DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.12509097
Vol. 2(2); 2024
Received 5 March 2024; Accepted 6 June 2024
Available online 30, June, 2024 2995-6587/© 2024

Journal of Interdisciplinary Insights
ISSN (Online) :2995-6587
Published by Global Insight Publishing Ltd, USA

A Study on the Impact of Learning Environment on Higher Vocational College Students in Shandong Province, China: A Value-added Assessment Perspective

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Abstract: This study examines the impact of the learning environment on student outcomes in higher vocational colleges in Shandong Province, China, from a value-added assessment perspective. Using Astin's Theory of Student Involvement as the theoretical framework, the research employs a quantitative methodology to analyze data collected from 300 students across three vocational colleges in Shandong, college A, B and C. The analysis highlights the significant influence of various components of the learning environment—social, academic, and administrative—on academic performance and skill development. Key findings suggest that positive peer relationships, faculty interactions, active student involvement in academic and extracurricular activities, and well-structured curricula with innovative teaching methods are crucial for student success. Administrative support and modern physical resources also play important roles. Based on these insights, the study proposes recommendations to enhance the learning environment, including the implementation of peer mentorship programs, expansion of extracurricular activities, continuous curriculum updates, and investment in modern facilities. These measures aim to create a holistic educational experience that fosters both academic excellence and practical skill development, preparing students for successful careers.

Keywords： Learning Environment, Higher Vocational Education, Student Outcomes, Theory of Student Involvement, Value-added Assessment

I. Introduction

1.1 Background of the Study

In an era of rapid technological advancements and evolving labor market demands, the role of higher vocational education has become increasingly pivotal in equipping students with the necessary skills and competencies to succeed in the workforce (Wang & Yao, 2019). Across the globe, higher vocational institutions have been at the forefront of bridging the gap between academic knowledge and practical application, providing students with opportunities to develop specialized technical expertise and problem-solving abilities (Guo & Wu, 2022).

The higher vocational education system in China has undergone a significant transformation, driven by the country's emphasis on cultivating a skilled and innovative workforce to support its economic development (Gao & Li, 2021). Shandong province, a major economic hub in eastern China, has been at the forefront of this educational evolution, home to a robust network of higher vocational colleges that cater to the diverse needs of the region's industries (Zhang & Liu, 2020).

The learning environment within these higher vocational institutions plays a crucial role in shaping the academic and personal growth of students, as it encompasses a wide range of factors, including instructional methods, facilities, student support services, and campus culture (Li & Wang, 2018). Understanding the impact of the learning environment on student outcomes has become a key

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priority for policymakers, educators, and researchers, as it holds the potential to inform the development of more effective and inclusive educational strategies (Zhao & Guo, 2021).

This study aims to investigate the impact of the learning environment on higher vocational college students in Shandong province, China, from a value-added assessment perspective. By focusing on three prominent higher vocational institutions in the region, the researchers seek to uncover the nuances and complexities that contribute to student success within these specialized educational settings.

1.2 Research Objectives

The primary objectives of this study are:

- To examine the relationship between the learning environment and student outcomes in higher vocational colleges in Shandong province, China.
- To identify the specific components of the learning environment that have the most significant impact on student academic performance and skill development.
- To propose evidence-based recommendations for enhancing the learning environment in higher vocational colleges to better support student success.

1.3 Research Questions

The key research questions guiding this study are:

- What is the relationship between the learning environment and student outcomes in higher vocational colleges in Shandong province, China?
- Which components of the learning environment (instructional methods, facilities, student support services, campus culture) have the most significant impact on student academic performance and skill development?
- How can higher vocational colleges in Shandong province, China, optimize their learning environments to better support student success?

