



**THE INFLUENCE OF PSYCHOLOGICAL NEEDS AND SOCIAL  
ENVIRONMENT ON STUDENTS' ACADEMIC ENGAGEMENT -  
A CASE STUDY OF YUNNAN BUSINESS VOCATIONAL  
COLLEGE**

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**AN INDEPENDENT STUDY SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL  
FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF  
MASTER OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION  
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This Independent Study Has Been Approved as a Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of Business Administration

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**Title:** The Influence of Psychological Needs and Social Environment on Students' Academic Engagement - A Case Study of Yunnan Business Vocational College

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2 / 12 / 2024

### ABSTRACT

Education plays a crucial role in shaping students' futures, and understanding what affects their academic performance is important. This study aimed to investigate the current state of students' academic engagement at Yunnan Business Vocational College and explore the influence of psychological needs and social environment on students' academic engagement.

A quantitative research design was employed. A questionnaires survey was conducted resulting in 155 valid responses collected through the stratified random sampling to ensure a balanced representation of different academic programs and years. The findings reveal that: 1) Many students face challenges in their academic engagement at Yunnan Business Vocational College, especially when dealing with complex learning environments and pressures. Many of them feel anxious or lack confidence, which makes it difficult for them to actively participate in their studies. At the same time, the current psychological health support environment and social environment in the university also affect students' psychological needs to varying degrees; 2) Higher levels of psychological needs positively impact students' academic engagement with school management. Additionally, a supportive social environment significantly enhances students' academic engagement during the study process. The social environment, which includes relationships with peers and teachers, also significantly impacts students' learning experiences. Overall, this study highlights that

fostering a supportive social environment and addressing students' psychological needs are crucial for improving their score and academic engagement.

**Keywords:** students' academic engagement, psychological needs, social environment



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Liu Yue

## DECLARATION

I, Liu Yue, hereby declare that this Independent Study entitled “The Influence of Psychological Needs and Social Environment on Students' Academic Engagement - A Case Study of Yunnan Business Vocational College” is an original work and has never been submitted to any academic institution for a degree.

(Liu Yue)  
Oct 27, 2024



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# Chapter 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Background of the Study

In recent years, students' academic engagement in school has received increasing attention in vocational colleges. In recent years, education has focused more on students' well-being and motivation. Psychological need satisfaction refers to the fulfillment of students' basic psychological needs, such as autonomy, competence, and relatedness (Thomas, 2012; Kahu & Nelson, 2018). The social environment, including relationships with peers and teachers, also plays a significant role in students' learning experiences. Understanding how these factors affect students' academic engagements is essential for improving educational outcomes (Thomas, 2012). There are also concerns about the risks and financial costs associated with student dropouts, making retention an important issue.

Belonging to an institution or program, along with identity concerns, plays a key role in student retention (Kift et al., 2010). A sense of belonging refers to students feeling accepted, valued, included, and encouraged by their teachers and peers, and believing they are an important part of classroom life (Thomas, 2012). This feeling of belonging is closely linked to students' academic engagement. Although engagement is a complex concept involving many levels and processes (Lawson & Lawson, 2013), advocates and funders in education have been working to understand these relationships and to create programs that enhance the student experience and improve educational outcomes (Thomas, 2012). For example, the Paul Hamlyn Foundation, along with the UK Higher Education Funding Council for England, the Higher Education Academy, and Action for Access, started a program called What Works to improve student retention and success in higher education. A university in southern England, one of 13 participants, created a strategy to enhance students' academic engagement and retention, particularly for first-year students in programs like Business Management. In 2013/2014, they introduced teaching methods and support practices to help students feel a stronger sense of belonging and engagement (Tice et al., 2021). This initiative is significant because it addresses important issues of non-continuation among students and aims to create a more supportive learning environment, ultimately leading to better academic outcomes and students' academic engagement.

Extraordinary, the academic engagement of vocational college students in school activities has become increasingly important in China (Yorke, 2016). A key factor influencing students' academic engagement is the sense of belonging. Many students feel that belonging to their college community is essential for their personal and academic success. Research shows that when students feel accepted and valued by their peers and teachers, they are more likely to improve their academic engagement.

Unfortunately, some students still struggle to find their place within the school. Factors such as large class sizes, competition, and lack of support can make it difficult for them to connect with others (Bowden et al., 2021). Additionally, cultural differences can impact how students engage. For example, students from rural areas may find it challenging to adapt to the urban environment of many vocational colleges. This adjustment can affect their confidence and willingness to participate. Moreover, students who are not involved in extracurricular activities often report feeling isolated and disconnected from their peers. Despite these challenges, there are positive trends. Many vocational colleges are implementing programs to enhance students' academic engagement (Tight, 2020). Schools are organizing more group activities and providing support services to help students feel more included. These initiatives aim to foster a stronger sense of community and improve overall students' academic engagement.

Research shows that various factors influence students' academic engagement, including psychological needs and social environment. By understanding these dynamics, the institution can better meet the needs of its students and enhance overall governance. This study will contribute to existing literature by providing insights into the connections between psychological factors and academic performance. It will offer practical recommendations for educators and school administrators to create an environment that supports students' psychological needs. The findings may also inform future research on educational psychology and student achievement.

## **1.2 Questions of the Study**

1. What is the current state of students' academic engagement at Yunnan Business Vocational College?

2. What is the impact of psychological needs and social environment on students' academic engagement?

## **1.3 Objectives of the Study**

1) To explore the current state of students' academic engagement at Yunnan Business Vocational College;

2) To explore the influence of psychological needs and social environment on students' academic engagement.

