

Study on Campus Adaptation and Influencing Factors of Retired Vocational to Undergraduate Soldiers: A Case Study of Five Universities in Jiangsu Province

Fuxin Lin^{1,*}

¹Vocational Education College, Tianjin University of Technology and Education, Tianjin, China

*Corresponding author: 923882650@qq.com

Abstract

In recent years, there has been a continuous upward trend in the enlistment of college students in the military. The state attaches great importance to the education of retired college students. In 2021, the Ministry of Education promulgated preferential policies for retired soldiers with higher vocational colleges (associate college) to participate in the enrollment of ordinary college students without examination. Therefore, retired college students who raise their educational level through college upgrading have gradually become an important part of students in ordinary colleges and universities. Compared with general undergraduate retired college students and general undergraduate students, higher vocational colleges students who have been retired from military service have greater difficulties in learning, interpersonal and other campus adaptability, which should be highly valued. In this study, 238 retired undergraduates were selected from five colleges in Jiangsu Province for a questionnaire survey using the Learning Adaptability Scale for Undergraduates compiled by Feng Tingyong et al. and 10 of them were interviewed in depth using the interview method. The results showed that the scores of the learning motivation dimension (18.87 ± 9.05), the teaching mode dimension score (16.63 ± 7.90), the learning ability dimension score (14.14 ± 11.00), the learning attitude dimension score (9.47 ± 4.52), and the environmental factor dimension score (9.46 ± 4.62) were at a low level, and all of them were significantly lower than the scores of the general college students in the learning motivation dimension (26.73 ± 6.35), teaching mode (25.73 ± 4.98), learning ability (21.79 ± 5.02), learning attitude (14.23 ± 3.33), environmental factors (12.76 ± 3.07). Retired college students have high learning commitment and clear goals, but their poor campus adaptability is caused by factors such as weak academic foundation, poor learning methods, limited interpersonal communication, and pressure to pursue employment and further education. In view of this phenomenon, colleges should grasp the psychological characteristics of retired soldiers, provide scientific and reasonable adaptive education and carry out specialized psychological counseling; retired soldiers should also strictly demand themselves, strengthen psychological construction and quickly integrate into the campus; all parties should make concerted efforts to help retired college students and soldiers grow up to be successful and make greater contributions to the construction of the society and the cause of national defense.

Keywords

Retired College Soldiers; Vocational to Undergraduate; Campus Adjustment; Interpersonal Interaction; Mental Health.

1. Introduction

In January 2022, the Ministry of Veterans Affairs thoroughly implemented the important expositions of relevant departments regarding work for veterans, compiled and sorted out existing policies on education and training, and issued the "Twenty-Three Policy Summaries on Education and Training for Ex-servicemen"[1]. Among them, the implementation of the policy allowing retired college student soldiers with associate degrees to apply for a bachelor's degree without taking cultural course exams marks the deep integration of China's education and national defense, providing a broader space for education and development for numerous ex-servicemen. At the same time, it lays a solid foundation for the country to cultivate more high-quality composite talents. The exemption policy for upgrading to a bachelor's degree promotes the organic integration of education and military affairs. As two inseparable fields, education and military affairs have significant importance in their mutual infiltration and interactive exchanges. Through the exemption policy, ex-servicemen have the opportunity to combine their military experience with academic knowledge, laying a solid foundation for their further development in the academic field. This integration not only helps cultivate more talents with military backgrounds and professional knowledge but also provides stronger intellectual support for national construction.

Learning adaptability refers to the process by which individuals adjust themselves to adapt to the environment and learning needs, involving a series of processes such as breaking the balance, generating learning needs, actively making self-adjustments, and finally achieving a good state of adaptation[2]. Existing research has shown that learning adaptability not only plays a crucial role in academic performance but also has a close relationship with people's mental health and has an important impact on their future ability to adapt to society [3].