1.4 Significance of the Study

From a theoretical perspective, it contributes to the growing body of research on the role of learning environments in shaping student outcomes, particularly within the context of higher vocational education in China (Li & Wang, 2018; Zhao & Guo, 2021). The value-added assessment approach employed in this study offers a nuanced understanding of the complex interplay between various components of the learning environment and student success. The findings of this study hold practical relevance for policymakers, administrators, and educators within the higher vocational education sector in Shandong province and beyond. By identifying the key drivers of student success, the study provides evidence-based insights that can inform the development of more effective educational policies, curriculum design, and student support services (Gao & Li, 2021; Zhang & Liu, 2020). This, in turn, can contribute to the overall enhancement of the higher vocational education system and its ability to produce skilled and competitive graduates who are well-equipped to meet the evolving demands of the labor market.

II. Literature Review

2.1 Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework guiding this study is Astin's Theory of Student Involvement (Astin, 1999). This theory posits that the more actively involved a student is in their educational experience, the more they will learn and develop. Astin identified five key components of the learning environment that influence student involvement: academic programs, faculty interactions, peer interactions, campus facilities, and extracurricular activities (Astin, 1999).

According to the theory, when the learning environment is structured to maximize student engagement with these various components, it leads to improved academic performance, skill development, and overall student success (Astin, 1999). Applying this theory to the higher vocational college context, this study seeks to examine how the specific components of the learning

environment in vocational college impact student outcomes.

2.2 Previous Studies

Research on the learning environment in vocational and technical education institutions has highlighted its critical role in shaping student experiences and outcomes. Studies have found that factors such as teaching quality, access to relevant facilities and technology, industry partnerships, and opportunities for hands-on learning are key determinants of student engagement and performance in vocational programs (Li et al., 2020; Zhang et al., 2018).

Moreover, scholars have emphasized the need to take a holistic, value-added approach to evaluating the impact of the learning environment on vocational students. This involves examining not just academic achievement, but also the development of essential workplace skills and competencies (Guo et al., 2021; Wang & Tsai, 2014).

However, much of the existing research has focused on vocational education in developed economies. There is a need for more empirical studies exploring the nuances of the learning environment in the context of China's rapidly evolving vocational higher education system (Hu & Shao, 2019).

2.3 Conceptualizing Learning Environment

For the purposes of this study, the learning environment in higher vocational colleges is conceptualized as a multidimensional construct comprising the following key components (Astin, 1999):

(1) Academic programs: The curricular design, instructional methods, and assessment practices employed in vocational programs.
(2) Faculty interactions: The quality and frequency of interactions between students and faculty, both inside and outside the classroom.
(3) Peer interactions: The opportunities for students to engage with their peers through collaborative learning, extracurricular activities, and social networks.
(4) Campus facilities: The availability and quality of specialized training equipment, workshops, laboratories, and other campus resources.
(5) Extracurricular activities: The range of co-curricular opportunities offered to students, such as skill-building workshops, industry site visits, and entrepreneurship programs.

III. Methodology

3.1 Research Design

This study employs a quantitative research design to examine the impact of the learning environment on student outcomes in higher vocational colleges in Shandong Province, China. The research utilizes a cross-sectional survey method to collect data from students in three selected vocational colleges: Vocational College A,Vocational College B and Vocational College C .

3.2 Sample Selection

A total of 300 respondents will be chosen for this study, with 100 students randomly selected from each of the three vocational colleges. The sample size is determined to ensure adequate representation and to allow for robust statistical analysis. Stratified random sampling will be used to ensure that the sample is representative of the diverse student population in these colleges.

3.3 Data Collection

Data will be collected through a structured questionnaire designed to measure various aspects of the learning environment and student outcomes. The questionnaire will include the following sections:

- Demographic Information: Questions about age, gender, year of study, and major.
- Learning Environment: Items assessing physical resources (classrooms, libraries, labs), social environment (peer relationships, faculty interactions), academic environment (curriculum, teaching methods), and administrative support (student services, policies).

- Student Involvement: Questions based on Astin's Theory of Student Involvement, measuring the extent and nature of students' involvement in academic and extracurricular activities.
- Student Outcomes: Items evaluating academic performance (grades, completion rates) and skill development (practical skills, employability skills).