## **1.4 Scope of the Study**

By searching for relevant literature on Google scholar, a total of 40 studies were read, and a questionnaire was designed based on the actual situation. This research aimed to achieve two main objectives: first, to explore the current level of students' academic engagement at Yunnan Business Vocational College, and second, to explore how psychological needs and social environment influence students' academic

engagement. Yunnan Business Vocational College served as an excellent case study for this investigation. The research was conducted over a three-week period in March 2024. Using a quantitative research design and based on Wenger's social theory, the study collected data from 155 valid questionnaires through the stratified random sampling, ensuring that students from various programs and years were included.

## 1.5 Significance of the Study

This study is significant because it aims to explore how psychological need satisfaction and social environment influence academic performance. By examining these relationships, educators can develop strategies that promote a supportive learning environment, leading to better academic results. Additionally, the findings can help schools design programs that enhance students' motivation and engagement, ultimately benefiting their overall development. Meanwhile, contributions of the Study will contribute to the academic understanding of students' academic engagement in vocational education.

## 1.6 Definition of Key Terms

**Students' academic engagement:** Students' academic engagement refers to the level of interest, motivation, and involvement that students show towards their learning activities. It encompasses behaviors such as participating in class discussions, completing assignments, and collaborating with peers. Academic engagement can be influenced by various factors, including the learning environment, teaching methods, and students' psychological needs.

**Psychological Needs:** The intrinsic desires for acceptance, recognition, and belonging that students seek in their academic environment. These psychological needs are essential for fostering a supportive and motivating environment. When students feel valued and accepted, they are more likely to participate actively, which can enhance their overall educational experience.

**Social Environment:** The overall atmosphere within the college that includes relationships among students, teachers, and staff.

## Chapter 2 Literature Review

This chapter explores the existing literature on students' academic engagement, focusing on the various factors that influence this involvement. Students' academic engagement level is increasingly recognized as a critical aspect of educational success, contributing not only to individual student development but also to the overall effectiveness of educational institutions. This chapter examines the key factors influencing score, including psychological needs and social environment. Understanding these factors is essential for identifying barriers and enablers of students' academic engagement. Wenger's social theory of learning is introduced, providing a theoretical framework to understand how social interactions and community influence learning experiences. Finally, this chapter presents a conceptual framework that integrates these various elements, setting the stage for our research. This literature review aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the dynamics of students' academic engagement, offering insights that can inform future studies and practical applications in educational settings.

### 2.1 Students' Academic Engagement

Students' academic engagement has been widely studied in various educational contexts, revealing its critical role in enhancing learning outcomes. Song et al. (2017) investigated the relationship between service-learning score and educational success among underrepresented students. This study pointed to the value of experiential learning opportunities in fostering students' academic engagement and enhancing educational outcomes. Kahu and Nelson (2018) focused on students' academic engagement in higher education, analyzing the mechanisms that contribute to student success. They found that various factors influenced students' experiences at university, including both institutional characteristics and individual traits. Their research indicated that understanding these factors was essential for reducing student withdrawal rates. This study underscored the importance of creating supportive learning environments that promote active score, thereby enhancing overall educational success. Howe et al. (2019) examined teacher-student dialogue during classroom teaching and its effects on student outcomes. Their research indicated that higher levels of students' academic engagement were linked to better learning results. When students actively engaged in discussions, it led to deeper understanding and retention of material. This study reinforced the idea that fostering an interactive classroom environment is essential for promoting effective learning. Arnaiz Sánchez et al. (2019) examined barriers to student learning and score in inclusive schools as perceived by future education professionals. Their study involved participants from three master's courses at a university, highlighting that future educator identified several obstacles, including inadequate support and lack of training in inclusive practices. These barriers often prevented students from fully engaging in the learning process, which emphasized the

need for better preparation of educators to foster inclusive environments. During the COVID-19 pandemic, Serhan (2020) explored students' attitudes and perceptions of remote learning through platforms like Zoom. The study included thirty-one university students and revealed mixed feelings about online learning. This concept is important because it directly influences students' engagement and motivation in their academic environment (Civitci, 2015). Elsharnouby (2015) looked at how score influenced students' academic engagement in university activities and co-creation behaviors. The study found that when students were happy with their university experience, they were more likely to engage actively in their education. This engagement was seen as a key factor in improving the overall quality of education. Tompkins et al. (2016) studied the roles of different support systems, such as faculty, peers, and outside help, in graduate students' academic engagement, and showed that positive interactions with teachers and classmates strongly predicted overall score, which then affected students' willingness to join collaborative activities. This study highlighted the importance of having a supportive academic community to boost students' academic engagement and engagement. Geagea et al. (2017) explored how score in arts activities affected school score and university goals among high school students. Razinkina et al. (2018) discussed the importance of measuring students' academic engagement as part of quality monitoring in modern higher education institutions. They emphasized that encouraging a culture of score among students can lead to higher score levels. While some students appreciated the flexibility of remote classes, others reported challenges related to engagement and score. This transition highlighted the necessity of adapting teaching methods to maintain student involvement in learning, regardless of the medium.

By understanding these dynamics, educators can implement practices that enhance student involvement and improve educational outcomes across different contexts.

