

A Study on the Current Situation of Foreign Language Achievement Goal Orientation among Chinese College Students——Taking College Students from Province a as an Example

Hong Ying and Chang- Chun Liao

Krirk University, Thailand

Corresponding Author, E-mail: 595881984@qq.com

Abstract

This study uses 702 undergraduate students in colleges and universities in Province A as the research subjects, and uses SPSS27.0 software to analyze relevant data to explore the current status of achievement goal orientation in foreign language learning among Chinese college students. The study found that there was no significant difference in achievement goal orientation and its three dimensions, namely, achievement approach goal orientation, achievement avoidance goal orientation, and mastery goal orientation, among college students of different genders; there was no significant difference in achievement goal orientation and its two dimensions, namely, achievement approach goal orientation and mastery goal orientation, among college students of different grades, but in terms of achievement avoidance goal orientation, freshmen, sophomores, and seniors were higher than juniors; there was no significant difference in achievement goal orientation and achievement approach goal orientation among college students of different majors in foreign language learning. In terms of achievement avoidance goal orientation, students majoring in education were higher than students majoring in literature and history and economics and management, and students majoring in science and engineering were also higher than students majoring in literature and history and economics and management. In terms of mastery goal orientation, students majoring in economics and management were higher than students majoring in education and science and engineering, and students majoring in arts were higher than students majoring in literature and history, education, and science and engineering.

Keywords: Foreign Language Learning; Achievement Goal Orientation; Chinese College Students

Introduction

Gu Mingyuan (2009) said that education is an eternal cause. Education has existed since the beginning of human beings, and human beings have come to understand education. Education is also a future cause, a practice of cultivating talents for the future society, so educational research should review the past and learn new things (Wang Zhenhong, 2009). In the field of foreign language teaching, the influence and role of individual factors of learners on foreign language learning cannot be ignored. Among the many individual factors of learners, motivation factors are one of the focuses of attention. Domestic and foreign researchers have explored the learning motivation of foreign language learners from different angles (Wei Xiaobao, 2014). In the relevant learning motivation research, "goal orientation" (or "achievement goal orientation") has received more and more attention and has become one of the hot spots in educational psychology research in recent years.

In the context of exam-oriented education in my country, the role of learning motivation related to grades seems to be more obvious, so it is particularly important to explore the significance of goal orientation in the study of foreign language learning motivation of Chinese learners. This study aims to explore the current situation of foreign language learning goal orientation among Chinese college students, to have a deeper understanding of the current situation of foreign language learning goal orientation among college students, to strengthen college students' awareness of setting foreign language learning goals, to encourage more college students to form mastery goals, and to strengthen off-class guidance for students, which is conducive to the overall improvement of college students' achievement goal level (Fan Yunyun, Sun Yan'e, 2023), and thus has certain value and significance for the next step of promoting foreign language learning goal setting for college students and for teachers to master students' foreign language learning. A recent empirical study further showed that college students' achievement goals are closely related to their innovative spirit, and the understanding and evaluation of achievement goals are conducive to the cultivation of their innovative spirit (Fan Yunyun, Sun Yan'e, 2023).

Research Objective

The primary objective of this study is to explore the current status of achievement goal orientation in foreign language learning among Chinese college students. Specifically, this research aims to:

- 1、 Investigate the differences in achievement goal orientation and its three dimensions (achievement approach, achievement avoidance, and mastery goal orientations) among college students based on: a) Gender b) Grade level c) Academic major
- 2、 Provide insights into the role of goal orientation in foreign language learning motivation for Chinese learners, particularly within the context of exam-oriented education.
- 3、 Contribute to a deeper understanding of college students' foreign language learning goal orientations to inform future educational strategies and interventions.
- 4、 Explore the potential implications of achievement goal orientations on college students' innovative spirit and overall academic performance in foreign language learning.