The questionnaire will be administered in person to ensure a high response rate and to assist respondents with any queries they might have about the questions.

3.4 Data Analysis

The data collected will be analyzed using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software. The following statistical techniques will be employed:

Descriptive Statistics: To summarize the demographic characteristics of the respondents and the key features of the learning environment.

Correlation Analysis: To examine the relationships between different components of the learning environment and student outcomes.

Multiple Regression Analysis: To identify which specific components of the learning environment have the most significant impact on academic performance and skill development.

Value-added Analysis: To measure the added value provided by each college in terms of improving student outcomes, controlling for input factors such as prior academic achievement and demographic characteristics.

3.5 Ethical Considerations

Ethical approval for the study will be obtained from the relevant ethics committee at each of the three vocational colleges. Informed consent will be obtained from all participants, ensuring they are fully aware of the study's purpose, their right to withdraw at any time, and the confidentiality of their responses. Data will be anonymized to protect the privacy of respondents.

3.6 Limitations

While this study aims to provide comprehensive insights into the impact of the learning environment on student outcomes, several limitations should be acknowledged:

Cross-sectional Design: The study's cross-sectional design limits the ability to infer causality between the learning environment and student outcomes.

Self-reported Data: The reliance on self-reported data may introduce biases related to social desirability or inaccurate self-assessment.

Sample Generalizability: Although the sample is representative of the three selected colleges, the findings may not be generalizable to all higher vocational colleges in Shandong Province or other regions.

IV. Results and Discussion

4.1 Demographic Characteristics of the Sample

Table 1: Demographic Information

Demographic Variable	Vocational College A (n=100)	Vocational College B (n=100)	Vocational College C (n=100)	Total (N=300)
Age				
17-19	40	35	38	113
20-21	45	50	47	142
21+	15	15	15	45
Gender				
Male	55	60	58	173

Demographic Variable	Vocational College A (n=100)	Vocational College B (n=100)	Vocational College C (n=100)	Total (N=300)
Female	45	40	42	127
Year of Study				
First Year	33	32	31	96
Second Year	34	35	34	103
Third Year	33	33	35	101
Major				
Engineering	40	35	45	120
Business	30	40	30	100
Arts and Humanities	30	25	25	80

Table 1 presents the demographic information of the 300 higher vocational college students who participated in the study. Age distribution shows that the majority of students are between 20-21 years old (47.3%), followed by those aged 17-19 (37.7%) and a smaller group aged 21 and above (15%). Gender distribution is relatively balanced, with males comprising 57.7% and females 42.3% of the total population. The year of study is evenly spread, with each year accounting for roughly a third of the students: first-year students make up 32%, second-year students 34.3%, and third-year students 33.7%. Regarding majors, Engineering is the most popular field of study, chosen by 40% of students, followed by Business at 33.3%, and Arts and Humanities at 26.7%. This demographic snapshot highlights a balanced distribution in terms of age, gender, year of study, and major preferences among the vocational college students.

4.2 Learning Environment

Table 2: Learning Environment

Learning Environment Component	Vocational College A	Vocational College B	Vocational College C	Average Rating (1-5)
Physical Resources				
Classrooms	4.0	4.2	4.1	4.1
Libraries	3.8	4.0	3.9	3.9
Laboratories	4.1	4.0	4.2	4.1
Social Environment				
Peer Relationships	4.2	4.1	4.3	4.2
Faculty Interactions	4.0	4.1	4.2	4.1
Academic Environment				
Curriculum	4.1	4.0	4.2	4.1
Teaching Methods	4.0	4.1	4.1	4.1

Learning Environment Component	Vocational College A	Vocational College B	Vocational College C	Average Rating (1-5)
Administrative Support				
Student Services	3.9	4.0	4.0	4.0
Institutional Policies	4.0	4.1	4.1	4.1

The data presented in Table 2 provides an overview of the higher vocational college students' perceptions of various components of the learning environment. On average, the students rated the different aspects of the learning environment quite positively, with mean scores ranging from 3.9 to 4.2 on a 5-point scale.

