0.637**	<.001	Highly Significant
Emotional Engagement	0.654**	<.001	Highly Significant
<b>Altruistic Intention</b>			
Behavioral Engagement	0.682**	<.001	Highly Significant
Cognitive Engagement	0.680**	<.001	Highly Significant
Emotional Engagement	0.696**	<.001	Highly Significant

\*\**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level*

By analyzing the data in Table 4, it could be clearly seen that the calculated rho value falls within the range of 0.637 to 0.748, which fully revealed the strong positive correlation between the two sub variables of learning motivation and learning engagement. Furthermore, since the P-value was much less than 0.01, this statistical result showed that the relationship between learning motivation and learning engagement was statistically significant, that is, the enhancement of learning motivation will directly lead to the increase of learning engagement. This result showed that learning engagement is significantly driven by learning motivation, that is, the intensity of learning motivation is proportional to the level of learning engagement. Under the influence of professional education, college students' enthusiasm for learning is ignited, and they increasingly realize the importance of professional knowledge for personal growth and future development, and their learning motivation will naturally be strengthened. However, strong motivation alone is not enough to ensure maximum learning effectiveness.

In order to achieve this goal, students need to make efforts in many aspects. First of all, it is very important to maintain a good mental state, which can provide solid psychological support for continuous learning. Secondly, reasonable arrangement of time to ensure the balance between study and rest is the key to improve learning efficiency. More importantly, students should cultivate the habit of positive thinking, dare to explore the unknown, combine theoretical knowledge with practice, deepen understanding through increasing learning practice, so as to improve learning results. To sum up, giving full play to the role of learning motivation in promoting learning engagement requires students to work together in multiple dimensions. Only under the strong impetus of learning motivation, supplemented by a good psychological state, reasonable time management, positive thinking and rich practice, students can go further and further on the road of learning, and finally achieve a significant improvement in employment competitiveness.

According to the data shown in Table 5, it can be clearly concluded that the strength of the association between learning motivation and the sub-variables of employment competitiveness was quantified by the calculated rho value in the range of 0.521 to 0.702, indicating a medium to strong direct correlation between the two. Moreover, since the P-value obtained by the statistical test was much less than 0.01, this finding not only revealed a strong link between learning motivation and employment competitiveness, but also proved that this relationship was highly statistically significant. In other words, the enhancement of learning motivation largely predicts the improvement of students' future employment competitiveness. It shows that the stronger the learning motivation, the higher the employment competitiveness. College students with high investment in professional learning tend to have a strong interest in learning, have higher requirements for themselves, hope that they can get more honors, and will take in to account that they cannot live up to the expectations of parents and teachers.

Therefore, in the process of in-depth study of relevant courses, college students gradually realize that only extensive and comprehensive study can achieve rapid personal growth. This cognition promotes their learning motivation and becomes a continuous source of learning motivation. Over time, this positive learning attitude not only significantly improves their interpersonal skills and teamwork ability, but also greatly enhances their competitiveness in the job market.

**Table 5***Relationship Between Learning Motivation and Employment Competitiveness*

Variables	rho	p-value	Interpretation
<b>Learning Interest</b>			
Knowledge Understanding Ability	0.698**	<.001	Highly Significant
Business Skills	0.647**	<.001	Highly Significant
Personal Qualities	0.667**	<.001	Highly Significant
Cognitive Power	0.577**	<.001	Highly Significant
<b>Ability</b>			
Knowledge Understanding Ability	0.700**	<.001	Highly Significant
Business Skills	0.688**	<.001	Highly Significant
Personal Qualities	0.702**	<.001	Highly Significant
Cognitive Power	0.654**	<.001	Highly Significant
<b>Reputation Acquisition</b>			
Knowledge Understanding Ability	0.599**	<.001	Highly Significant
Business Skills	0.602**	<.001	Highly Significant
Personal Qualities	0.555**	<.001	Highly Significant
Cognitive Power	0.521**	<.001	Highly Significant
<b>Altruistic Intention</b>			
Knowledge Understanding Ability	0.623**	<.001	Highly Significant
Business Skills	0.602**	<.001	Highly Significant
Personal Qualities	0.594**	<.001	Highly Significant
Cognitive Power	0.540**	<.001	Highly Significant

