Research on the Influence of Blended Curriculum Teaching Evaluation Design on Learning Motivation--Based on Control Value Theory

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Abstract: *Blended learning environments bring new dimensions to the teaching capabilities of college instructors while also presenting novel challenges. Addressing these challenges requires investigation not only at the theoretical and policy levels but also in terms of individual awareness and practical implementation. Grounded in the control-value theory, this study scrutinizes the teaching evaluation design, control-value assessment, and students' learning motivation in blended courses within the blended online, online, and offline classroom settings. The study aims to explore the intricate relationships among these three components. The findings reveal that the teaching evaluation design of blended curriculum has no direct and significant impact on students' learning motivation in college classrooms. However, it does exert an indirect influence on students' learning motivation through control evaluation and value assessment. The outcomes of this research contribute to enhancing instructors' comprehension of the mechanisms that stimulate students' learning motivation in a blended curriculum context. Subsequently, it offers valuable insights for interventions to enhance students' learning motivation in college classrooms.*

Keywords: Blended Teaching; Learning Enthusiasm; Teaching Evaluation Design; Control Value.

1. INTRODUCTION

The evolution of The Times has rendered blended teaching both necessary and feasible. The 2016 "Guiding Opinions on Deepening Education and Teaching Reform in universities affiliated with the Central Government," issued by the Ministry of Education, advocated for the "promotion of intercampus online and offline blended teaching reform." Subsequently, in 2019, the "Implementation Opinions of the Ministry of Education on the Construction of First-class Undergraduate Courses" introduced the "Double Million Plan" for first-class undergraduate courses, encompassing approximately 6,000 state-level online and offline hybrid courses.

Blended Learning has traversed three phases, progressing from technology application version 1.0 to technology integration version 2.0 and culminating in the "Internet Plus" version 3.0, which places emphasis on the learning experience (Chen et al., 2023) [1]. Its essence has transformed into a "teaching situation based on mobile communication equipment, network learning environment, and classroom discussion." This approach amalgamates face-to-face and online teaching, as well as student-centered instruction and tutoring. Going beyond the confines of a singular learning environment, it emerges as a novel and optimal pedagogical approach to enhance students' learning outcomes. In this paradigm, the primary role of the teacher shifts to that of a learning designer and facilitator. Although blended teaching, a concept coined by domestic scholars based on blended learning, is often interchangeably used, it subtly diverges in focus: blended learning centers on students, while blended teaching centers on teachers (Doo et al., 2020) [2]. This implies that teachers, through strategic teaching design, propel students towards blended learning behaviors and attain optimal learning outcomes. To avoid confusion, this study will consistently employ the term "blended teaching."

Nevertheless, blended teaching is still in its infancy, and the concept of blended teaching design remains unfamiliar to most educators. Currently, the academic community concentrates on the design and implementation of blended teaching, evaluation criteria, teacher acceptance, influencing factors, and other pertinent issues (Arbaugh, 2014) [3]. Various interpretive frameworks, such as the Community of Inquiry, Disruptive Innovation, ADDIE teaching design model, blended teaching dynamic support model, and Technology Acceptance Model,

have been proposed to guide teachers in conducting blended teaching (Zhai et al., 2023) [4]. However, limited research exists on teachers' readiness and competency models for blended teaching, and empirical studies based on practical cases are scarce. Therefore, this study aspires to comprehend the prevailing challenges and difficulties in current blended teaching evaluation designs through an assessment of existing schemes. Building on this understanding, the study aims to propose reference suggestions for refining blended teaching evaluation designs. By doing so, it aims to assist educators in more effectively implementing the blended teaching system and fostering heightened enthusiasm for learning among students.

2. THEORETICAL BASIS AND LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Control Value Theory

The control-value theory constitutes a crucial framework within the realm of educational psychology, primarily investigating the structure, origins, influencing factors, and outcomes of academic emotions (Pekrun, 2006) [5]. This theory posits that academic emotions are shaped by both proximal and distal triggers. Proximal incentives encompass control evaluation, denoting the learner's perception of control over academic activities or outcomes, and value evaluation, reflecting the learner's assessment of the intrinsic attributes (e.g., enjoyment) and extrinsic functions (e.g., utility) of academic endeavors. Distal incentives encompass individual factors, involving cognitive level, motivation, and goals, as well as situational factors, encompassing task type, social expectations, academic feedback, and external influences.