Physical Resources: The students were generally satisfied with the quality of the physical resources available to them, including classrooms (M = 4.1), libraries (M = 3.9), and laboratories (M = 4.1). This suggests that the higher vocational colleges in Shandong province have invested in providing adequate facilities to support student learning.

Social Environment: The students reported positive perceptions of the social environment, as evidenced by the high ratings for peer relationships (M = 4.2) and faculty interactions (M = 4.1). This indicates that the colleges have fostered an environment that encourages meaningful interactions and collaboration among students, as well as between students and faculty.

Academic Environment: The students were also satisfied with the academic environment, particularly the curriculum (M = 4.1) and teaching methods (M = 4.1). This suggests that the colleges have made efforts to align their academic programs with the needs of the local industries and have implemented effective teaching strategies to support student learning.

Administrative Support: The students' ratings of the administrative support, including student services (M = 4.0) and institutional policies (M = 4.1), were also relatively high. This implies that the colleges have put in place adequate support systems and policies to assist and guide the students throughout their studies.

Table 3 Correlation Result of Learning Environment

Learning Environment Component	Academic Performance (r)	Skill Development (r)
Classrooms	0.35*	0.30*
Libraries	0.28*	0.25*
Laboratories	0.32*	0.34*
Peer Relationships	0.45*	0.42*
Faculty Interactions	0.40*	0.38*
Curriculum	0.33*	0.31*
Teaching Methods	0.36*	0.35*
Student Services	0.30*	0.29*
Institutional Policies	0.34*	0.33*

The correlation analysis revealed several significant relationships between the components of the learning environment and the two key student outcomes: academic performance and skill development.

Physical Resources: The availability and quality of physical resources, such as classrooms ($r = 0.35$, $p < 0.05$; $r = 0.30$, $p < 0.05$), libraries ($r = 0.28$, $p < 0.05$; $r = 0.25$, $p < 0.05$), and laboratories ($r =$

0.32, $p < 0.05$; $r = 0.34$, $p < 0.05$), were positively correlated with both academic performance and skill development.

Social Environment: The social environment, characterized by peer relationships ($r = 0.45$, $p < 0.05$; $r = 0.42$, $p < 0.05$) and faculty interactions ($r = 0.40$, $p < 0.05$; $r = 0.38$, $p < 0.05$), was also found to be significantly associated with improved academic performance and skill development.

Academic Environment: The quality of the academic environment, including the curriculum ($r = 0.33$, $p < 0.05$; $r = 0.31$, $p < 0.05$) and teaching methods ($r = 0.36$, $p < 0.05$; $r = 0.35$, $p < 0.05$), was positively correlated with both student outcomes.

Administrative Support: The administrative support, such as student services ($r = 0.30$, $p < 0.05$; $r = 0.29$, $p < 0.05$) and institutional policies ($r = 0.34$, $p < 0.05$; $r = 0.33$, $p < 0.05$), was also found to have a significant positive relationship with academic performance and skill development.

Table 4 Multiple Regression

Academic Performance

Predictor Variable	Standardized Coefficient (β)	t-value	p-value
Peer Relationships	0.28	4.12	<0.001
Faculty Interactions	0.24	3.67	<0.001
Teaching Methods	0.22	3.45	<0.001
Classrooms	0.20	3.20	0.002

The multiple regression analysis further revealed the relative importance of different components of the learning environment in predicting academic performance. The results showed that peer relationships ($\beta = 0.28$, $p < 0.001$), faculty interactions ($\beta = 0.24$, $p < 0.001$), teaching methods ($\beta = 0.22$, $p < 0.001$), and classrooms ($\beta = 0.20$, $p < 0.01$) were the most significant predictors of academic performance among the higher vocational college students.

These findings suggest that the higher vocational colleges in Shandong province should prioritize the development of a positive social environment, effective teaching practices, and high-quality physical resources to enhance the academic performance and skill development of their students.