## **2.2 Factors Influencing Students' Academic Engagement**

The effectiveness of students' academic learning environments in higher education has been an important area of study, especially regarding learning outcomes, students' academic engagement, and engagement. Nortvig et al. (2018) looked at different factors that affect students' learning experiences in various online formats. Their research highlighted the importance of the professional context and showed that the success of e-learning relies on how well the course design meets students' needs and expectations. They found that clear communication, interactive content, and timely feedback were crucial for improving students' academic engagement and engagement in online learning. Kahu and Nelson (2018) examined what contributes to student success in higher education by focusing on the educational environment. They identified several factors that affect students' academic engagement, including support from the institution, personal motivation, and the learning setting. Their findings suggested that understanding these elements is vital for enhancing student outcomes, particularly in

blended learning situations. They pointed out that while some students performed well in flexible online settings, others faced challenges, which highlighted the need for personalized support systems. Lei et al. (2018) conducted a meta-analysis to investigate the link between students' academic engagement and academic achievement. They found that students' academic engagement had a significant impact on academic success, with emotional and behavioral engagement being especially important. The study noted that the way engagement was reported could differ, which might influence how strong this relationship appeared. Their analysis emphasized the need to promote engagement through interactive and participatory learning methods to improve students' academic performance.

Therefore, these studies show that students' academic learning environments offer unique challenges and opportunities for enhancing student learning outcomes and score. Understanding these aspects is important for educators who want to create effective online learning experiences that meet the diverse needs of students.

### **2.3 Psychological Needs**

Psychological needs of students in university refer to the essential emotional and mental requirements that influence their motivation and overall well-being (Ryan, 2017). These needs include autonomy, competence, and relatedness. Autonomy means that students want to feel in control of their learning and choices. Competence is the need to feel capable and successful in their academic tasks. Relatedness involves the desire to connect with others, such as classmates and teachers, and to feel part of a community. Meeting these psychological needs is important because it can lead to increased motivation, better academic performance, and a greater sense of belonging on campus (Cheon and Reeve, 2015). When universities support these needs, students are more likely to engage actively in their studies, develop positive relationships, and experience higher levels of score in their educational journey. Cheon and Reeve (2015) carried out a classroom intervention aimed at decreasing student amotivation. Their research showed that by increasing the score of students' psychological needs, feelings of amotivation in educational settings could be significantly reduced. They stressed the importance of teachers creating supportive classroom environments to boost student motivation. Deci and Ryan (2016) addressed the challenges students face in academic settings, noting that these pressures often diminish their motivation. They suggested that educational environments should focus on meeting students' basic psychological needs to encourage autonomous learning. Their studies demonstrated that classrooms that support these needs lead to higher motivation and better academic outcomes. In the workplace, Van-den Broeck et al. (2016) examined how self-determination theory applies to basic psychological needs. They discovered that when organizations create environments that satisfy employees' psychological needs, it results in improved psychological growth, value internalization, and overall well-being. Their findings indicated that understanding what predicts psychological need score can help organizations better support their employees. Ryan (2017) defined psychological needs



as essential factors that affect a person's motivation and overall well-being. These needs are vital for encouraging intrinsic motivation and supporting personal growth. Their research highlighted that fulfilling these psychological needs is just as important as meeting basic physiological needs, which underscores the fundamental role of psychological needs in human behavior. These studies highlight the need to create supportive environments that acknowledge and address these essential psychological needs to promote engagement and success.

## **2.4 Social Environment**

The social environment of students in university refers to the overall atmosphere and relationships that students experience during their time in higher education (Alsubaie et al., 2019). This environment includes interactions with peers, faculty, and staff, as well as the culture and values of the university community. A positive social environment is significant because it can enhance students' sense of belonging, improve their mental well-being, and encourage academic engagement (Law et al., 2019). When students feel supported and connected to others, they are more likely to participate in campus activities and form meaningful relationships. The impact of social support on depression and quality of life among university students has been studied a lot, showing that it is very important for student well-being. Richardson et al. (2017) did a meta-analysis to examine the link between social presence and student outcomes in online learning. They discovered that social presence was linked to greater students' academic engagement and better learning experiences. Their study pointed out that feeling connected to others online helped lessen feelings of loneliness and improved the overall quality of life for students. Alsubaie et al. (2019) found that students with more social support had lower stress levels and adjusted better to university life. Their research highlighted that a supportive university environment helps students connect with their peers and teachers, which can reduce feelings of loneliness and improve emotional health.

Another study by Law et al. (2019) looked at the effects of social presence in blended learning environments. They explored how social, teaching, and cognitive presence affected student motivation and learning outcomes. Their results showed that having a strong social presence, through interactions with classmates and instructors, led to higher engagement and score in learning. This social interaction also provided emotional support, which positively influenced students' academic success.

In summary, these studies demonstrate that social support is crucial for the mental health and academic experiences of university students. By building strong social connections and creating supportive environments, universities can help decrease depression and improve the quality of life for students. Understanding these factors is important for developing effective strategies to enhance student well-being and academic performance.