Distal incentives can indirectly impact academic emotions by influencing learners' control evaluation and value evaluation. In essence, proximal incentives act as intermediaries between distal incentives and academic emotions. For instance, the cognitive demands of a task (i.e., task difficulty) can elicit diverse academic emotions by shaping learners' sense of control. The mismatch between the cognitive demands of a task and learners' abilities can influence learners' subjective evaluation of their control over a task, thereby yielding distinct academic emotions (Pekrun & Perry, 2014) [6].

2.2 Blended Teaching Design

Blended teaching can be categorized into a broad sense and a narrow sense. In a broad sense, blended teaching encompasses the integration of learning theories, teaching media, teaching modes, and teaching methods. In a narrow sense, it specifically denotes the fusion of offline and online teaching. However, contemporary scholars predominantly adhere to the narrow concept of blended teaching. According to Tynan et al. (2015) [7], defining blended teaching more precisely as the amalgamation of online and offline teaching is more fitting to maintain conceptual clarity.

The information age not only necessitates teaching reform but also provides the conditions for such reform. A key advantage of blended teaching lies in its ability to leverage technology to transcend temporal and spatial constraints, thereby fostering authentic learning environments. Scholars have delineated three stages of learning environment research (Richardson, 2016) [8]. Comparing the second stage (natural real-world perspective) with the third stage (technology-supported learning environment perspective), it is argued that the former involves integrating the real world into teaching, while the latter utilizes technology to construct a learning environment more conducive to student learning.

In contrast to traditional offline teaching, the learning environment crafted by blended teaching is more favorable for achieving high-level goals, albeit imposing greater demands on teachers. Effective teaching hinges on meticulous teaching design (Kim & Lim, 2019) [9]. Presently, many college instructors are not accustomed to comprehensive teaching design; instead, they often resort to creating courseware, which may lead to deviations from the intended goals. On one hand, the lofty goal of "applying expert thinking to solve problems" imposes elevated requirements for both "teacher instruction" and "student learning," necessitating meticulous planning. On the other hand, the elements of the learning environment shaped by blended teaching are more diverse and complex. Consequently, a systemic approach is imperative. This involves not only accurately and ambitiously positioning the target but also considering the design of evaluations, content, methods, resources, etc. This comprehensive approach maximizes the advantages of both online and offline components.

2.3 Blended Curriculum Teaching Evaluation and learning Enthusiasm

In recent years, the implementation of large-scale blended curriculum teaching in domestic colleges and universities has undergone a smooth transition, with positive feedback from both teachers and students (Burke & Sass, 2013) [10]. Nevertheless, several research findings highlight challenges in online teaching, such as a deficiency in teachers' online literacy, students' limited online learning abilities, and the necessity for innovative teaching management.

A predominant concern regarding blended curriculum learning revolves around the assumption that it may lead to a lack of deep learning. Deep learning is intricately linked to the attainment of advanced cognitive goals and fostering enthusiasm for learning in higher education. Recognizing that enhanced participation in the learning process is pivotal for promoting deep learning during online learning, numerous research endeavors focus on designing online learning strategies (Chen et al., 2022) [11]. These strategies aim to elevate the quality of online learning by uncovering correlations between students' online learning behavior and their enthusiasm for online learning.

Moreover, the advantage of long-term memory retention resulting from blended course learning is attributed to the intervals between learning sessions. These intervals prompt learners to forget the course content, compelling them to invest additional effort in revisiting and reproducing the materials. Consequently, learners engage in the retrieval and extraction of previously acquired information, enhancing memory and sustaining learning motivation (Larsson, 2017) [12]. Relevant studies also assert that under blended curriculum learning conditions, the forgetting induced by time intervals complicates the recall and extraction of information. As a result, learners allocate more cognitive resources to dispersed learning, establishing a heightened level of learning enthusiasm.

3. RESEARCH DESIGN

Building upon the comprehensive literature review, this study endeavors to investigate the intricate interplay among blended curriculum teaching evaluation's design, control, and value assessments, and their impact on students' motivation. The specific research questions guiding this exploration are as follows:

1) Regarding the design and control of teaching evaluations in blended courses, what is the overall landscape concerning value assessments and student enthusiasm?

2) In the design and control of blended curriculum teaching evaluations, does a direct relationship exist between value assessments and students' enthusiasm?

