

A Study on the Cultivation of Achievement Motivation among Management Students at Universities in Ethnic Minority Areas

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Abstract: *From the perspective of market demand-oriented research, this paper discusses cultivating achievement motivation of university students in minority areas. Based on the competency model and achievement motivation theory, this study systematically analyzed influential research literature in related fields, drew upon existing research results, investigated various factors affecting college students' achievement motivation, and proposed corresponding hypotheses. To verify these hypotheses, the study referred to the achievement motivation scale compiled by Gjesme and Nygar, and then designed a questionnaire and randomly sampled 1,400 management students from ethnic areas in China. The research results verified the validity of the hypothesis. On this basis, the corresponding conclusions and suggestions were put forward to promote the educational practice and reform of colleges and universities in minority areas.*

Keywords: *market demand, competence, achievement motivation, ethnic areas, college management majors*

1. Introduction

The digital economy and artificial intelligence underscore the critical role of management education in regional ethnic colleges and universities. Students' innovative spirit and practical skills are vital for navigating the changing socio-economic landscape. Nonetheless, many students demonstrate inadequate achievement motivation, limiting their capacity for independent exploration, self-discipline, and innovation. Contributing factors include regional economic conditions, geographic elements, and cultural contexts, which can lead to unclear learning objectives, weak self-directed learning motivation, and reduced social adaptability. These background influences further result in narrow perspectives and insufficient practical experience among graduates, impeding their ability to meet societal demands.

Achievement motivation is integral to competency and acts as a key internal driver for personal development. Exploring the determinants of achievement motivation among management students in ethnic colleges enhances understanding of its formation mechanisms, thereby providing a theoretical foundation for fostering high achievement motivation. This endeavor promotes a competency-based educational model aimed at refining teaching practices and expanding educational theories to equip graduates for contemporary challenges.

Employing competency models and achievement motivation theory, this study conducted a cluster analysis of educational literature on competency, identified research gaps, and formulated hypotheses for empirical investigation. The outcomes are intended to guide management education reforms in minority institutions, thereby advancing modern educational and teaching theories.

2. Fundamental Theories

2.1. The Iceberg Model

McClelland (1973) posited that motivation, personality traits, self-image, attitudes, values, domain-specific knowledge, cognitive ability, and behavioral skills are deep-level characteristics that differentiate high achievers from regular practitioners. These characteristics delineate competency as the distinction between excellent and average performance. The Iceberg Model includes: 1) Ability is categorized into five levels: knowledge and skills, values, self-awareness, quality, and motivation; 2) A distinction exists

between surface abilities (explicit) and beneath-the-surface abilities (implicit); 3) The hierarchy of abilities ranks knowledge and skills as the most superficial, followed by values, self-awareness, quality, and achievement motivation at the base; 4) Evaluating performance should prioritize underlying abilities, particularly achievement motivation.

2.2. Achievement Motivation Theory

McClelland emphasized that the drive for success and excellence are fundamental human needs. Individuals with high achievement needs strive for perfection, improved efficiency, and substantial accomplishments. Atkinson (1963) further developed the achievement motivation model, identifying two components: the pursuit of success and avoidance of failure. Achievement motivation (T_a) is defined as the differential between the tendency to pursue success (T_s) and the tendency to avoid failure (T_{af}), represented by the formula $T_a = T_s - T_{af}$. The pursuit of success is influenced by the need for achievement (motivation for success), M_s , the probability of success (P_s), and its incentive value, expressed as $T_s = M_s \times P_s \times Ps$. Conversely, avoidance of failure (T_{af}) is shaped by the motivation to avoid failure (M_{af}), the probability of failure (P_f), and its negative incentive value, represented as $T_{af} = M_{af} \times P_f \times If$. Therefore, the achievement motivation model is articulated as $T_a = M_s \times P_s \times Ps - M_{af} \times P_f \times If$ ^[1].

Yu (1990) advanced the concepts of self-oriented and social-oriented achievement motivation, indicating that social incentives significantly influence individuals' social orientation, leading to varying behavioral characteristics across different motivational levels. In essence, teachers serve as vital connectors of social and individual incentives that enhance achievement motivation in higher education. They are crucial in fostering personal incentives such as goal setting, risk management, and opportunities for talent exhibition. This support not only aids students in establishing appropriate personal goals but also empowers them to critically analyze challenges and devise reasonable solutions, bolstering their resilience in the face of adversity. Additionally, students can help them update their goals and gain upward momentum in the joy of success when they achieve partial success^[2].