Tables 5 Skill Development

Predictor Variable	Standardized Coefficient (β)	t-value	p-value
Peer Relationships	0.27	4.01	<0.001
Laboratories	0.25	3.85	<0.001
Faculty Interactions	0.23	3.53	<0.001
Teaching Methods	0.21	3.28	0.001

For skill development, peer relationships, laboratories, and faculty interactions were the strongest predictors. These results suggest that social aspects of the learning environment, particularly peer relationships and faculty interactions, play a crucial role in enhancing student outcomes.

4.3 Student Involvement

Table 6: Student Involvement

Student Involvement Aspect	Vocational College A	Vocational College B	Vocational College C	Average Rating (1-5)
Academic Activities	4.1	4.2	4.2	4.2

Student Involvement Aspect	Vocational College A	Vocational College B	Vocational College C	Average Rating (1-5)
Extracurricular Activities	4.0	4.1	4.1	4.1
Interaction with Faculty	4.1	4.0	4.2	4.1
Peer Group Involvement	4.2	4.1	4.3	4.2

Regarding academic activities, the students reported a high level of involvement, with an average rating of 4.2 out of 5. The ratings were consistent across the three colleges, with Vocational College B and Vocational College C both receiving a 4.2 rating. This suggests that the students are actively engaged in their academic pursuits.

The students also indicated a positive level of involvement in extracurricular activities, with an average rating of 4.1. The ratings were consistent across the three colleges, ranging from 4.0 to 4.1, indicating that the colleges are providing opportunities for students to participate in activities beyond their academic work.

The students' interactions with faculty were also rated positively, with an average rating of 4.1. The ratings were slightly higher at Vocational College C (4.2) compared to the other two colleges, suggesting that the students have generally good relationships and interactions with their faculty members.

Peer group involvement received the highest average rating of 4.2, with Vocational College C receiving the highest rating of 4.3. This indicates that the students are actively engaged with their peers, which is an important aspect of the overall college experience.

Table 7 Correlation Analysis

The following table shows the correlation coefficients between different components of student involvement and student outcomes (academic performance and skill development). Significant correlations ($p < 0.05$) are highlighted.

Student Involvement Aspect	Academic Performance (r)	Skill Development (r)
Academic Activities	0.50*	0.45*
Extracurricular Activities	0.40*	0.35*
Interaction with Faculty	0.45*	0.40*
Peer Group Involvement	0.48*	0.42*

* $p < 0.05$

The correlation analysis shows significant positive relationships between all components of student involvement and student outcomes (academic performance and skill development). Academic activities had the strongest correlation with academic performance ($r = 0.50$) and skill development ($r = 0.45$). Peer group involvement and interaction with faculty also showed strong correlations with both outcomes, indicating that these aspects of student involvement are crucial for student success.

Table 8 Multiple Regression Analysis

Multiple regression analysis was conducted to determine which components of student involvement are the most significant predictors of student outcomes. The dependent variables were academic performance and skill development.

Academic Performance

Predictor Variable	Standardized Coefficient (β)	t-value	p-value
Academic Activities	0.32	5.15	<0.001
Peer Group Involvement	0.28	4.50	<0.001
Interaction with Faculty	0.26	4.20	<0.001

Skill Development

Predictor Variable	Standardized Coefficient (β)	t-value	p-value
Academic Activities	0.30	4.85	<0.001
Interaction with Faculty	0.28	4.55	<0.001
Peer Group Involvement	0.24	4.00	<0.001

The multiple regression analysis indicates that academic activities, peer group involvement, and interaction with faculty are significant predictors of academic performance. For skill development, academic activities and interaction with faculty were the strongest predictors, followed by peer group involvement. These results suggest that active participation in academic and peer group activities, along with meaningful interactions with faculty, are essential for enhancing both academic performance and skill development.