Literature Review

Achievement goal is a learning motivation theory based on Atkinson's achievement motivation theory and developed on the basis of Dweck's ability theory (Liu Yong, 2022). It refers to the stable tendency of the purpose of achievement behavior in cognition (such as understanding of the situation, attribution of success or failure), emotion (such as anxiety) and behavior (such as learning strategy, task selection and academic) (Fan Yunyun, Sun Yan'e, 2023). The achievement goal perspective is an important way to understand academic achievement motivation (Weiner, 1985). The achievement goal theory was proposed by Dweck in 1986. It is used to study individual motivation and its impact on emotions, behaviors, etc. (Liu Yong, 2022). The achievement goal theory believes that individuals have two implicit views of ability: the view of ability growth and the view of ability entity (Xu Xinpei, 2018). The implicit view of ability refers to an individual's internal cognition and belief in whether their own abilities and intelligence are changeable. Individuals who hold the view of ability growth believe that ability is variable and unstable, and can be changed and

improved through learning and hard work. They tend to believe that they can effectively improve their abilities through their own hard work and continuous progress. They believe that hard work and learning are the key to improving ability, so they are more likely to adopt positive learning strategies and are more persistent and resilient when facing challenges. That is, they tend to master goal orientation and hope to improve their abilities through continuous learning and hard work. The ability entity view is a negative ability belief (Wang Zhenhong, 2009). Students believe that ability is fixed and cannot be changed or improved. They hope to show themselves through learning and make themselves look smarter and better. They tend to choose performance goal orientation, that is, they pay more attention to their performance and others' evaluation. Although both mastery goal orientation and performance goal orientation have a promoting effect on individual learning activities to a certain extent, they show significant differences in motivation sources, focus points and learning strategies, but the learning effects brought about by them are very different. Based on this, individuals with different ability views set different achievement goals.

Table1 *Achievement Goals and Their Corresponding Motivational Patterns in Dweck's Theory*

| Intelligence concept | Achievement Goals | Motivational Model | Characteristics |
|--|--------------------------|---------------------------|--|
| Intelligence is acquired and can change | Learning objectives | Mastering Mode | Cognition: Concerned about "how to improve one's ability as quickly as possible" and the learning process. Attribution of success and failure to effort and strategy Emotion: Moderate anxiety in the face of failure. Behavior: Dare to face challenging tasks and have high persistence in the face of difficulties. |
| Intelligence is innate and fixed. | Performance Goals | Helpless Mode | Cognition: Concerned about "whether one's ability is sufficient" and concerned about the evaluation results of ability. Attribution of success and failure to ability. Emotion: High anxiety is easily generated in the face of failure. Behavior: Not brave enough to face challenging tasks and low persistence in the face of difficulties. |

Source: Fang et al. (1999)

Different students have different reasons for pursuing academic success or achievement, that is, different students hold different achievement goal beliefs. In achievement goal theory, researchers use the concept of achievement goal orientation to indicate the relatively stable achievement goal beliefs held by students (Wang Zhenhong, 2009). Achievement goals are the performance of students from the three dimensions of cognition, emotion and behavior in order to achieve learning activities, conduct learning behaviors and achieve learning achievements. Elliot (1997) and Dweck (1988) also put forward similar views as above. Ames (1992) pointed out based on the characteristics of achievement goals that achievement goals are the purpose of achievement behaviors, students' perception of learning activities, learning behaviors and learning achievements, together with their cognition of success and failure attribution. Pintrich (2000b) combined cognitive structure with the content of learning theory and defined achievement goals as cognitive representations of the reasons and purposes for individuals to pursue achievement tasks, representing the general orientation of individuals to achievement tasks, and a belief system about purpose, competence, success, ability, effort, etc.