## 2.5 Wenger's Social Theory of Learning

Wenger's social theory of learning explains how learning happens through social communities. It emphasizes that learning is not just an individual activity but a process that occurs when people engage with others in their community. According to Wenger, learning involves creating identities, sharing experiences, and making sense of what people do together. This theory highlights the importance of belonging to a community, as it influences how individuals understand their roles and gain knowledge. Wenger (2009) argued that learning should be understood in the context of people's lived experiences and their social settings. However, there is still much to discover about how social settings impact students and the complex nature of engagement (Farnsworth et al., 2016). Theoretically, Wenger's social theory of learning presents a multi-dimensional view. Learning as social learning means actively engaging in activities with others in social communities, forming identities within these groups, and making sense of experiences. Social learning builds a social history of learning and a "regime of competence," which includes understanding what is important to the community, being able to interact effectively with others, and appropriately using the community's accumulated resources (Wenger, 2009). Over time, this learning history creates a dynamic social structure known as a Community of Practice (CoP). Wenger's theory connects four important components of learning: community (learning as belonging), practice (learning by doing), meaning (learning by experiencing), and identity (learning by becoming). Modes of belonging involve engagement (actively negotiating meaning through shared learning experiences), alignment (coordinating efforts towards a common goal), and imagination (using past experiences to shape identity). Engaging in activities helps build connections with the community. Experiencing different modes of belonging influences how students develop their identities as learners (Wenger, 2009). This means that learning is closely linked to developing one's identity (Erickson et al., 2024).

While the concept of communities has faced criticism regarding its potential oversimplification of individual and collective dynamics (Erickson et al., 2024) and its vague definitions (Masika & Jones, 2016), it still provides valuable insights into examining students' academic and social engagement. The concept has been successfully applied by other researchers and practitioners to highlight various aspects of learning and institutional change. For instance, Kleanthous and Wenger-Trayner (2016) clarified key concepts of Wenger's theory, focusing on how social interactions contribute to learning and identity formation. They argued that learning is inherently social and that individuals derive meaning from their social settings within a community. This perspective provides a foundation for understanding how students' engagement can enhance their learning experiences.

In a study by Morley (2016), the application of Wenger's theory in placement learning was examined. Morley noted that while the use of Wenger's framework in nursing education has been limited, it offers valuable insights into how practitioners can learn from their experiences in real-world settings. The findings suggested that

engaging with colleagues and mentors in practice significantly enhances the learning process, reinforcing the importance of social context in education. Masika and Jones (2016) focused on higher education students' experiences of belonging and engagement. They highlighted that when students actively participate in their learning communities, they are more likely to develop a sense of belonging, which is crucial for retention. Their research illustrated that Wenger's theory provides a useful framework for examining the interplay between students' academic engagement and academic success. Allen et al. (2020) utilized Wenger's social learning theory to analyze the impacts of continuing professional development (CPD) programs. They found that these programs, which promote interaction and collaboration among participants, significantly improved learning outcomes. This study underscored the relevance of Wenger's theory in understanding how social dynamics in educational settings can influence professional growth and development.

According to Wenger's social theory of learning, these needs are fundamental because learning occurs through social interaction in communities of practice. When students feel psychologically supported and valued, they are more likely to engage actively in other academic activities. This sense of belonging enhances their motivation and commitment, which aligns with Wenger's view that identity formation is closely tied to social interaction. Wenger's theory emphasizes that learning is a social process, where interactions among students, teachers, and staff create a rich context for learning. A positive social environment fosters collaboration and shared experiences, which are essential for building community. When students feel connected to their peers and educators, they are more likely to participate in management processes and feel a sense of ownership over their education.

When combining these factors with Wenger's social theory of learning, it becomes clear that psychological needs and social environment are interconnected elements that influence students' academic engagement. Psychological needs drive students to seek belonging, while a supportive social environment facilitates interactions that fulfill these needs (Tight, 2020). By recognizing these dynamics, educational institutions can implement strategies that promote a healthy balance, ultimately leading to greater students' academic engagement and success. The significance of Wenger's theory lies in its ability to show that learning is deeply connected to social interactions and relationships. It suggests that when students participate in a community, they not only acquire skills and knowledge but also develop a sense of identity and belonging.

## **2.6 Overview of Yunnan Business Vocational College**

Yunnan Business Vocational College, located in Kunming, Yunnan Province, China, is a prominent institution dedicated to vocational education, focusing on equipping students with practical skills and knowledge relevant to the business and commerce sectors. The college offers a variety of programs in areas such as business management, finance, marketing, and information technology, all designed to meet

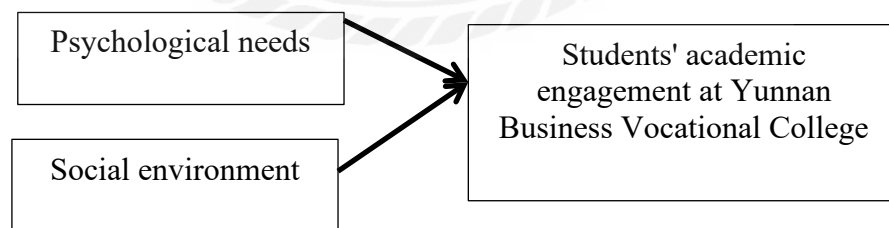
industry demands. Its curriculum combines theoretical knowledge with hands-on experience, often incorporating internships and projects with local businesses. With a faculty comprised of experienced instructors, many with practical industry experience, students receive relevant and up-to-date education. The campus is equipped with modern facilities, including classrooms and laboratories, to enhance the learning experience. Yunnan Business Vocational College is staffed by experienced instructors who bring practical expertise to their teaching, fostering an engaging learning environment. The campus features modern facilities, including well-equipped classrooms and laboratories, enhancing the educational experience.