3) Does control-value evaluation mediate the relationship between blended curriculum teaching evaluation design and students' enthusiasm?

To address these research questions, the researchers, drawing on the findings of Pekrun (2006) [5], Li (2021) [13], and Leersnyder et al. (2023) [14], have formulated the hypothesis model depicted in Figure 1. This model incorporates specific assumptions, namely: 1) Positive predictive relationships exist between blended curriculum teaching evaluation design and control as well as value assessments; 2) Control assessments positively (or negatively) predict students' enthusiasm; 3) Value assessments positively predict students' enthusiasm; 4) Blended curriculum teaching evaluation design positively predicts students' enthusiasm.
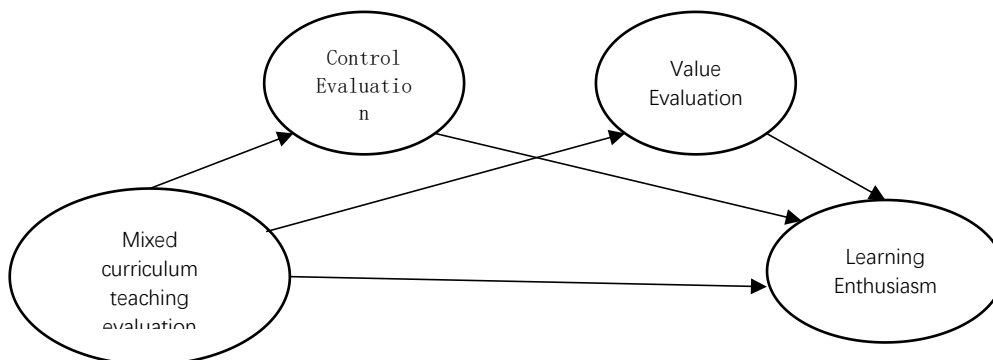

Figure 1: Conceptual model

4. RESEARCH CONCLUSION

4.1 The Impact of Blended Curriculum Teaching Evaluation Design

Evaluation design involves two difficulty indices. However, the challenges identified in the aforementioned target design are intricately linked to the evaluation process. The complexities of evaluation design primarily manifest in two dimensions. Firstly, the inadequacy of timely, diverse, and specific evaluation feedback hinders the effective implementation of process evaluation in promoting learning. Secondly, insufficient attention is given to students' self-evaluation and peer evaluation.

In general, students exhibit a positive perception of the timeliness, diversity, and specificity of feedback, along with the learning resources and interactive opportunities in classroom evaluations. However, shortcomings in the evaluation process are evident, primarily in the timeliness, diversity, and concreteness of the feedback. Consequently, students tend to perform above average in the control evaluation of the course, despite the high value evaluation, aligning with previous research findings. The overall level of students' perceived motivation to learn in blended courses is notably high, consistent with the results reported by Chen (2023) [1]. The perceived level of learning enthusiasm is closely intertwined with the perceived concreteness, timeliness, and diversity of the evaluation system in the blended classroom model.

4.2 Design and Control of Blended Curriculum Teaching Evaluation: Exploring the Direct Impact of Value Evaluation on Learning Enthusiasm

A negative correlation is observed between control evaluation and learning motivation, while a positive correlation exists between the teaching evaluation and value evaluation of blended curriculum and learning motivation. Firstly, a highly significant negative correlation is identified between control evaluation and learning motivation, aligning with Pawlak et al.'s (2020) [15] findings in the context of language majors. This emphasizes the consistency of the relationship between control evaluation and learning motivation across different disciplinary backgrounds. Future research could explore and compare this relationship in diverse disciplinary contexts. Secondly, a substantial positive correlation is noted between value evaluation and learning enthusiasm, indicating that higher value evaluation of blended courses corresponds to stronger perceived learning enthusiasm among students. This affirms the hypothesized relationship in the control and value theory (Pekrun, 2006) [5], consistent with Li's (2021) [13] research on non-English major learners in China. This discovery holds significant implications for teaching practices. In blended teaching, educators can indirectly influence the level of learning enthusiasm by intervening in students' value evaluation. For instance, teachers can guide students to comprehend fully the intrinsic value of blended courses, such as the importance of enhancing knowledge and mastering the discipline system, as well as the extrinsic value, including the relevance to extracurricular application abilities, employment prospects, and team communication. This strategic guidance aims to enhance overall value evaluation among students, thereby increasing the likelihood and intensity of students' learning enthusiasm.