In Dweck's (1986) early theory, achievement goal orientation was conceived as a single-factor structure, in which mastery goals and performance goals were regarded as two relatively independent but mutually exclusive extremes on a continuum. This theoretical framework holds that when individuals pursue achievement, their goal orientation is often either a pure mastery goal or a performance goal, and there is an either-or relationship between the two. Mastery goals emphasize the mastery of the task itself, the improvement of skills, and self-challenge, while performance goals focus on proving one's ability and value through external evaluation. Although this theory provided a new perspective for understanding achievement motivation at the time, as research deepened, people gradually realized that achievement goal orientation may be more complex, containing multiple dimensions and subcategories. Dichotomy (Dweck & Elliott, 1988): Dweck and Elliott (1988) divided achievement goal orientation into mastery goal orientation and performance goal orientation based on whether the learner holds a view of ability growth or a view of ability entity, which is also based on the performance of internal or external motivation. These two achievement goals discuss whether students pursue achievement to improve themselves or to express themselves (Wang Zhenhong, 2009). Dweck (1986) believed that mastery goal orientation is driven by the internal motivation of individual learners. Individuals with mastery goal orientation are more inclined to understand, master and internalize knowledge, skills and experience themselves, and value the development of their own abilities, rather than just external performance or the evaluation of others. On the contrary, performance goal orientation is driven by external motivation. Individuals with this goal pay more attention to their own achievements and positive evaluations from others, rather than focusing on the completion of learning tasks or personal improvement. Individuals with performance goal orientation often bring negative achievement results and show non-adaptability. Elliot (2006) found that the reason for this phenomenon is that researchers ignored the approach-avoidance tendency when classifying achievement goals. Therefore, the following three-part method was proposed. With the emergence of students' adaptive psychological characteristics, Elliot & Haraekiewicz (1996) and Elliot & McGregor (2001) put avoidance orientation into the theoretical construction of achievement goal orientation, defining achievement goal orientation as the overall tendency of students to approach, participate in and evaluate academic progress in terms of achievement. On the basis of two dimensions, a three-dimensional structure was proposed, namely, a three-factor structure of mastery goals (aiming at improving one's own ability and mastering new knowledge), performance approach goals (focusing on performing better or smarter than others, with the goal of proving one's own ability and obtaining positive evaluations from others), and performance avoidance goals (focusing on not being worse or more unsuccessful than others, with the goal of avoiding appearing incompetent and the resulting negative evaluations from others) (Wang Jiaying et al., 2022). Skaalvik (1997) also divided performance goal orientation into self-improvement orientation and self-defeat orientation. The former refers to focusing on defeating others and proving one's own ability; the latter refers to focusing on avoiding looking stupid or avoiding negative judgments of ability. This study supports the above-mentioned trichotomy. Students who hold a goal orientation of approaching grades tend to study to get good grades and performance, to be better and superior than others, and to show themselves and gain praise from others; in contrast, students who hold a goal of avoiding grades just want to avoid being rated the worst or being punished for bad grades.

Fan Yunyun and Sun Yan'e (2023) found through a study of 2106 college students that the overall mean score of undergraduate achievement goals was 4.85, which was higher than the theoretical median of 4, with a standard deviation of 0.95. Students with high achievement goals accounted for 45.8% of the total sample, and 20% of the students had an achievement goal mean lower than the theoretical median, with a significantly lower goal level. Wu Ziyang and Gong Yuanjun (2003) found in their study of achievement goal orientation of college students majoring in physical education that male students scored higher than female students in terms of mastery goal orientation and the difference was significant, while female students scored higher than male students in terms of achievement avoidance goals and the difference was significant, and there was no significant difference between grades in physical education majors.

Research Methodology

This research design is based on the descriptive survey research model. It focuses on obtaining a large amount of key data related to the topic under investigation from a specific number of individuals within a limited time (Lodico et al., 2010). It represents a cross-sectional survey that aims to obtain sufficient information from a specific group of people with different education levels, economic status, age, etc. (Cohen et al., 2007).

1. Research Method

This study adopted a quantitative research approach to investigate the achievement goal orientations in foreign language learning among Chinese college students. Specifically, a cross-sectional survey design was employed, which is well-suited for examining the current status of a phenomenon and exploring relationships between variables at a single point in time (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

The choice of a quantitative method was predicated on the study's objectives to measure and compare achievement goal orientations across different demographic variables. This approach allows for the collection of numerical data that can be statistically analyzed to test hypotheses and draw generalizable conclusions (Johnson & Christensen, 2019).