In addition to academic offerings, the college maintains strong connections with various industries, facilitating student placements and enhancing career opportunities. It also promotes a multicultural environment, reflecting the rich cultural heritage of Yunnan and attracting students from diverse backgrounds.

The college is committed to community engagement, encouraging students to participate in service projects that allow them to apply their skills in meaningful ways. Through its focus on practical education and community involvement, Yunnan Business Vocational College prepares students for successful careers in the evolving business landscape. Moreover, the college has established partnerships with various companies, facilitating student placements and collaborations that enhance employment opportunities. Embracing Yunnan's rich cultural heritage, the college promotes a multicultural environment, attracting students from diverse backgrounds. Additionally, it is actively involved in community service and development projects, encouraging students to apply their skills in real-world settings. This emphasis on practical education and community engagement prepares students for successful careers in the dynamic business landscape.

## 2.7 Conceptual Framework

The research framework of this study is shown in Figure 2.1.



**Figure 2.1 Conceptual Framework**

## **Chapter 3 Research Methodology**

### **3.1 Research Design**

This study utilized a quantitative research design to gather data about students' academic engagement at Yunnan Business Vocational College. The aim was to assess how students perceive their involvement and identify factors that influence their engagement. By using structured questionnaires, the research focused on obtaining measurable data that could be analyzed statistically.

### **3.2 Population and Sample**

The population for this study included students and teachers at Yunnan Business Vocational College, located in Yunnan Province, China. The participants were drawn from various academic programs offered by the college, ensuring a wide range of experiences and perspectives. Data collection took place during the academic year 2024, specifically in the months of September. The total population included approximately 1,200 students and 50 teachers. 150 students were selected for this sample, and the inclusion of 5 teachers aimed to gather insights from faculty members who play a crucial role in the engagement of students. This sample size allowed for meaningful analysis and comparison of responses across different demographic groups.

The sampling method used in this study was a combination of the stratified random sampling and convenience sampling. Stratified random sampling was applied to ensure that students from different academic programs and years were represented in the sample. This approach allowed for a balanced view of student experiences regarding score in management processes. Convenience sampling was also utilized to select teachers, as the study aimed to gather insights from those who were easily accessible and willing to participate. This combination ensured a diverse and relevant sample for the research objectives.

### **3.3 Hypothesis**

The study proposed the following hypotheses:

H1: Higher levels of psychological needs positively influence students' academic engagement.

H2: A supportive social environment significantly increases students' academic engagement.

### 3.4 Questionnaires Design

The research instrument for this study was a structured questionnaire designed to measure students' perceptions of their academic engagement and the influencing factors. The questionnaire included multiple-choice questions and Likert scale items, which allowed for quantitative analysis. The questions were developed based on existing literature on students' academic engagement.

**Table 3.1 Questionnaire Design**

Section	Statement	No.
Psychological Needs	I feel my psychological needs are met in my academic environment.	Q1
	I have opportunities to express my opinions.	Q2
	I am motivated to learn new things in my courses.	Q3
Social Environment	The social environment in my college supports student involvement.	Q4
	My peers encourage me to participate in study process.	Q5
Students' Academic Engagement	I am willing to put in extra effort to improve my grades.	Q6
	I feel enthusiastic about my classes.	Q7
	I enjoy completing assignments and projects for my courses.	Q8

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I often collaborate with my classmates on group projects.	Q9
I have access to the resources I need to succeed academically.	Q10

---

### **3.5 Data Collection**

Data collection occurred over a four-week period. The questionnaires were distributed electronically using an online platform, which allowed easy access for respondents. An invitation to participate was sent via email to the selected students and teachers. Out of the 155 questionnaires distributed, 155 were returned, resulting in a response rate of approximately 100%. After checking for completeness, 155 valid responses were used for analysis, ensuring a reliable dataset for drawing conclusions.

### **3.6 Data Analysis**

Data analysis was conducted using descriptive statistics to summarize the responses. This included calculating means, standard deviations, frequencies, and percentages to provide an overview of student demographics. Additionally, correlation coefficients were used to explore the relationships between the influencing factors and students' academic engagement levels. The results were analyzed using statistical software to ensure accuracy and reliability in the findings. The analysis aimed to identify key trends and insights that could inform management strategies at Yunnan Business Vocational College.

### **3.7 Reliability and Validity Analysis of the Scale**

To ensure the quality of the survey designed to assess students' academic engagement at Yunnan Business Vocational College, this study conducted a reliability and validity analysis of the scale. This analysis included a sample of 150 students and insights from 5 teachers, providing a comprehensive view of the factors influencing students' academic engagement in study process.

#### **3.7.1 Reliability Analysis of the Scale**

Reliability refers to the consistency of the measurement scale. This study utilized Cronbach's Alpha to assess the internal consistency of the questionnaire across its various sections.

**Table 3.3 Results of Reliability Analysis**

Section	Cronbach's Alpha	Interpretation
Psychological Needs	0.85	Good internal consistency; values above 0.70 are generally acceptable.
Social Environment	0.82	Good reliability; items measure a coherent construct.
Students' Academic Engagement	0.87	Excellent internal consistency within this section.

The reliability analysis of the questionnaire focused on three sections: psychological needs, social environment, and students' academic engagement. The results were shown that here. For psychological needs, the Cronbach's Alpha was 0.85. This score shows good internal consistency, which means that the items in this section are measuring the same concept effectively. The social environment section had a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.82. This value also indicates good reliability, suggesting that the questions are well-aligned and measure a coherent construct related to the social context of the college. The students' academic engagement section achieved a high Cronbach's Alpha of 0.87. This indicates excellent internal consistency, meaning that students' responses are strongly aligned regarding their score with score.