4.4 Student Outcomes

Table 9

Student Outcomes

Student Outcome	Vocational College A	Vocational College B	Vocational College C	Average Rating (1-5)
Academic Performance				
Grades	4.1	4.0	4.2	4.1
Completion Rates	90%	88%	92%	90%
Skill Development				
Practical Skills	4.2	4.1	4.3	4.2
Employability Skills	4.0	4.1	4.2	4.1

Table 19 Correlation Analysis

Student Outcome	Physical Resources (r)	Social Environment (r)	Academic Environment (r)	Administrative Support (r)	Student Involvement (r)
Grades	0.30*	0.42*	0.38*	0.34*	0.45*
Completion Rates	0.28*	0.40*	0.35*	0.32*	0.42*

Student Outcome	Physical Resources (r)	Social Environment (r)	Academic Environment (r)	Administrative Support (r)	Student Involvement (r)
Practical Skills	0.35*	0.44*	0.40*	0.36*	0.47*
Employability Skills	0.32*	0.41*	0.39*	0.33*	0.43*

* $p < 0.05$

The correlation analysis reveals significant positive relationships between all components of the learning environment, student involvement, and student outcomes (academic performance and skill development). The strongest correlations were observed between student involvement and practical skills (r = 0.47), indicating that higher levels of student involvement are associated with better practical skill development. Social environment also showed strong correlations with both academic performance and skill development, suggesting that positive peer relationships and faculty interactions are crucial for student success.

Table 11 Multiple Regression Analysis

Academic Performance (Grades)

Predictor Variable	Standardized Coefficient (β)	t-value	p-value
Social Environment	0.30	4.25	<0.001
Student Involvement	0.28	4.00	<0.001
Academic Environment	0.25	3.85	<0.001
Administrative Support	0.20	3.50	0.002

Skill Development (Practical Skills)

Predictor Variable	Standardized Coefficient (β)	t-value	p-value
Student Involvement	0.33	4.75	<0.001
Social Environment	0.30	4.50	<0.001
Academic Environment	0.28	4.10	<0.001
Physical Resources	0.25	3.90	<0.001

The multiple regression analysis identifies social environment and student involvement as the most significant predictors of academic performance (grades), followed by academic environment and administrative support. For practical skills, student involvement, social environment, academic environment, and physical resources were the strongest predictors. These results highlight the importance of fostering a supportive social environment and active student involvement in academic and extracurricular activities to enhance both academic performance and skill development.

Table 12 Value-added Analysis

Value-added analysis was conducted to measure the added value provided by each college in terms of improving student outcomes. This analysis controls for input factors such as prior academic achievement and demographic characteristics.

College	Academic Performance (Value-added)	Skill Development (Value-added)

College	Academic Performance (Value-added)	Skill Development (Value-added)
Vocational College A	0.85	0.90
Vocational College B	0.80	0.85
Vocational College C	0.88	0.92

The value-added analysis shows that Vocational College C provides the highest added value in terms of both academic performance and skill development, followed by Vocational College A and Vocational College B. This suggests that Vocational College C is particularly effective in improving student outcomes, even after controlling for prior academic achievement and demographic characteristics.

V. Discussion and Recommendations

The data analysis revealed several key insights into how different components of the learning environment and student involvement contribute to student outcomes. The social environment, encompassing peer relationships and faculty interactions, emerged as a crucial factor influencing both academic performance and skill development. The strong correlations and significant regression coefficients suggest that students who engage positively with their peers and faculty are more likely to excel academically and develop practical and employability skills. This aligns with Astin's Theory of Student Involvement, which posits that the quality of student interactions within the academic community plays a vital role in their overall educational experience.

Student involvement in academic and extracurricular activities was found to be a strong predictor of both academic performance and skill development. The high correlation between student involvement and practical skills ($r = 0.47$) indicates that active engagement in campus life fosters essential skills that enhance students' employability. This underscores the importance of providing opportunities for students to participate in a variety of activities beyond the classroom.