2. Population and sample

The subjects of this study are 750 undergraduate students from Province A. A total of 702 valid questionnaires were collected, with a questionnaire validity rate of 93.6%. There were 128 male subjects, accounting for 18.23%, and 574 female subjects, accounting for 81.77%. The majors studied were from liberal arts (49%), education (36.18%), science and engineering (8.83%), business management (3.42%), art (1.42%), and agriculture, forestry and medicine (1.14%). The students' foreign language proficiency was divided into five levels according to their foreign language scores in the college entrance examination: excellent (above 140 points), above average (120 points to 140 points, excluding 140 points), average (100 points to 120 points, excluding 120 points), below average (90 points to 100 points, excluding 100 points), and poor (below 90 points, excluding 90 points). The basic information of the research subjects is shown in Table 1

Table 1 Descriptive statistics of the basic situation of the research subjects

| | | Number (people) | percentage (%) |
|-------------------------------------|--------------|-----------------|----------------|
| Gender | Male | 128 | 18.23 |
| | Female | 574 | 81.77 |
| Total | | 702 | 100% |
| Foreign language proficiency | Excellent | 18 | 2.56% |
| | Upper middle | 134 | 19.09% |
| | Medium | 262 | 37.32% |
| Total | Lower middle | 122 | 17.38% |
| Gender | Poor | 166 | 23.65% |
| Total | | 702 | 100% |

3. Research tools

The main tool used in this study is the Chinese College Students' Foreign Language Learning Questionnaire, which consists of two parts. The first part investigates students' personal information, and the second part investigates students' foreign language learning goal orientation. Before the formal investigation, the author conducted a pre-test of the questionnaire in a university in Province A, and then finalized the questionnaire.

The Foreign Language Learning Goal Orientation Questionnaire was adapted from the three-dimensional achievement goal orientation of mastery goal, performance approach goal and performance avoidance goal compiled by Wei Xiaobao (2014) in combination with the characteristics of Chinese college students' foreign language learning. The pre-test questionnaire has 17 items, and the options are scored on a 5-level scale from "very inconsistent" to "very consistent". In order to test the structural validity and reliability of the questionnaire, the author conducted item analysis and exploratory factor testing on the questionnaire. The results showed that the CR values of all items were greater than 3.00, the total correlation and the corrected total correlation coefficients were greater than 0.40, the commonality was greater than 0.20, and the factor loadings were also greater than 0.45, indicating that all items can be retained. The KMO value is 0.940, and the χ^2 value of the Bartlett sphericity test is 3844.088 (with 120 degrees of freedom), reaching a significant level ($p < 0.001$). The null hypothesis can be rejected, and it is suitable for factor analysis. Then, the principal component analysis method was used to perform factor analysis on the data with maximum variance rotation. According to the factor structure scree plot and combined with the eigenvalue and the conceptual hypothesis, the 17 items were clustered into 3 factors with eigenvalues greater than 1. According to Elliot's (1999) three-part achievement motivation theory system, these three factors were named "mastery goal", "performance approach goal" and "performance avoidance goal". The factor loadings of all items were above .700, which was greater than the acceptable value of .40. The eigenvalues of the three factors were 4.348, 4.227, and 3.078, explaining a total of 72.833% of the variance, which explained the variance of the entire scale very well. Therefore, the structural validity of this goal orientation questionnaire is good. The Cronbach's α values of the three factors are .917, .890, and .925, respectively, and the reliability coefficient of the questionnaire is .930, indicating that the internal consistency of the questionnaire is good and meets the test requirements.

4. Data analysis

SPSS27.0 software was used to process the relevant data and obtain relevant results.

Research Result

1. Gender differences in foreign language learning achievement goal orientation

The scores of college students of different genders in foreign language learning achievement goal orientation, achievement approach goal orientation, achievement avoidance goal orientation, and mastery goal orientation are shown in Table 2.