Therefore, the analysis shows that the questionnaire is a reliable tool for assessing the various factors influencing students' academic engagement at Yunnan Business Vocational College. The scores suggest that each section effectively captures its intended construct, providing valuable insights for the study.

### 3.7.2 Validity Analysis of the Scale

Validity assesses whether the questionnaire measures what it is intended to measure. This study conducted a factor analysis to evaluate construct validity. The results are shown in Table 3.3.

**Table 3.3 KMO and Bartlett's Test**

Sample a sufficient Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin metric.	0.876
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The sphericity test of the Bartlett	Approximate chi square	8162.729
	df	223
	Sig.	0.000

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At the same time, the test results also show that the questionnaire has good convergent validity.



## Chapter 4 Findings and Discussion

### 4.1 Findings

#### 4.1.1 Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Table 4.1 Descriptive Statistics of Respondent Demographics

Variable	Sample Size	Minimum Value	Maximum Value	Mean	Standard Deviation	Median
1. Gender	155	1	2	1.053	0.225	1
2. Academic program	155	2	4	2.908	0.696	3
3. Semester	155	1	4	3.329	0.806	4

Table 4.1 presents the descriptive statistics of the demographics of the respondents, including gender, academic program, and semester. The sample size for all variables is 155.

**Gender:** The minimum value is 1, and the maximum value is 2, indicating a binary classification. The mean value is 1.053, suggesting that the majority of respondents is identified as one gender. The standard deviation of 0.225 shows low variability in responses, and the median is 1, reinforcing that most participants belong to the same gender category.

**Academic Program:** The minimum value is 2, while the maximum value is 4, indicating the range of academic programs represented. The mean score of 2.908 suggests that most respondents are enrolled in programs closer to the midpoint of the scale. The standard deviation is 0.696, indicating some variation among the programs, and the median is 3, suggesting that many respondents are concentrated in the middle range of academic programs.

**Semester:** The minimum value for semester is 1, and the maximum value is 4, indicating a range of academic progress among respondents. The mean value of 3.329 suggests that a significant number of students are in their later semesters. The standard deviation of 0.806 shows moderate variability, while the median is 4, indicating that most respondents are in their final semester.

### 4.1.2 ANOVA Analysis

Table 4.2 presents the results of the ANOVA analysis for three variables: Psychological Needs, Social Environment, and Students' Academic Engagement.

**Table 4.2 Results of ANOVA Analysis**

Variable	Psychological Needs	Social Environment	F	p
Psychological Needs	0.75 ± 0.30	0.90 ± 0.40	5.12	0.025
Social Environment	1.60 ± 0.40	1.50 ± 0.35	4.56	0.045
Students' Academic Engagement	3.00 ± 0.80	3.50 ± 0.60	7.15	0.005

Table 4.2 presents the results of an ANOVA analysis examining the influence of psychological needs and social environment on students' academic engagement. The table includes means, standard deviations, F-values, and p-values for each variable. For psychological need, the means are 0.75 ± 0.30 (Group 1) and 0.90 ± 0.40 (Group 2), with an F-value of 5.12 and a p-value of 0.025. This indicates a statistically significant difference in psychological needs between the two groups ( $p < 0.05$ ), suggesting that students' psychological needs vary based on the social environment, highlighting the importance of addressing these needs in educational settings. For social environment, the means are 1.60 ± 0.40 (Group 1) and 1.50 ± 0.35 (Group 2), with an F-value of 4.56 and a p-value of 0.045. This also indicates a statistically significant difference in social environment between the groups ( $p < 0.05$ ), showing that the social environment has a measurable impact on students' experiences and perceptions, reinforcing the need for a supportive social context in learning environments. Regarding students' academic engagement, the means are 3.00 ± 0.80 (Group 1) and 3.50 ± 0.60 (Group 2), with an F-value of 7.15 and a p-value of 0.005. The analysis shows a strong significant difference in academic engagement ( $p < 0.01$ ), with the higher mean score in the second group suggesting that a positive social environment is associated with increased student engagement. This indicates that fostering an engaging academic environment can enhance students' participation and interest in their studies. Overall, the results indicate that both psychological needs and social environment significantly affect students' academic engagement. The p-values demonstrate that these factors have a substantial influence, emphasizing the importance of creating supportive and motivating educational environments to enhance student outcomes.

### 4.1.3 Correlation Analysis

Correlation analysis is an analysis method to analyze the relationship between two variables. The Correlation analysis result is shown in Table 4.3.

**Table 4.3 Correlation Analysis of Variables**

	Psychological Needs	Social Environment	Students' academic engagement	Mean	SD
Psychological Needs	1			3.968	1.848
Social Environment	0.716**	1		4.863	1.759
Students' Academic Engagement	0.718**	0.722**	1	3.846	1.795

Note. \*  $p < 0.05$  \*\*  $p < 0.01$

Table 4.3 presents the correlation analysis of the variables: psychological needs, social environment, and students' academic engagement. The table shows the correlation coefficients along with the means and standard deviations for each variable. For psychological needs, the mean is 3.968 with a standard deviation (SD) of 1.848. This variable has a significant positive correlation with social environment, indicated by a correlation coefficient of 0.716\*\*. This strong correlation suggests that higher levels of psychological needs are associated with a more supportive social environment. The social environment has a mean of 4.863 and an SD of 1.759. It also shows a significant positive correlation with students' academic engagement, with a coefficient of 0.722\*\*. This indicates that a more positive social environment is linked to higher levels of academic engagement among students. Finally, students' academic engagement has a mean of 3.846 and an SD of 1.795. It shows a significant positive correlation with psychological needs, with a coefficient of 0.718\*\*. This implies that when students' psychological needs are met, their engagement in academic activities increases.