To sum up, teachers serve as an essential bridge connecting social and individual incentives that stimulate achievement motivation in higher education. They play a crucial role in fostering necessary personal incentives such as goal setting, facing risks related to success or failure, and providing opportunities for individual talent to shine. This not only helps inspire students to establish their personal goals correctly but also aids them in analyzing and summarizing problems, offering reasonable suggestions, and boosting their courage to overcome challenges when difficulties arise. Furthermore, students can assist in updating their goals and gaining momentum from the joy of success when students achieve partial success.

3. Literature Review

There are many research results on teaching competency training for college students, all of which have explored and studied the competency training of college students from different angles or majors. The mainstream research still divides competency into two levels: explicit and implicit, according to the iceberg model. The existing research content is mainly reflected in three aspects: explicit, implicit, and the combination of explicit and implicit.

From the perspective of explicit competence, the overall quality of college students is clearly reflected in their comprehensive abilities regarding learning, entrepreneurial skills, and participation in social practices (Li et al., 2015)^[3]. The professional quality of college students plays a crucial role in their employability, indicating that enhancing students' professional attributes is the top priority for improving their job prospects (Zong et al., 2017)^[4]. Since implicit competence is established before adulthood, it is challenging to significantly change and develop it through higher education (Zheng et al., 2014.02)^[5]. A few researchers have specifically studied implicit competence. For instance, significant differences exist between genders concerning learning motivation, enthusiasm, goal-setting, academic performance, attribution style, motivation style, achievement needs, self-confidence, and innovative ability. Boys tend to score higher than girls in goal-setting, self-confidence, and innovative ability, yet they score lower in academic performance and enthusiasm (Xiang, 2008)^[6]. Furthermore, external factors such as the cultural environment of dormitories can positively influence college students' achievement motivation. The interplay between gender, academic year, and whether students are only children does not significantly affect dormitory culture or personal achievement motivation (Wu et al., 2019)^[7]. Additional research on competence emphasizes the integration of both explicit and implicit factors. Wang et al. (2002) argued that value orientation, integrity, sense of responsibility, and power orientation of the full-

time job constitute the management quality dimension, whereas coordination and monitoring skills, strategic decision-making abilities, motivation, leadership capacity, and innovation skills make up the management skills dimension^[8]. The competency framework for human resources professionals consists of 14 factors across four dimensions: personal characteristics, human resource management skills, strategic contributions, and business knowledge (Zheng et al., 2010)^[9]. Meanwhile, the competency requires for management professionals are categorized into three areas: essential skills, comprehensive abilities, and personal attributes (Shao, 2020)^[10]. In conclusion, competency research is a popular topic in all walks of life. In the reform of education and teaching, the cultivation of student competency has become one of the focuses of the teaching community. After studying the existing literature on the cultivation of college student competency, we found few research contents on cultivating college student achievement motivation. Given this, this paper adopted college students' achievement motivation as the research content, aiming to expand the existing research field further, enrich the research on college students' competence, and provide theoretical support for reforming higher education teaching in ethnic minority areas.

4. Research Hypothesis

4.1. Personal Background and Achievement Motivation

Individual factors are pivotal in shaping achievement motivation, influenced by family education, school experiences, and social environments from childhood. Van Lof categorized the development of achievement motivation into three stages: self-discipline, social comparison, and their integration. These stages predominantly occur in childhood, leading to a mature achievement motivation as children reconcile personal and social standards. Therefore, this study posited the following hypothesis:

H1: There is a significant correlation between personal background and achievement motivation among college students in ethnic minority areas.

Beyond gender and age, personal background encompasses family elements that markedly influence achievement motivation. The socialization process potentially causes differences in motivation between genders (Wang et al., 1999)^[12]. However, since college students are still transitioning into society, the impact of gender on achievement motivation remains to be explored. As individuals age, their social experiences and psychological maturity typically evolve, impacting their achievement motivation. Thus, this study further proposed:

H1a: There is a significant correlation between gender and achievement motivation among management students at local ethnic universities.

H1b: There is a significant correlation between age and achievement motivation among management students at local ethnic universities.

H1c: There is a significant correlation between family background (e.g., parents' education and income) and achievement motivation among management students at local ethnic universities.

4.2. Learning Environment and Achievement Motivation

The learning environment significantly influences achievement motivation in educational contexts. A positive environment boosts motivation, while a negative one can diminish it. Thus, this study hypothesized:

H2: There is a significant correlation between the learning environment in ethnic minority colleges and the achievement motivation of college students.