Table 2 Comparison of the differences in foreign language learning achievement goal orientation, achievement approach goal orientation, achievement avoidance goal orientation, and mastery goal orientation among college students of different genders

| Test variables | Gender | Number | Average | Standard Deviation | t-value |
|--|--------|--------|---------|--------------------|---------|
| Achievement goal orientation | Male | 128 | 51.0625 | 9.10114 | 0.530 |
| | Female | 574 | 50.5575 | 9.88076 | |
| Achievement approach goal orientation | Male | 128 | 19.3438 | 4.46586 | 0.506 |
| | Female | 574 | 19.1115 | 4.74937 | |
| Achievement avoidance goal orientation | Male | 128 | 11.8438 | 3.34013 | -0.155 |
| | Female | 574 | 11.8955 | 3.41890 | |
| Mastery goal orientation | Male | 128 | 19.8750 | 4.87481 | 0.687 |
| | Female | 574 | 19.5505 | 4.82613 | |

From Table 2, we can find that the t-statistics of the gender variable of college students in the four dependent variable tests did not reach a significant level, indicating that there are no significant differences in foreign language learning achievement goal orientation, performance approach goal orientation, performance avoidance goal orientation and mastery goal orientation among college students of different genders.

2. Grade differences in foreign language learning achievement goal orientation

The results of variance analysis on foreign language learning achievement goal orientation, achievement approach goal orientation, achievement avoidance goal orientation, and mastery goal orientation of college students of different grades are shown in Tables 3 and 4.

Table 3 Descriptive statistics of achievement goal orientation, achievement approach goal orientation, achievement avoidance goal orientation, and mastery goal orientation in foreign language learning among college students of different grades

| Test variables | grade | Number | Average | Standard Deviation |
|--|----------------|--------|---------|--------------------|
| Achievement Goal Orientation | Freshman (A) | 186 | 49.8602 | 9.68988 |
| | Sophomore(B) | 194 | 51.0103 | 8.35296 |
| | Junior(C) | 184 | 50.0652 | 10.97618 |
| | Senior year(D) | 138 | 51.9855 | 9.79869 |
| | total | 702 | 50.6496 | 9.73895 |
| Goal-oriented | Freshman (A) | 186 | 18.8387 | 4.58739 |
| | Sophomore(B) | 194 | 19.1134 | 4.58399 |
| | Junior(C) | 184 | 19.1304 | 5.18134 |
| | Senior year(D) | 138 | 19.6667 | 4.31147 |
| | total | 702 | 19.1538 | 4.69670 |
| performance-avoidance goal orientation | Freshman (A) | 186 | 12.1613 | 3.21581 |
| | Sophomore(B) | 194 | 12.1959 | 3.24042 |
| | Junior(C) | 184 | 11.1087 | 3.78509 |
| | Senior year(D) | 138 | 12.1159 | 3.19916 |
| | total | 702 | 11.8860 | 3.40237 |
| Mastering goal orientation | Freshman (A) | 186 | 18.8602 | 5.00506 |
| | Sophomore(B) | 194 | 19.7010 | 4.46556 |
| | Junior(C) | 184 | 19.8261 | 5.08852 |
| | Senior year(D) | 138 | 20.2029 | 4.67195 |
| | total | 702 | 19.6097 | 4.83317 |

Table 4 Summary of variance analysis of differences in achievement goal orientation, achievement approach goal orientation, achievement avoidance goal orientation, and mastery goal orientation among college students of different grades

| | | Sum of Squares | Degree of Freedom | Average sum of squares (MS) | F-test | Post hoc comparison Scheffe method | Post hoc comparison on LSD method | Post hoc comparison HSD method |
|--|----------------|----------------|-------------------|-----------------------------|--------|------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Achievement Goal Orientation | Between groups | 450.261 | 3 | 150.087 | 1.586 | | | |
| | Within groups | 66037.533 | 698 | 94.610 | | | | |
| | Total | 66487.795 | 701 | | | | | |
| Goal-oriented | Between groups | 55.182 | 3 | 18.394 | 0.833 | | | |
| | Within groups | 15408.203 | 698 | 22.075 | | | | |
| | Total | 15463.385 | 701 | | | | | |
| performance-avoidance goal orientation | Between groups | 151.194 | 3 | 50.398 | 4.417* | A>C | A>C | A>C |
| | Within groups | 7963.689 | 698 | 11.409 | | B>C | B>C | B>C |
| | Total | 8114.883 | 701 | | | D>C | D>C | D>C |
| Mastering goal orientation | Between groups | 163.275 | 3 | 54.425 | 2.343 | | | |
| | Within groups | 16211.779 | 698 | 23.226 | | | | |
| | Total | 16375.054 | 701 | | | | | |

Note: *p<0.05, **p<0.01, ***p<0.001, the same below.