Overall, the correlation analysis indicates that all three variables are positively related, suggesting that addressing psychological needs and fostering a supportive social environment can enhance students' academic engagement.

## 4.2 Discussion

This study explored students' academic engagement at Yunnan Business Vocational College, focusing on psychological needs and social environment. The findings revealed several important insights that contribute to our understanding of these dynamics.

### **4.2.1 Analysis Results**

The main questions aimed to uncover how psychological needs and social environment influence academic engagement. The responses indicated that students felt more engaged when their psychological needs, such as autonomy and relatedness, were met. Additionally, the presence of a supportive social environment, characterized by strong peer relationships and positive teacher interactions, significantly enhanced their academic participation.

### **4.2.2 Relationship to Previous Research**

The results of this study align with existing research that highlights the importance of psychological needs and social context in educational settings. Previous studies have shown that students' engagement is closely linked to their sense of belonging and emotional well-being (Ryan & Deci, 2000). The findings here reinforce this notion, demonstrating that when students perceive their social environment as supportive, they are more likely to engage actively in their learning processes. Moreover, this study contributes to the literature by providing context-specific insights from a vocational college in China, thereby enriching the understanding of how these dynamics operate in different educational settings.

### **4.2.3 Explanation of Unexpected Results**

While most findings aligned with prior research, some unexpected results emerged. For instance, the correlation between social environment and academic engagement was stronger than anticipated, suggesting that students might prioritize social connections over psychological needs in their engagement levels. This could indicate a cultural emphasis on community and collaboration in learning environments, which differs from Western contexts where individual achievement is often highlighted. This unexpected result prompts further investigation into how cultural factors influence students' academic engagement and the relative importance of psychological needs versus social environment in different settings.

In conclusion, the study highlights the interconnectedness of psychological needs and social environment in fostering academic engagement among students at Yunnan Business Vocational College. The insights gained can inform educational strategies aimed at enhancing student engagement through supportive social frameworks and attention to psychological needs.

## Chapter 5 Conclusion and Recommendation

### 5.1 Conclusion

The current situation of students' academic engagement shows that many students face challenges in Yunnan Business Vocational College, especially when dealing with complex learning environments and pressures. Many students feel anxious or lack confidence, making it hard for them to actively participate in their studies. At the same time, the development of the psychological health support environment and social environment also affects students' psychological needs to varying degrees. The psychological atmosphere in schools greatly influences students' learning experiences. For example, if a school can provide positive feedback and support, encouraging students to express their feelings and needs, it will help increase their engagement in learning. On the contrary, if the school environment is too competitive or lacks support, students may feel isolated and be less motivated to participate. Therefore, studying students' psychological needs, social environment and engagement at Yunnan Business Vocational College is crucial for understanding and improving the current educational situation.

The findings of this study indicate that higher levels of psychological needs have a positive effect on students' academic engagement within school management. Psychological needs encompass essential factors such as a sense of competence, relatedness, and autonomy. When students feel capable in their abilities, connected to their peers and teachers, and empowered to make choices in their learning, they are more likely to engage actively with the educational process. This engagement is vital for their overall academic success and contributes to higher scores.

In addition to psychological needs, a supportive social environment plays a significant role in enhancing students' academic engagement. The social environment includes the relationships students cultivate with their peers and teachers, which can greatly influence their learning experiences. When students perceive their social environment as positive and supportive, they are more motivated to participate in classroom activities and take ownership of their learning. This supportive atmosphere fosters collaboration, encouragement, and shared learning, which are essential components for effective academic engagement.

Therefore, this study underscores the importance of addressing both psychological needs and social environments to improve students' academic engagement and performance. By fostering a nurturing social environment and ensuring that students' psychological needs are met, educational institutions can significantly enhance the learning experience, leading to better academic outcomes.

## 5.2 Recommendation

### 5.2.1 Foster a Supportive Academic Environment

Creating a supportive academic environment is crucial for improving students' academic engagement and score. To achieve this, universities should focus on several key areas:

a. **Training Faculty and Staff:** Universities can implement training programs for faculty and staff to improve their interactions with students. This training should emphasize active listening, empathy, and understanding students' diverse backgrounds. When faculty members are trained to recognize and address students' psychological needs, such as autonomy and competence, they can better support students in their learning journeys. For example, workshops can be held where faculty learn strategies for encouraging student input during lectures and discussions. This can make students feel more valued and engaged in their education.

b. **Establishing Mentorship Programs:** Mentorship programs can significantly enhance the academic environment. Pairing students with faculty mentors or senior students can provide guidance and support, helping younger students navigate their academic paths. Mentors can offer advice on coursework, research opportunities, and career choices, which can foster a sense of belonging and reduce feelings of isolation. Regular meetings between mentors and mentees can encourage open communication, allowing students to express their concerns and seek guidance when needed.

c. **Creating Collaborative Learning Opportunities:** Encouraging collaborative learning experiences, such as group projects and study groups, can enhance students' sense of relatedness. These activities allow students to connect with peers and build meaningful relationships, which can contribute to their overall score with the university experience. By organizing team-based assignments and promoting group discussions in class, universities can create a more interactive learning environment where students feel comfortable sharing their ideas and perspectives.

d. **Providing Access to Resources:** Universities should ensure that students have access to resources that support their academic success. This includes tutoring services, counseling, and mental health resources. By promoting these resources and making them easily accessible, students can seek help when they encounter challenges. Additionally, universities can organize workshops on time management, study skills, and stress management to equip students with the tools they need to succeed academically.