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level

**Table 6***Relationship Between Learning Engagement and Employment Competitiveness*

Variables	rho	p-value	Interpretation
<b>Behavioral Engagement</b>			
Knowledge Understanding Ability	0.715**	<.001	Highly Significant
Business Skills	0.711**	<.001	Highly Significant
Personal Qualities	0.675**	<.001	Highly Significant
Cognitive Power	0.614**	<.001	Highly Significant
<b>Cognitive Engagement</b>			
Knowledge Understanding Ability	0.762**	<.001	Highly Significant
Business Skills	0.760**	<.001	Highly Significant
Personal Qualities	0.716**	<.001	Highly Significant
Cognitive Power	0.654**	<.001	Highly Significant
<b>Emotional Engagement</b>			
Knowledge Understanding Ability	0.827**	<.001	Highly Significant
Business Skills	0.813**	<.001	Highly Significant
Personal Qualities	0.777**	<.001	Highly Significant
Cognitive Power	0.710**	<.001	Highly Significant

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level

As can be seen from Table 6, the calculated rho values range from 0.614 to 0.827, indicating a strong to very strong direct relationship between the sub variables of learning engagement and employment competitiveness. There was a statistically significant relationship between learning engagement and employment competitiveness, as the obtained P-value was less than 0.01. It shows that the higher the learning involvement, the higher the employment competitiveness. In the process of professional learning or professional practice, it is far from enough to rely only on passive knowledge reception in order to achieve significant improvement in ability and quality. Positive learning attitude, active exploration spirit, application and reflection in practice are

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all indispensable elements, which together contribute to personal growth and promote the leap of all-round ability. College students should hold a positive attitude, not only devote themselves to study, but also need to think and discuss diligently, in order to stimulate a good state of study. They should actively optimize their behavioral, cognitive, and emotional inputs to ensure that they actively contribute to the learning process, thereby ensuring superior learning outcomes. Such comprehensive investment and self-improvement is the key path for college students to achieve their learning goals. In order to enhance their employment competitiveness.

**Table 7**  
*Strategies to Improve Students' Competitiveness in Employment*

Key Outcome Areas	Objectives	Strategy	Success Indicators	People involved
1 Government level policy support	1.1 Increase support for college students' employment competitiveness	Help employers and universities to establish a good internship exchange system	Students get professional practical experience	Government college students
		Increase funding to improve students' ability to innovate	The employability of college students has been improved	Government
		Integrate relevant cutting-edge technologies to improve students' vocational skills	College students master professional preamble knowledge	Government students
	Improve employability policies for college students	Have a deep understanding of market demand and formulate reasonable education policies	Help students improve their employability in top-level design	Government students
		Provide policy support and financial subsidies to college students for their innovation	College students can have a safe, fast and convenient environment for innovation and entrepreneurship	Government Students
2. Integration of practice at the enterprise level	2.1 Build a platform for training practical ability	Provide positions and opportunities for students to practice learning	Recruit suitable new graduates	Corporate college students
	The increase of enterprises and the integration of the training objectives of universities	Integrate the needs of enterprises into the content of college courses	Colleges and universities can produce students who meet the market demand	Enterprise college students
3. Education and guidance at the school level	3.1 Strengthen enrollment publicity and education, and set correct development goals	Invite experts to give lectures to guide students to establish correct values and stimulate learning motivation	Students' learning motivation is enhanced	College students
		Cultivate a good campus learning atmosphere	Students' learning efficiency is improved	College students
		Establish a harmonious teacher-student relationship	Students' interest in learning is improved	College teachers and students
	3.2 Establish a strict standard system	Establish a scientific quality evaluation system and pay attention to students' learning input in real time	Improve students' satisfaction	College students
		Improve the reward mechanism	Motivate students to learn	College students
	3.3 Improve the level of employment guidance	According to the characteristics and needs of each major, formulate systematic and scientific career guidance courses to help students learn the characteristics of their major, initially establish the concept of career planning, so that students can independently form clear learning goals and career goals. At the same time, moderators can collect and use all kinds of recruitment and employment information more quickly and efficiently.	Solve the problems in the students' job hunting and improve the expression of job hunting	Colleges and Universities
	3.4 Strengthen innovative employability training	Take the market demand as the guide to adjust the training plan of students and help students with professional knowledge	Students can have a good professional quality after graduation	College students
		Provide a variety of campus activities and competitions to improve students' social skills, teamwork skills and transposition skills, etc., to ensure students' basic survival ability in the workplace	Students have good workplace competence	College students
	3.5 Strengthen the construction of teaching staff	Encourage teachers to enter the market and enter the enterprise. Through the understanding of the market, teachers can understand the	The teaching ability of teachers meets the market demand	College teachers