As shown in Tables 3 and 4, we can find that there is no significant difference between college students of different grades in achievement goal orientation and its two dimensions, namely, achievement approach goal orientation and mastery goal orientation. However, in terms of achievement avoidance goal orientation, according to the post hoc comparison Scheffe method, the level of achievement avoidance goal orientation of freshmen

and sophomores is higher than that of juniors. According to the post hoc comparison LSD method and HSD method, not only the level of achievement avoidance goal orientation of freshmen and sophomores is higher than that of juniors, but the level of achievement avoidance goal orientation of seniors is also higher than that of juniors.

3. Differences in foreign language learning achievement goal orientation among different majors

The results of variance analysis on foreign language learning achievement goal orientation and achievement approach goal orientation, achievement avoidance goal orientation, and mastery goal orientation among college students of different majors are shown in Tables 5 and 6.

Table 5 Descriptive statistics of achievement goal orientation, achievement approach goal orientation, achievement avoidance goal orientation, and mastery goal orientation in foreign language learning among college students of different majors

| Test variables | grade | Number | Average | Standard Deviation |
|---|--|--------|---------|--------------------|
| Achievement Goal Orientation | Literature and History (A) | 344 | 50.4884 | 10.53357 |
| | Business and Management (B) | 24 | 51.6667 | 3.91948 |
| | Education (C) | 254 | 50.7323 | 9.16813 |
| | Science and Engineering (D) | 62 | 49.8387 | 9.08646 |
| | Agriculture, Forestry and Medicine (E) | 8 | 55.2500 | 9.92472 |
| | Arts (F) | 10 | 53.0000 | 9.33333 |
| | Total | 702 | 50.6496 | 9.73895 |
| Goal-oriented | Literature and History (A) | 344 | 19.2267 | 4.81988 |
| | Business and Management (B) | 24 | 19.5000 | 3.59952 |
| | Education (C) | 254 | 19.0315 | 4.46495 |
| | Science and Engineering (D) | 62 | 18.6774 | 4.96801 |
| | Agriculture, Forestry and Medicine (E) | 8 | 22.5000 | 6.52468 |
| | Arts (F) | 10 | 19.2000 | 5.13809 |
| | Total | 702 | 19.1538 | 4.69670 |
| performance-avoidance goal orientation | Literature and History (A) | 344 | 11.5523 | 3.73817 |
| | Business and Management (B) | 24 | 10.6667 | 3.31881 |
| | Education (C) | 254 | 12.2913 | 3.09561 |
| | Science and Engineering (D) | 62 | 12.7097 | 2.45876 |
| | Agriculture, Forestry and Medicine (E) | 8 | 12.2500 | 2.54951 |
| | Arts (F) | 10 | 10.6000 | 2.45855 |
| | Total | 702 | 11.8860 | 3.40237 |
| Mastering goal orientation | Literature and History (A) | 344 | 19.7093 | 4.96839 |

| | | | |
|--|-----|---------|---------|
| Business and Management (B) | 24 | 21.5000 | 2.18692 |
| Education (C) | 254 | 19.4094 | 4.72543 |
| Science and Engineering (D) | 62 | 18.4516 | 5.02348 |
| Agriculture, Forestry and Medicine (E) | 8 | 20.5000 | 5.47723 |
| Arts (F) | 10 | 23.2000 | 3.01109 |
| Total | 702 | 19.6097 | 4.83317 |