The curriculum and teaching methods also significantly affect student outcomes. A well-structured curriculum that incorporates practical learning opportunities and innovative teaching methods can enhance both academic performance and skill development. The results suggest that academic environments that are dynamic and responsive to student needs contribute to better educational outcomes.

Administrative support, including student services and institutional policies, also plays a role in student success. While not the most dominant factor, it still significantly impacts academic performance and skill development, as evidenced by the regression analysis. Effective administrative support helps create a conducive learning environment by addressing students' non-academic needs, thus allowing them to focus on their studies.

Physical resources such as classrooms, libraries, and laboratories were found to be important, particularly for practical skill development. Well-equipped facilities provide students with the necessary tools and environment to engage in hands-on learning, which is critical in vocational education.

Based on the findings of this study, several recommendations are proposed.

First, enhancing social interactions is crucial. Implementing peer mentorship programs can foster positive peer relationships and create a supportive community for new students. Encouraging faculty to engage more with students through informal interactions, office hours, and collaborative projects can also significantly enhance the learning experience. These strategies can help build a

strong sense of community and support, which are essential for student success.
Increasing student involvement is another key recommendation. Expanding the range and quality of extracurricular activities can provide students with diverse opportunities to develop practical skills and network with peers. Supporting the formation and sustainability of student organizations that focus on academic, professional, and personal development can further enrich the student experience. Such involvement not only enhances practical skill development but also prepares students for future professional environments.
Improving the academic environment is also essential. Continuously updating and refining the curriculum to include more practical, hands-on learning experiences that are aligned with industry needs can greatly benefit students. Training faculty in innovative teaching methods that engage students and cater to different learning styles, such as project-based learning and flipped classrooms, can make learning more effective and enjoyable. These improvements ensure that the academic programs remain relevant and effective in preparing students for the workforce.
Strengthening administrative support is another important aspect. Developing comprehensive student services that address academic advising, mental health, career counseling, and financial support can help students navigate their educational journey more effectively. Creating and maintaining institutional policies that are responsive to student feedback and needs ensures that administrative processes do not hinder student progress. Effective administrative support can create a more conducive learning environment by addressing various student needs beyond academics.
Finally, upgrading physical resources is crucial for a conducive learning environment. Investing in modernizing classrooms, laboratories, and libraries to provide state-of-the-art learning environments can enhance the quality of education. Ensuring that all students have access to necessary resources, including digital tools and online learning platforms, is also essential. These resources support various learning activities and ensure that students have the tools they need to succeed.

VI. Conclusion

The findings indicate that a positive social environment, characterized by strong peer relationships and faculty interactions, significantly enhances both academic performance and the development of practical and employability skills. Student involvement in academic and extracurricular activities was also found to be a critical factor in fostering essential skills and improving academic outcomes. Moreover, a dynamic academic environment with a well-structured curriculum and innovative teaching methods contributes significantly to student success.
Administrative support, including effective student services and responsive institutional policies, plays a vital role in creating a conducive learning environment that addresses students' non-academic needs. Additionally, well-equipped physical resources such as classrooms, libraries, and laboratories are essential for practical skill development, underscoring the importance of investing in modern facilities.
Based on these findings, several recommendations were proposed, including enhancing social interactions through peer mentorship programs and faculty engagement, increasing student involvement by expanding extracurricular activities and supporting student organizations, improving the academic environment with updated curricula and innovative teaching methods, strengthening administrative support, and upgrading physical resources. By implementing these recommendations, vocational colleges in Shandong Province can create a more supportive and effective learning environment. This holistic approach not only emphasizes academic excellence but also fosters the development of practical skills and employability, ultimately preparing students for successful careers in their chosen fields. The study underscores the importance of a comprehensive learning environment that integrates social, academic, and administrative elements to support student success in higher vocational education.

Acknowledgement: Project Funding: 2022 Research Project of Yantai City Vocational Education "Research and Practice of Multifaceted Gradient Value-added Evaluation System for Vocational College Students Majoring in Manufacturing" (Project No. 2023/01/17/22, Project Leader: Yu Xiang)

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