Key elements affecting the learning environment include the learning environment and teacher support. A supportive atmosphere fosters competition and planning, boosting motivation. Teachers play a critical role in providing psychological support during students' transitions away from family. Therefore, this study posited:

H2a: There is a significant correlation between the learning environment and achievement motivation among management students in ethnic minority colleges.

H2b: There is a significant correlation between teacher support and achievement motivation among management students in ethnic minority universities.

4.3. Educational Intervention and Achievement Motivation

Transitioning from academic environments to societal participation significantly influences students' sense of achievement and challenge. The complexity of learning tasks increases, requiring effective educational interventions to foster achievement motivation. The hypotheses are as follows:

H3: There is a significant correlation between educational interventions in ethnic minority colleges and achievement motivation.

Effective educational interventions, based on Atkinson's theory, encourage students to pursue achievable goals while managing stress and challenges, promoting quicker adaptation to college life. Through these interventions, students learn to align their external achievements with internal growth, set challenging goals, and enhance self-efficacy, ultimately fostering achievement motivation. Therefore:

H3a: There is a significant correlation between educational intervention activities (e.g., career planning, internships) and achievement motivation among management students.

H3b: There is a significant correlation between psychological counseling and achievement motivation among management students in ethnic local universities.

4.4. Comprehensive Factors and Achievement Motivation

This study investigated the interplay of various factors affecting achievement motivation among management students in ethnic minority colleges, focusing on: 1) family economic status, parental education, and social status; 2) internal factors (gender, age, personal values) affecting motivation and goals; 3) objective elements influencing the learning environment; 4) peer and teacher support and incentive mechanisms; 5) effectiveness of educational interventions; 6) external incentives; and 7) psychological strategies. We hypothesized (H4) that comprehensive factors—personal background, learning environment, and educational interventions—positively impact achievement motivation. A questionnaire survey were utilized to explore these relationships (see Figure 1).

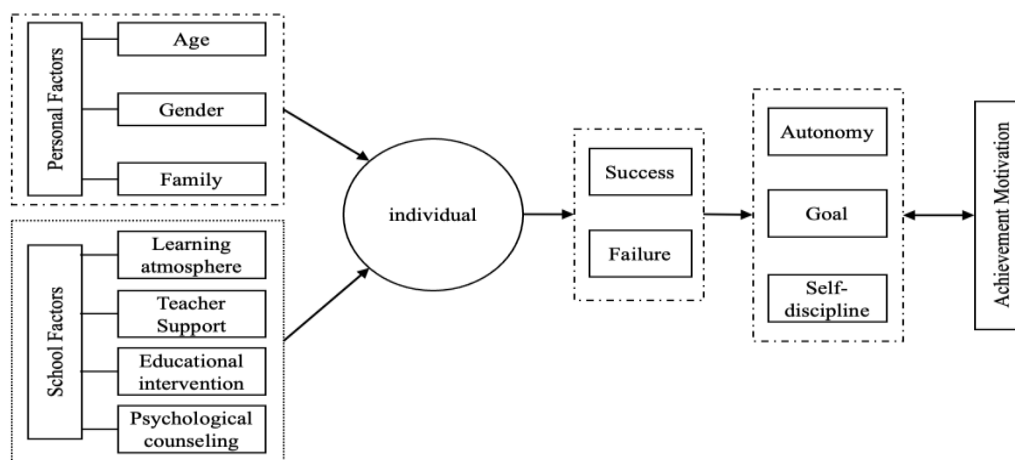


Figure 1: Research framework

5. Research Design

5.1. Research Concepts

This study aims to verify and analyze the impact of personal and school factors on individual achievement motivation and to determine the correlation between each factor and achievement motivation. Additionally, it explored effective ways to cultivate management talent with high achievement motivation in ethnic minority colleges and universities through school education. Based on the iceberg model and Atkinson's achievement motivation theory, the psychological responses of college students to the factors affecting school education while pursuing success and avoiding failure will be examined. The achievement motivation scale compiled by Norwegian psychologists Gjesme and Nygar will be utilized to design a questionnaire, conduct a pilot survey, and modify the questionnaire to ensure its validity and reliability. Management students at ethnic minority colleges and universities will be

selected as the survey subjects, data will be collected, and verification analysis will be performed to test the validity of the hypothesis. A training path will be proposed based on the research findings.