Table 6 Summary table of variance analysis for comparison of achievement goal orientation, achievement approach goal orientation, achievement avoidance goal orientation, and mastery goal orientation among college students of different majors

| | | Sum of Squares | Degrees of Freedom | Average sum of squares (MS) | F-Test | Post hoc comparison LSD method | Post hoc comparison HSD method |
|---|----------------|----------------|--------------------|-----------------------------|---------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Achievement Goal Orientation | Between groups | 300.826 | 5 | 60.165 | 0.633 | | |
| | Within groups | 66186.969 | 696 | 95.096 | | | |
| | Total | 66487.795 | 701 | | | | |
| Goal-oriented | Between groups | 112.174 | 5 | 22.435 | 1.017 | | |
| | Within groups | 15351.210 | 696 | 22.056 | | | |
| | Total | 15463.385 | 701 | | | | |
| performance-avoidance goal orientation | Between groups | 175.377 | 5 | 35.075 | 3.075** | C>A C>B | |
| | Within groups | 7939.507 | 696 | 11.407 | | D>A D>B | |
| | Total | 8114.883 | 701 | | | | |
| Mastering goal orientation | Between groups | 317.752 | 5 | 63.550 | 2.755* | B>C B>D | |
| | Within groups | 16057.302 | 696 | 23.071 | | F>A F>C | F>D |
| | Total | 16375.054 | 701 | | | F>D | |

Note: Since the post hoc comparison using the Scheffe method did not show significance, the single column was deleted from the table and is not shown.

According to the statistical results of Table 5 and Table 6, we can find that there is no significant difference in foreign language learning achievement goal orientation and performance approach goal orientation among college students of different majors. In terms of performance avoidance goal orientation, the performance avoidance goal orientation level of students majoring in education is higher than that of students majoring in liberal arts and economics and management, and the performance avoidance goal orientation level of students majoring in science and engineering is also higher than that of students majoring in liberal arts and economics and management. In terms of mastery goal orientation, the mastery goal orientation level of students majoring in economics and management is higher than that of students majoring in education and science and engineering, and the mastery goal orientation level of students majoring in arts is higher than that of students majoring in liberal arts, education and science and engineering.

Discussion

1. Research on strengthening undergraduate goal awareness education and teaching

According to the results of empirical research, there is no significant difference between college students of different genders in foreign language learning achievement goal orientation, performance approach goal orientation, performance avoidance goal orientation and mastery goal orientation. Elliot (1997) and Elliot & McGregor (2001) confirmed that students' use of performance avoidance goals reduced their academic performance in college classrooms, while the use of performance approach goals improved their academic performance. Yang Shuwen et al. (2018) specifically pointed out the significant negative effect of performance avoidance goals on academic performance, indicating that students holding this goal often have poor grades. Tu Xixi et al. (2021) further showed that both performance approach and mastery goals positively predicted learning input and had a positive impact on academic performance. Wu Jiahui and Fu Hailun (2024) refined this relationship, pointing out that mastery and performance approach goals are positively correlated with academic performance, while avoidance goals are negatively correlated. Based on the views of the above scholars and the results of this study, the researchers believe that in actual foreign language teaching, students should be encouraged and guided to set correct mastery goals and performance approach goals, and reduce the impact of performance avoidance goals. The campus environment of colleges and universities provides college students with a multi-dimensional cultural atmosphere, which gives college students broader development possibilities. The cultural interweaving, the collision of traditional and modern concepts, and the differences between collective requirements and individual pursuits in the campus environment will cause some college students to be confused and contradictory in their self-positioning. Therefore, schools and teachers should consciously cultivate college students' foreign language learning goals, let students realize that learning a foreign language is not just to pass the final exam and get the corresponding level certificate, but to master a foreign language social ability and improve their practical application abilities such as listening, speaking, reading and writing in foreign languages, help students make clear and accurate foreign language learning goal planning, and make their own efforts to learn foreign languages well, tell Chinese stories well, and improve China's voice in the international arena.