		skills most needed by students in practice, and teach from their own experience Teach students basic employment skills, so that teachers' teaching can be more practical To help students improve their employability.		
	Change course teaching methods and strengthen practice to improve professional transformation	Through scenario case method and brainstorming method, stimulate students' interest and initiative in learning professional knowledge, pay attention to the transformation of students' ability, and reduce the negative influence of the previous exam-oriented education which is not conducive to the cultivation of students' application ability and the extension of expansive thinking	Students can apply their professional knowledge in practice	College teachers
		Through practice to consolidate the application of theory, joint employing units to further research the practical action of talent training	Students get more employment opportunities and improve the key competitiveness of students' employment	College teachers and students
4. Self-development at student level	4.1 Strengthen career planning awareness	Make an objective self-analysis of your own personality characteristics and ability quality with scientific methods, recognize your strengths and weaknesses, formulate career plans, and cultivate your employability in all aspects	Students have a clear career plan	Student
	4.2 Strengthen the motivation of learning and actively participate in social practice	Through school learning and social practice, consciously integrate learning into their own life, so that it becomes a way of life.	Students become talents with solid knowledge foundation	Students
	4.3 Develop a sense of independent learning	It is necessary to make full use of school resources, consciously and proactively learn knowledge and skills conducive to improving employability, and increase behavioral input in learning.	Students have strong motivation and sufficient commitment to study	Student
	4.4 Improve students' cognition of their major	Understand the future career development trend of the major, the current research status and the future development trend of the field. Only a clear understanding of the ante-causes and after-effects of the major can stimulate the motivation to study the major.	Students stay abreast of industry developments	Students
	4.5 Improve social adaptability	Actively learn and improve foreign language skills, computer skills and problem solving skills in knowledge	Students acquire basic workplace skills	Students
	4.6 Good psychological quality	College students should pay attention to improve their psychological quality during their study, especially to exercise their indomitable character in daily life; In job hunting, fully understand the employment information, calm and calm to cope with the difficulties encountered, with a positive attitude to job hunting.	Students have a relatively mature attitude towards the workplace	Student

#### 4. Conclusion and recommendations

Research shows that respondents moderately agreed with the positive effects of motivational learning, including interest in knowledge, pursuit of ability, acquisition of reputation and altruistic intention. Respondents moderately agreed that learning engagement was assessed by behavioral engagement, cognitive engagement, and emotional engagement. The respondents moderately agreed to improve the employment competitiveness of college students by improving subject understanding, skills, personal qualities and metacognition. There were significant positive correlations between learning motivation and employment competitiveness, between learning motivation and learning engagement, and between learning motivation and employment competitiveness. This means that with the enhancement of learning motivation, learning input will increase correspondingly, which will promote the improvement of employment competitiveness, and a virtuous circle of mutual promotion will be formed among the three. This paper puts forward relevant strategies to improve students' employment competitiveness by stimulating students' learning motivation.

The government and enterprises may give more support to improve the competitiveness of students' employment, improve the corresponding assistance policies, build a platform for college students' employment, and improve their ability to understand, adapt and solve problems. Colleges and universities may actively educate college students, improve their sense of achievement and honor in learning, increase their motivation to study, guide them to actively participate in learning, ensure that students can better improve their academic performance, and thus promote the improvement of their employability. College students may strengthen their awareness of career planning, establish independent learning awareness, enhance goal awareness and learning motivation, and constantly increase learning input in professional knowledge learning and workplace practice to improve employment competitiveness. In the future, researchers may continue their research in developing talent training programs that meet the needs of market development and innovating teaching models to stimulate college students' learning motivation.

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