5.2. Questionnaire Design

The design of this questionnaire was guided by the Iceberg Model and Atkinson's achievement motivation theory. It comprehensively analyzed existing research literature, extracting influencing factors such as personal background, learning environment, and educational interventions on college students' achievement motivation. The questionnaire then proposed four hypotheses and was designed based on these hypotheses. The first three dimensions aim to explore whether the three influencing factors relate to college students' achievement motivation. Specifically, questions 1-5 assess the impact of personal background, questions 6-8 examine the effect of the learning environment, and questions 9-12 investigate the influence of educational interventions on college students' achievement motivation. Additionally, questions 13-17 are adapted from the achievement motivation scale compiled by Gjesme and Nygar to evaluate students' achievement motivation levels. These questions should be analyzed together with the first twelve questions to assess the correlation between the three comprehensive factors and college students' achievement motivation.

During the table preparation process, repeated experiments were conducted after completing the first draft. A small sample of 50 management students from colleges and universities in ethnic minority areas was selected for preliminary investigation, considering control variables such as environment and psychological influence. The questionnaire was modified based on the survey results, and then another 100 samples were drawn similarly for re-surveying. The questionnaire was revised again based on the second sample results to ensure it maintained high efficiency and reliability, thus ensuring the scientific validity of the survey data.

5.3. Empirical analysis

The authors randomly conducted a questionnaire survey on 1,400 students majoring in management at ethnic local universities and collected 1,391 valid questionnaires, with a valid questionnaire rate of over 99%.

5.3.1. Correlation Analysis of Background and Achievement Motivation

Table 1 presents descriptive statistics derived from the questionnaire data, showing 513 male students (36.9%) with an average achievement motivation score of 17.03 (SD = 3.308), and 878 female students (63.1%) with an average score of 18.52 (SD = 3.2916). This gender distribution aligns with the overall male-to-female ratio in management programs at local ethnic universities. A two-sample heteroscedastic T-test was employed to compare the mean achievement motivation scores between genders, as variances were deemed unequal. The results (Table 2) indicated a significant difference ($p < 0.000$), substantiating that gender significantly influences achievement motivation, thus confirming hypothesis H1a.

One-way ANOVA analysis on student ages is provided in Table 3. The between-groups sum of squares was 723.133 (df = 10, MSA = 72.313), while the within-groups sum of squares was 13056.411 (df = 1380, MSE = 9.461). A calculated F statistic of 7.643 ($p < 0.000$) reaffirmed significant differences in achievement motivation among various age groups, hence validating hypothesis H1b. Further analysis revealed a strong correlation between family income and parental education levels. Students were categorized based on parental education into six groups: primary school or below, junior high school, high school/technical secondary, junior college, undergraduate, and graduate. Single-factor variance analysis indicated a significant difference in achievement motivation across these backgrounds (Table 4), with a F value of 7.661 ($p < 0.000$), confirming hypothesis H1c. In conclusion, a significant correlation exists between background factors and achievement motivation among college students in ethnic minority regions, thereby affirming hypothesis H1.

Table 1: Statistics of Achievement Motivation for Male and Female Students

	Gender	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	Standard Error of the Mean
Achievement Motivation	Male	513	17.03	3.308	.146
	Female	878	18.52	2.916	.098

Table 2: Independent Samples T-test

		Levene Test for Equality of Variances					T-test for the Mean Equation			
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (Two-tailed)	Mean Difference	Standard Error	95% Confidence Interval for the Difference	
									Lower Limit	Upper Limit
Achievement Motivation	Assume equal variances	.754	.385	-8.762	1389	.000	-1.493	.170	-1.827	-1.159
	Assume unequal variances			-8.477	966.077	.000	-1.493	.176	-1.838	-1.147

Table 3: One-way ANOVA of Age

Achievement Motivation					
	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Significance
Between Group	723.133	10	72.313	7.643	.000
Within Group	13056.411	1380	9.461		
Total	13779.544	1390			

Table 4: One-way ANOVA of Family Background

Achievement Motivation					
	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Significance
Between Group	370.865	5	74.173	7.661	.000
Within Group	13408.679	1385	9.681		
Total	13779.544	1390			

5.3.2. Correlation Analysis of Learning environment and Achievement Motivation

A correlation analysis (Table 5) examining the relationship between students' learning environment and achievement motivation yields a Pearson correlation coefficient of 0.649, with a significance level of 0.000 ($p < 0.01$), indicating a substantial correlation. This finding is particularly relevant for management students at local ethnic universities, supporting hypothesis H2a. Additionally, the correlation between teacher support and achievement motivation (Table 6) was analyzed, revealing a Pearson correlation of 0.454, also with a significance level of 0.000 ($p < 0.01$), confirming a significant correlation. This correlation holds true for management students at local ethnic universities, thus verifying hypothesis H2b. In summary, a significant correlation exists between the learning environment of ethnic minority universities and college students' achievement motivation, confirming hypothesis H2.