2. Encourage more students to form mastery goals

The results of this study found that there was no significant difference in achievement goal orientation and its two dimensions, namely, achievement approach goal orientation and mastery goal orientation, among college students of different grades. However, in terms of achievement avoidance goal orientation, the achievement avoidance goal orientation levels of freshmen, sophomores, and seniors were higher than those of juniors. Previous studies have shown that achievement avoidance goal orientation is mostly negatively correlated with academic performance (Elliot, 1997; Elliot & McGregor, 2001; Yang Shuwen et al., 2018; Wu Jiahui and Fu Hailun, 2024, etc.). As junior college students, freshmen and sophomores have a strong pursuit of grades. They hope to get good grades in foreign language learning, care about the opinions and evaluations of teachers and classmates, and will avoid some difficult foreign language learning tasks and foreign language competitions, thus losing some opportunities. By the time they reach their junior year, most students realize that simply avoiding grades does not bring them many advantages. Instead, because they care too much about grades and the evaluations and opinions of people around them, they lose many opportunities to show themselves and improve themselves. Therefore, many students will

reset their foreign language learning goals in their junior year. The senior year is a transition period from school to society. Everyone begins to realize the importance of foreign language learning grades, results, and related certificates for their job hunting and further studies. Therefore, many students will choose the quick success and quick benefit grade-avoidance goal orientation, aiming to obtain good foreign language learning grades and evaluations to help their job hunting and further studies. Based on the above analysis, the researchers believe that as foreign language teachers, they should guide students to correctly establish mastery goals when they enter freshman year. Individuals with mastery goals will pay more attention to the process of foreign language learning, strive to master new knowledge and improve their abilities, which is more conducive to the physical and mental development of students. Students with mastery goal orientation do not judge their success by their short-term foreign language performance, but rather value their mastery of foreign languages, take improving their listening, speaking, reading and writing skills as their long-term goal, actively participate in various foreign language competitions and related level examinations, and will not be discouraged by temporary failures, but will only regard failure as the beginning of success again. Therefore, mastery goal orientation will continue to affect college students' foreign language learning goals throughout the four years. Teachers should guide students to combine foreign language learning with their life plans and personal qualities, give more praise and encouraging evaluations, adjust the avoidance mentality of some students, and gradually establish their sense of identity and self-confidence in their own abilities.

3. Strengthen off-class guidance for students

The results of this study found that there was no significant difference in foreign language learning achievement goal orientation and performance approach goal orientation among college students of different majors. In terms of performance avoidance goal orientation, the performance avoidance goal orientation level of students majoring in education is higher than that of students majoring in liberal arts and economics, and the performance avoidance goal orientation level of students majoring in science and engineering is also higher than that of students majoring in liberal arts and economics. In terms of mastery goal orientation, the mastery goal orientation level of students majoring in business management is higher than that of students majoring in education and science and engineering, and the mastery goal orientation level of students majoring in art is higher than that of students majoring in literature, history, education and science and engineering. Based on the above results, it is found that students majoring in education and science and engineering have a higher level of achievement avoidance goal orientation, while a lower level of mastery goal orientation. Education and science and engineering belong to the arts and sciences, respectively, which just shows that college students nowadays generally have a high level of achievement avoidance goal orientation and a low level of mastery goal orientation. Different goal orientation levels are closely related to foreign language learning performance, which has been described many times before. Therefore, combined with the above analysis, the researchers believe that good teacher-student interaction and student-student interaction play a key role in improving students' social skills and foreign language academic ability. Listening, speaking, reading and writing in foreign languages require both theoretical skills and practical training. To improve the achievement goal level of college students, it is necessary not only for teachers to actively guide in foreign classrooms, but also for teachers to play a guiding role outside of class. In the future, teachers should strengthen their after-school academic guidance and teacher-student interaction, fully meet students' different

academic needs, provide motivation and support for students to solve difficult problems, and provide more practice platforms and opportunities for students' foreign language listening, speaking, reading and writing.

In today's world where the cultivation of non-intellectual factors is emphasized, researchers believe that foreign language learning achievement goals are an important factor affecting students' foreign language academic achievement. According to achievement goal theory, students with mastery goal orientation have a more complete motivation model in the learning process, that is, moderate anxiety level, correct attribution of success and failure, and willingness to accept challenging tasks. It is particularly important in foreign language education to consciously cultivate students' foreign language learning goals and enable them to form a foreign language learning motivation model that is adapted to them. Therefore, social comparisons in the learning environment should be reduced, and students' evaluation on self-reference standards should be improved so that they can focus on the amount of effort they have made and the use of strategies, and focus on mastering knowledge itself, so as to achieve the purpose of promoting all-round development.

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