4.3 Design and Management of Blended Curriculum Teaching Evaluation: The Direct Impact of Value Assessment on Learning Enthusiasm

The findings indicate that control-value evaluation serves as a complete mediating factor between the design of teaching evaluation and the learning motivation in blended curriculum. The manifestation of the blended curriculum teaching evaluation design can be tangibly illustrated through the perceived evaluation resources and interaction opportunities by learners. Consequently, it can be posited that the evaluation system, in the form of learning resources and interactive opportunities within blended curriculum teaching, indirectly influences the level of learning enthusiasm through the impact on learners' control evaluation and value evaluation.

Regarding learning resources, the teaching evaluation design of blended courses encompasses not only the conventional instruction of basic skills in professional courses but also innovatively integrates comprehensive knowledge from disciplines such as economic management. The abundant teaching content in blended curriculum enhances the interaction between learning resources and learners. The perceived evaluation system is characterized by high interaction, further deepening students' comprehension of the intrinsic and extrinsic values associated with the learning tasks in the blended curriculum. This, in turn, sustains students' learning enthusiasm at an elevated level within the blended classroom.

From the perspective of the interactive evaluation system, the notable transformation of the teacher's role into a

collaborative learner and active participant in blended curriculum is evident. Furthermore, the incorporation of task-based and project-based teaching methods has significantly amplified interactive communication opportunities in the blended classroom. With a marked increase in teacher-student interaction and mutual evaluation during the teaching process, this not only reinforces students' sense of control over classroom tasks (Richardson, 2016) [8] but also indirectly influences students' perception of learning enthusiasm in blended courses.

The aforementioned research findings offer valuable insights for the instructional design of blended courses in economics and management. Educators implementing blended curriculum strategies should recognize the indirect predictive impact of the two-way evaluation system within blended classrooms on students' learning enthusiasm and its underlying mechanisms (Goodyear, Dudley, 2015) [16]. It is imperative to strategically cultivate a positive learning atmosphere within the blended classroom setting, aiming to enhance students' perceptions of teacher evaluation, teaching evaluation, and other evaluative mechanisms. Additionally, by providing guidance on the value attributed to the significance of two-way evaluation for students and adopting a balanced approach to controlling the difficulty of classroom tasks and learning content, educators can effectively maintain students' subjective control evaluations within an optimal range. In turn, facilitates the regulation of students' experiences of learning enthusiasm in blended courses. Ultimately, such an approach not only facilitates the convergence and dual attainment of "knowledge" and "skills" but also contributes significantly to the emotional well-being of students majoring in economics and management.

5. SUMMARY

Based on the control-value theory, this study investigates students' perception of the evaluability of curriculum design in blended classroom environments. It explores the relationship between control-value evaluation and learning motivation, specifically from the perspective of the evaluability of curriculum design. The findings reveal that, while the evaluative perception of curriculum instructional design cannot directly predict learning motivation, it significantly predicts learning motivation indirectly through students' control evaluation and value evaluation.

This study affirms the psychological mechanism wherein the evaluative perception of curriculum design serves as the distal incentive for learning motivation. It co-stimulates learning motivation in conjunction with proximal incentives, such as control-value evaluation. This discovery not only underscores the explanatory and applicable power of the control-value theory but also concretizes and expands its distal incentive within hybrid classroom design. This investigation represents an initial exploration into the relationship between curriculum instructional design content and students' learning motivation. It also constitutes an initial endeavor to integrate the curriculum instructional design system with positive psychology and educational psychology theories.

However, it is crucial to note that this study exclusively focuses on the relationship between blended classroom teaching design and learning enthusiasm within the field of economics and management subjects in Chinese universities. Future research endeavors can explore the applicability of this relationship model to other academic emotions (such as pleasure, anxiety, etc.) and its relevance to different subjects, language classroom environments, various academic levels (e.g., primary and secondary schools), and diverse teaching modes (e.g., online real-time teaching, virtual simulation teaching, MOOCs, etc.). Such investigations will facilitate a deeper understanding of the influence mechanism of blended curriculum design characteristics on learning enthusiasm across different majors. Additionally, they will provide empirical data support for intervening in classroom learning enthusiasm in varied contexts, ultimately achieving the goal of fostering learners' interest in learning, promoting academic development, and enhancing teaching efficiency.

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