Returning student-veterans constitute a relatively special group among college students, experiencing the identity transformation of "student-soldier-student" [4]. Domestic scholars have discussed the manifestation and causes of adaptability issues faced by returning college student-veterans. Studies have found that returning college student-veterans face varying levels of professional foundations and difficulties in learning adaptation[5]. Most existing studies have focused on undergraduate students who enrolled in the military and returned to their studies at the same university. After the issuance of the "Twenty-Three Policy Summaries on Education and Training for Ex-servicemen" in 2022, many ex-servicemen with associate degrees seized the opportunity to continue their studies at universities and upgrade their academic qualifications. However, due to the differences between associate and undergraduate education systems, coupled with the long period of professional disuse during their military service, the learning adaptability issues faced by returning associate-to-bachelor's degree student-veterans differ from those previously encountered by returning college student-veterans. Therefore, investigating and analyzing the learning adaptability of returning associate-to-bachelor's degree student-veterans and its influencing factors is of great significance in improving this group's learning adaptability and promoting their growth and development.

2. Research Methods

2.1. Research Subjects

A total of 260 college students from five universities in Jiangsu Province were selected as the survey objects, and 238 invalid questionnaires were eliminated, with an effective rate of 91.5%. Among the survey samples, there were 234 male students, accounting for 98.32%, and 4 female students, accounting for 1.68%. In terms of age, there were 165 people aged 20-22, accounting for 69.3%; 73 people were over 23 years old, accounting for 30.7%. In terms of majors, 47

(19.75%) were in literature and history, 74 (31.09%) were in science and engineering, 57 (23.95%) were in agriculture and forestry, 38 (15.97%) were in medicine and medicine, and 22 (9.24%) were in economics and finance. There were 103 junior students, accounting for 43.28%; There were 135 seniors, accounting for 56.72%. There were 216 students who served for two years, accounting for 90.76%, and 22 (9.24%) who served for five years.

2.2. Research Tools

The Learning Adaptation Scale for College Students developed by Feng Tingyong et al [6]. includes five dimensions: learning motivation, teaching mode, learning ability, learning attitude, and environmental factors. Among them, the dimension of learning motivation includes 8 items, the dimension of teaching mode includes 7 items, the learning ability dimension includes 6 items, the learning attitude includes 4 items, and the →environmental factors include 4 items. SPSS 25.0 software was used to test the reliability of the data of the scale, and the CITC value of each item was greater than 0.4, the overall α coefficient was 0.987, and the KMO value was 0.98, indicating that the scale had good validity.

2.3. Study Procedures

A total of 260 questionnaires were distributed and collected using the Questionnaire Star platform, and 238 invalid questionnaires were eliminated, with an effective rate of 91.5%. Statistical analysis of survey data was performed using SPSS25.0.

In order to have a more comprehensive understanding of the main factors affecting the learning adaptability of retired college students. In this study, two interviewees were randomly selected according to each type of major, and telephone interviews were conducted in the form of telephone interviews on the learning adaptability, factors affecting learning, personal needs and mental health of the interviewees. The interview results were coded and statistically analyzed.

3. Findings

3.1. Learning adaptability of retired college students

In order to understand whether there is a difference between the learning adaptability of retired college students and that of ordinary college students, the results of this survey were analyzed from the previous study on the learning adaptability of ordinary college students by Li Tingna et al. [7], and the results are shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Comparison of the learning adaptability of retired college students and ordinary college students ($\pm s$)

	university student (N=328)	Retired college students (N=238)	Theoretical median	Mean difference	95% confidence interval
Motivation to learn	26.73 $\pm$ 6.35 t=-13.41**	18.87 $\pm$ 9.05	20.0	-7.86	[-9.02,-6.71]
Teaching mode	25.73 $\pm$ 4.98 t=-17.76**	16.63 $\pm$ 7.90	17.5	-9.10	[-10.11,-8.09]
Ability to learn	21.79 $\pm$ 5.02 t=-17.01**	14.14 $\pm$ 11.00	15.0	-7.64	[-8.53,-6.76]
Learning attitude	14.23 $\pm$ 3.33 t=-16.26**	9.47 $\pm$ 4.52	10.0	-4.76	[-5.34,-4.18]
environmental factors	12.76 $\pm$ 3.07 t=-11.01**	9.46 $\pm$ 4.62	10.0	-3.30	[-3.89,-2.71]

* $p < 0.05$ ** $p < 0.01$

It can be seen from Table 1 that the scores of all dimensions of learning adaptability of retired college students are significantly lower than those of ordinary college students, indicating that they generally feel uncomfortable with campus life after returning to campus.