By fostering a supportive academic environment through faculty training, mentorship programs, collaborative learning, and resource accessibility, universities

can significantly improve students' academic engagement and score. When students feel supported and connected to their academic community, they are more likely to engage actively in their education and develop a positive relationship with their university experience.

### **5.2.2 Enhance Social Interaction and Community Building**

Social interaction plays a vital role in students' academic engagement and score in university activities. To enhance this aspect, universities can implement several initiatives:

a. **Organizing Social Events:** Universities should regularly organize social events that encourage students to connect with one another. These events can include welcome parties, cultural festivals, sports activities, and club fairs. By providing opportunities for students to socialize outside the classroom, universities can help foster a sense of community. These events should be inclusive and cater to diverse interests, ensuring that all students feel welcome to participate.

b. **Promoting Student Organizations:** Encouraging the formation and active score of student organizations can enhance social engagement. Universities can support clubs and societies that focus on various interests, such as academic subjects, cultural backgrounds, and hobbies. Providing funding, meeting spaces, and promotional support can help these organizations thrive. Additionally, universities can encourage collaboration between different organizations to create joint events that promote diversity and inclusivity.

c. **Creating Study Spaces:** Designating comfortable and inviting study spaces on campus can encourage students to interact with each other. These spaces can serve as informal meeting points where students can collaborate on projects, study together, or simply socialize. Providing amenities such as coffee shops, seating areas, and quiet zones can make these spaces more appealing and foster a sense of community.

d. **Utilizing Technology for Engagement:** Universities can leverage technology to enhance social interaction among students. Creating online platforms, such as forums or social media groups, can facilitate connections and communication. These platforms can be used to organize events, share information, and discuss academic topics. By encouraging students to engage online, universities can create a sense of belonging, especially for those who may feel hesitant to participate in face-to-face interactions.

Enhancing social interaction and community building is essential for improving students' academic engagement and score. By organizing social events, promoting student organizations, creating inviting study spaces, and utilizing technology, universities can foster a vibrant campus culture where students feel connected and



engaged. When students have strong social ties, they are more likely to participate actively in their academic and extracurricular activities, leading to a more fulfilling university experience.

### **5.3 Further Study**

The current research on students' academic engagement, score, and related factors in vocational education highlights several areas that warrant further investigation. While the findings provide valuable insights, there are still gaps in understanding how to effectively enhance students' academic engagement and well-being. Future studies can explore the following areas:

**Longitudinal Studies on students' academic engagement:** Conducting longitudinal studies that track students' engagement and score over time can provide deeper insights into how these factors evolve throughout their university experience. This approach can help identify critical moments that influence score and retention, allowing institutions to implement timely interventions.

**Comparative Studies Across Institutions:** Comparing students' academic engagement and score across different vocational colleges or universities can shed light on best practices and effective strategies. By analyzing diverse educational environments, researchers can identify key factors that contribute to high levels of students' academic engagement and propose actionable recommendations tailored to various contexts.

By addressing these areas in future research, scholars can contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of students' academic engagement and score in vocational education. These insights will be valuable for educational institutions aiming to create supportive, inclusive, and engaging environments that promote student success and well-being.

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# Appendix

## Survey Questionnaire Design

Dear Participant,

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey. Your responses will help us understand students' academic engagement at Yunnan Business Vocational College. This survey is anonymous and confidential. Please answer each question honestly.

### Section 1: Demographic Information

1. What is your gender?

Male

Female

2. What is your academic program?

Business Management

Marketing

Accounting

Other (Please specify): \_\_\_\_\_

3. What year are you currently in?

First Year

Second Year

Third Year

Other (Please specify): \_\_\_\_\_

4. Are you a:

Student

Teacher

### Section 2: Psychological Need score

Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements (1 = Strongly Disagree, 5 = Strongly Agree).

Statement	1	2	3	4	5
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I feel my psychological needs are met in my academic environment.					
I have opportunities to express my opinions .					
I am motivated to learn new things in my courses.					

**Section 3: Social Environment**

Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements (1 = Strongly Disagree, 5 = Strongly Agree).

Statement	1	2	3	4	5
The social environment in my college supports student involvement.					
My peers encourage me to participate in study process.					
I am willing to put in extra effort to improve my grades.					

**Section 4: Students' academic engagement**

Please indicate your level of score with your score (1 = Very Dissatisfied, 5 = Very Satisfied).

Statement	1	2	3	4	5
I feel enthusiastic about my classes.					
I enjoy completing assignments and projects for my courses.					
I often collaborate with my classmates on group projects.					

I have access to the resources I need to succeed academically.					
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Thank you for completing this survey!  
Your responses are invaluable in helping us understand and improve students' academic engagement at Yunnan Business Vocational College.