Table 5: Correlation Analysis of Learning environment				Table 6: Correlation Analysis of Teacher Support			
		Learning environment	Achievement Motivation			Teacher Support	Achievement Motivation
Learning environment	Pearson Correlation	1	.649**	Teacher Support	Pearson Correlation	1	.454**
	Sig. (Two-tailed)		0		Sig. (Two-tailed)		0
	N	1391	1391		N	1391	1391
Achievement Motivation	Pearson Correlation	.649**	1	Achievement Motivation	Pearson Correlation	.454**	1
	Sig. (Two-tailed)	0			Sig. (Two-tailed)	0	
	N	1391	1391		N	1391	1391

** . Significant correlation at the .01 level (two-sided).

** . Significant correlation at the .01 level (two-sided).

5.3.3. Correlation Analysis of Educational Interventions and Achievement Motivation

A correlation analysis was performed on educational interventions and students' achievement motivation, as shown in Table 7. The Pearson correlation between the learning environment and achievement motivation is 0.419, with a significance (two-tailed) of 0.000. This is significantly lower than the 0.01 threshold, indicating a strong correlation. Among management majors at ethnic local universities, participation in these interventions significantly correlates with achievement motivation, confirming hypothesis H3a. Similarly, an analysis of psychological counseling and support (Table 8)

revealed a Pearson correlation of 0.445, with a significance of 0.000, well below the 0.01 level. This finding suggests a substantial impact of psychological support on achievement motivation among management students at ethnic local universities, establishing hypothesis H3b. In conclusion, a significant correlation exists between psychological counseling and support and achievement motivation in this demographic, confirming hypothesis H3.

5.3.4. Correlation Analysis of Comprehensive Factors and Achievement Motivation

We aggregated scores from factors including learning environment, teacher support, educational interventions, psychological counseling, and related support to form comprehensive factor scores. A correlation analysis (Table 9) revealed a Pearson correlation of 0.624 between these factors and achievement motivation, with a two-tailed significance of 0.000, well below the alpha level of 0.01. This indicates a substantial positive correlation. Specifically, personal background, learning environment, and educational interventions positively influence the achievement motivation of management students in ethnic universities. Thus, Hypothesis H4 is established.

Table 7: Correlation Analysis of Educational Intervention Activities				Table 8: Correlation Analysis of Psychological Counseling and Support			
		Educational Intervention Activities	Achievement Motivation			Psychological Counseling and Support	Achievement Motivation
Educational Intervention Activities	Pearson Correlation	1	.419**	Psychological Counseling and Support	Pearson Correlation	1	.445**
	Sig. (Two-tailed)		0		Sig. (Two-tailed)		0
	N	1391	1391		N	1391	1391
Achievement Motivation	Pearson Correlation	.419**	1	Achievement Motivation	Pearson Correlation	.445**	1
	Sig. (Two-tailed)	0			Sig. (Two-tailed)	0	
	N	1391	1391		N	1391	1391
**. Significant correlation at the .01 level (two-sided).				**. Significant correlation at the .01 level (two-sided).			

Table 9: Correlation Analysis of Comprehensive Factors

		Comprehensive Factors	Achievement Motivation
Comprehensive Factors	Pearson Correlation	1	.624**
	Sig. (Two-tailed)		.000
	N	1391	1391
Achievement Motivation	Pearson Correlation	.624**	1
	Sig. (Two-tailed)	.000	
	N	1391	1391
**. Significant correlation at the .01 level (two-sided).			

6. Conclusions and Suggestions

6.1. Research Conclusions

6.1.1. Personal background and achievement motivation

The investigation and analysis of students majoring in management at colleges and universities in ethnic minority areas demonstrates a significant correlation between personal background and achievement motivation. Among these factors, gender plays a substantial role, with girls showing a higher average achievement motivation score than boys. Age is also significantly correlated with achievement motivation, revealing differences in mean achievement motivation scores among students of various ages. Additionally, family background—specifically, the highest cultural level of parents—has a significant link to achievement motivation, indicating variance in mean achievement motivation

among students from different family backgrounds.