3.2. Comparison of the differences in learning adaptability of college students in different grades

In order to understand whether the grade difference affects the learning adaptability of retired college students, the results of this survey were analyzed among the ordinary junior and senior students (the retired college students were directly promoted to the third year when they entered the undergraduate program), and the t-test found that the scores of the learning adaptability of the junior and senior college students were significantly lower than those of the ordinary college students of the same grade, and the learning adaptability of the retired college students in different grades was not significant.

Unlike ordinary college students, whose learning ability rises with the growth of grades, the learning ability of retired college students does not improve with the growth of grades, which indicates that they still do not adapt to study and life after one year of undergraduate life, and generally feel uncomfortable in learning.

3.3. Analysis of the results of the interview on the learning adaptability of retired college students

Table 2. Statistical table of learning adaptability interview codes for retired college students

	Learning Adaptive Description Keywords (Frequency)	Characteristics of the current learning status of retired college students (frequency total)	Commonality analysis
Advantage	Energetic to learn		(1) Retired college students have strong self-discipline and action, and have clear goals
	Know what you want to do (7)	Purposeful (7)	
	Stick to your own study plan (2)	Good	
	Active participation in group activities (2)	communicator (2)	
	I feel older and can settle down (6)	Calm personality (6)	
	Self-discipline than other classmates (8)	Self-Discipline (8)	
Disadvantage	Good popularity		(2) Retired college students generally have poor knowledge base, lack of learning methods, low interest in learning, and are unwilling to communicate with others
	Strong social skills		
	Too long time to study (3)		
	Freshman and sophomore years have not learned the basics (7)	Poor knowledge base (7)	
	Deficiencies in learning methods (9)	Poor use of learning methods (9)	
	Powerful can not make places, especially in English, can only memorize words (7)	Lack of interest in learning (6)	
	Feeling that my ability to learn is declining and I have no talent (7)	Lack of communication (6)	
	Unable to keep up with the pace of classmates (6)	Lack of self-confidence (7)	
	Lack of interest in learning (6)		
	I just want to get a diploma to get a job (3)		
	I don't want to communicate too much with other classmates, I just want to be busy with my own (6)		

Through the analysis and coding of the learning adaptability interviews of retired college students, it is found that the words of the retired college students in the four dimensions of poor

knowledge base, inability to use learning methods, lack of interest in learning and lack of communication appear more frequently, and words such as strong social ability and active participation in group activities appear less, as shown in Table 2.

4. Summary

4.1. Analysis of the overall situation of the learning adaptability of retired college students

The overall average of all dimensions of learning adaptation of retired college students is at a low level, indicating that the learning adaptability of retired college students is weak. In terms of specific dimensions, learning ability is the most affected, followed by learning motivation, environmental factors, learning attitude, and teaching mode. Different from the average college students, the adaptive development level of different grades in the dimension of learning ability shows an upward trend with the increase of grades, and the learning ability of retired college students still does not improve after entering the senior year. The worst adaptability of learning ability may be that there is no contact with university professional courses during the military camp life, but learning is not an overnight thing, but needs to be accumulated over a long period of time, so it causes the original knowledge to be forgotten during the service, and there will be learning difficulties after returning to school after retirement [8], and it may also be caused by not being good at using learning methods, for example, 70% of the sample interviewees said that they had difficulty learning English, could not find a learning method suitable for themselves, and tried hard but had little effect. In addition, the difficulty of the course increases and the course burden increases after the transfer students enter the undergraduate level, and some students have different types and directions of majors from the undergraduates, which increases the difficulty of learning[9].

Colleges and universities can set up preparatory classes for retired college students before enrollment to help them make up for the difference in professional knowledge that they lacked before, and can also arrange for students with grade grades to "pair" with them, in addition to helping them learn knowledge, it is more important to teach them scientific learning methods, exercise learning thinking, try to learn multiple learning and timely reflection and adjustment, and help them quickly complete learning and adaptation after admission.

4.2. Analysis of the overall situation of interviews with retired college students

Through interviews with retired college students, it is found that the performance of retired college students is relatively positive in terms of learning engagement, which is a positive learning state, which mainly reflects the students' learning effort [10]. This may be related to the fact that they have developed a good habit of being serious and positive after being tempered by the army, and they have also set long-term goals and persevered in them, in addition, they said that they are much calmer after retirement than before retirement, and can calm down and learn. But they also have the practical problem of lack of communication with their classmates and just want to be busy with their own affairs. In addition, the learning attitude of retired college students is not as positive as that of ordinary college students, which may indicate that they only regard learning as a necessary task and are not really interested in learning, which can also be seen from their low scores in the learning attitude dimension of the scale. Maintaining this state of affairs for a long time may lead to low learning efficiency and slow improvement of academic performance, which in turn will reduce their academic self-efficacy, which in turn will affect their perception of whether they can complete tasks in the field of study [11], which may hit their self-confidence in the long run and make them change from a positive learning state to a negative learning state.

In view of the above phenomenon, schools should grasp the psychological characteristics of retired college students, innovate teaching methods, liberate them from the state of "reading dead books", and use subject development trends and extracurricular practices to mobilize their interest in learning [12]. In addition, schools can arrange mental health teachers to carry out special psychological counseling for retired soldiers, help them communicate better with their classmates, help them maintain good interpersonal relationships, accelerate role change and identity, reduce loneliness, cultivate tenacious psychological quality, help them grow into talents, and improve their comprehensive quality and ability as reservists, so as to meet the needs of modern warfare and make important contributions to national security and national defense construction.

References

- [1] Summary of the 23 Policies on Education and Training for Ex-servicemen of the Employment and Entrepreneurship Department of the Ministry of Veterans Affairs of the People's Republic of China
- [2] MU Mengxuan. Exploration on the improvement of academic ability of retired college students: A case study of the School of Finance and Accounting, Fujian University of Commerce[J]. Journal of Huainan Vocational and Technical College, 2023,23(06):104-106.)
- [3] FENG Tingyong,LI Hong. Psychological Exploration,2002(1):44-48.
- [4] PAN Wei,GAO Xuemei. Chinese Journal of Health Psychology, 2017, 25(01): 73-76. DOI:10.13342/j.cnki.cjhp.2017.01.018.
- [5] JI Ying. Research on the problems and countermeasures in the role change of demobilized college students [J]. Theory Review,2009(11):59-60+63.)
- [6] Feng Tingyong, Su Ti, Hu Xingwang, et al. Chinese Journal of Psychology,2006(05):762-769.
- [7] LI Tingna, GU Zhaoming. Chinese Journal of Health Psychology,2011, 19(03): 350-352. DOI:10.13342/j.cnki.cjhp.2011.03.032.
- [8] Li Yanran. A Study on the Re-adaptation Issues of Retired College Student Soldiers Upon Returning to School: Taking Guizhou University as an Example [J]. Employment & Security, 2021, (09): 158-159.
- [9] ZHAO Wei. A brief analysis on the mental health education of students in the "special transfer" [J]. Cultural and Educational Materials,2009(11):190-191.)
- [10] Liao Youguo. Development of the College Student Learning Engagement Questionnaire and a Survey of Current Status [J]. Journal of Jimei University (Educational Science Edition), 2011, 12(02): 39-44.
- [11] LIU Na, LIU Qin, ZHANG Lihua, et al. The mediating role of academic self-efficacy in the relationship between the regulation mode of medical students in military academies and learning burnout and learning engagement [J]. Joint Logistics Military Medicine, 2024, 38(02): 165-170.DOI:10.13730/j.issn.2097-2148.2024.02.016.
- [12] LIU Ren, FAN Lei, LIAO Chaoyang. Journal of Shandong University of Agriculture and Engineering, 2018, 35(01):167-170.DOI:10.15948/j.cnki.37-1500/s.2018.01.035.