6.1.2. Learning environment and achievement motivation

There is a significant correlation between learning environment and achievement motivation. The Pearson correlation between learning environment and achievement motivation is 0.649, and the Pearson correlation between teacher support and achievement motivation is 0.454. These correlations are significantly correlated at the 0.01 level (two-tailed).

6.1.3. Educational intervention and achievement motivation

There is a significant correlation between educational intervention and achievement motivation. The Pearson correlation between educational intervention activities and achievement motivation is 0.419, and the Pearson correlation between psychological counseling and support and achievement motivation is 0.445, significantly correlated at the 0.01 level (two-tailed).

6.1.4. Comprehensive factors and achievement motivation

Considering factors such as personal background, learning environment, and educational intervention, the comprehensive score is correlated with achievement motivation, and the Pearson correlation is 0.624, which is significantly correlated at the 0.01 level (two-tailed) and positively correlated, indicating that comprehensive factors positively affect achievement motivation.

6.2. Suggestions

6.2.1. Personal Background

Considering gender differences, educators should pay attention to the distinct achievement motivation characteristics of boys and girls in the teaching process. For boys, more challenging and motivating teaching methods can be employed to stimulate their competitive awareness and enhance their achievement motivation; for girls, the focus can shift to fostering their innovative thinking and practical skills to further boost their achievement motivation. Teaching content and methods should be designed according to the age characteristics of the students, providing appropriate learning resources and guidance to meet the achievement motivation needs of different age groups. It is crucial to consider the differences in students' family backgrounds, ensuring that more comprehensive support and assistance are provided for students from low-income families. This support may include scholarships, grants, and academic counseling to address disparities in achievement motivation that may arise from family background.

6.2.2. Learning environment

Schools should commit to several aspects of enhancing the learning environment. First, they should foster a positive learning environment by promoting classroom interaction and providing abundant learning resources. Second, they need to encourage healthy competition among students, motivate them to consider their future and assist them in setting realistic life goals. Doing so will contribute to stimulating achievement motivation. Additionally, schools should improve teachers' support for students. First, teachers should provide instant guidance and feedback, effective support when students achieve results or suffer setbacks. Second, teachers need to help students overcome difficulties, rebuild confidence, and enhance students' achievement motivation.

6.2.3. Educational intervention

In the context of educational intervention, optimizing relevant activities is essential. This includes thoughtfully designing career planning courses, offering more high-quality internship opportunities, helping students clarify their career objectives through practical experience, enhancing their sense of self-efficacy, and increasing their achievement motivation. Strategies that can be adopted involve strengthening psychological counseling and support efforts, establishing a comprehensive counseling system, promptly assessing students' psychological states, providing targeted counseling, assisting students in stress relief, adjusting their mindsets, actively confronting learning and life challenges, and improving their overall achievement motivation.

7. Deficiencies and Prospects

7.1. Research Deficiencies

7.1.1. Sample Limitations

This study only surveyed students majoring in management at ethnic minority colleges and universities. The sample range is relatively narrow and may not fully represent the situation of all college students. The universality of the conclusions requires further verification.

7.1.2. Insufficient Consideration of Factors

Although the study considered multiple factors, such as personal background, learning environment, and educational intervention, other important factors, like social and cultural environments and regional differences, may affect students' motivation in real life. These factors were not thoroughly explored in this study.

7.1.3. Single Research Method

This study primarily used questionnaire surveys to collect and analyze data. While the validity and reliability of the questionnaire were ensured through careful design and repeated revisions, relying on a single research method may not fully and deeply reveal the formation mechanism and influencing factors of achievement motivation.

7.2. Research Prospects

7.2.1. Expand the Scope of Samples

Future research can broaden the scope of samples by including students from other majors in ethnic minority colleges and universities, as well as students from different regions and types of colleges and universities, to enhance the universality of research conclusions.

7.2.2. Comprehensively Consider More Factors

Additionally, other factors that may influence achievement motivation, such as the social and cultural environment and regional differences, should be explored and incorporated into the research system to analyze the formation mechanism and influencing factors of achievement motivation in a more comprehensive manner.

7.2.3. Use Multiple Research Methods

Combining various research methods, such as experimental research, case analysis, and interviews, can facilitate a deeper study of achievement motivation from different angles, compensating for the limitations of a single research method and more accurately revealing the formation mechanism and influencing factors of achievement motivation.

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