

# The Impact of Affective Factors in Junior High School Students' English Language Learning

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**Abstract:** This paper adopts the literature research method to explore in depth the influence of affective factors on junior high school students' English learning. By collecting, identifying, organizing and analyzing a large amount of related literature, this paper systematically sorted out the role of affective factors in junior high school students' English learning, analyzed the reasons for their emergence, and put forward corresponding educational countermeasures and suggestions. This study aims to provide theoretical support and practical guidance for junior high school English education, and help teachers better understand and cope with students' emotional problems in English learning, so as to improve the quality and effectiveness of teaching.

**Keywords:** Affective Factors; Junior High School Students; English Language Learning; Literature Research Approach.

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## 1. Introduction

English is taught as a second language in China and has become an important subject of basic education. The age of the junior high school students is a critical stage of psychological development and second language learning. However, in educational system, it is not difficult to find that poor English learning due to a kind of problems, one of the problems is the affective factors, such as lack of interest, insufficient motivation, anxiety, etc., which has become a major obstacle to students' English learning. According to the Krashen's Affective Filter Hypothesis, which argued that affective filter is a kind of psychological obstacle that prevents language learning (Krashen 1987). It is related to the language learner's input and intake (HuiNi 2012) The Affective Filter Hypothesis shows that the language learning was influenced strongly by the learner's emotional factors. For a low affective filter, learners must have high motivation, confidence, and low anxiety which belong to the emotional aspects that make it easier for students' language learning. Thus, teachers must take a look at their learner's mental well-being since language acquisition is a psychological process. Affective variables should be considerate (E. Kiruthiga 2022).

At the same time, the new English curriculum standard also points out that it is necessary to pay attention to students' knowledge and skills as well as their thoughts and emotions. Therefore, it is of great significance to study the influence of emotional factors in junior high school students' English learning in order to improve the quality of English teaching.

## 2. Definition, Content and Causes of Emotional Factors

### 2.1. Definition and Classification of Emotional Factors

Affective factors refer to the various emotional states and psychological experiences that affect people's cognition and behavior, and refer to the internal psychological reflection of people's positive and negative feelings towards people and objective things in some activities. The affective factors in educational psychology refer to the feelings, emotion and attitude of learner in learning process, including interest, motivation, anxiety, self-confidence and so on (Liu 2022; yin

2022). In English learning, affective factors play a crucial role. According to the researches, affective factors can be divided into two main categories. One is individual factors, including anxiety, inhibition, self-esteem and motivation that divide into intrinsic motivation and extrinsic motivation. The second is the affective factors between learners and learners and between teachers and learners, including interaction, cooperation and communication styles. Meanwhile, Emotions also can be categorized into positive and negative aspects. Positive emotions include interest, motivation, self-confidence, etc., which can stimulate students' enthusiasm and motivation for learning and improve the learning effect; while negative emotions include anxiety, fear, boredom, etc., which can hinder students' learning process and reduce the learning effect.

Therefore, in foreign language teaching, teachers need to pay attention to students' emotion and cultivate students' positive affective factors, as well as help students overcome negative affective factors in order to create a psychological environment conducive to learning.

### 2.2. The Content of Affective Factors

#### 1. Motivation

Motivation is an important source for junior high school students' English learning. Research shows that when students have a strong interest in English learning and a strong motivation to learn, the English learning outcome of students is obviously improved.

Firstly, motivation directly affects learners' learning attitudes and behaviors. When junior high school students have high motivation to learn English, they will participate in English learning more actively and devote more time and energy to learning, thus achieving better learning results. On the contrary, if the learning motivation is low, students may lack motivation to learn, resulting in poor learning results (Wen 2022).

What's more, motivation also influences students' learning strategies and approaches. Research shows that students with higher motivation are more likely to adopt positive learning strategies and methods, such as actively seeking learning resources, making learning plans, and conducting self-evaluation. These strategies and methods help them to better master English and improve their learning efficiency.

Lastly, motivation is closely related to students' learning outcomes and performance. Students with higher motivation tend to achieve better learning performance, such as obtaining higher scores and winning prizes in competitions. These outcomes not only enhance students' learning confidence, but also lay a solid foundation for their future English learning.

## **2. Anxiety**

Anxiety is one of the common negative emotions in middle school students' English learning.

Anxiety reduces students' motivation to learn English. Anxiety can make students lose interest in learning and lead to lower motivation. When middle school students face English learning, if they feel too much pressure or more uncertainties, they may have the psychology of avoidance or resistance and reduce the motivation of learning. At the same time, anxiety affects students' concentration and memory, which make learning efficiency decline. Under the state of anxiety, it is difficult for students to concentrate on English learning, and it is easy to be distracted or inattentive, thus reducing the learning effect.

Excessive anxiety may also cause students to develop a sense of inferiority and self-doubt, and lose confidence in their own learning ability. When junior high school students encounter difficulties or setbacks in English learning, if anxiety is not effectively relieved, it may lead them to doubt their own learning ability and lower their self-confidence, further affecting their learning effectiveness. For example, speech anxiety may affect students' orally ability, causing them to be afraid to speak up in the English classroom. Oral expression is an important part of the English learning process for middle school students. However, if students feel nervous or anxious in the classroom, they may be afraid of making mistakes or being laughed at, thus they dare not open their mouths to speak English, which affects the improvement of oral expression (Zhang 2022).

Since anxiety reduces learning motivation, affects learning efficiency, leads to loss of self-confidence and hinders students' learning ability, a combination of these factors may eventually lead to a decline in junior high school students' performance in English learning.

## **3. Self-Esteem**

The impact of self-esteem in middle school English learning is significant and plays an important role in both the process and outcomes of students' English learning. High self-esteem refers to an individual's positive evaluation and perception of his or her own value, ability, status and dignity. Individuals with high self-esteem usually see their own strengths, accomplishments and successes, show self-confidence and optimism. High self-esteem students have a certain degree of autonomy and decision-making power, and are good at expressing themselves and defending their rights and interests (Ibrahim, K. A. A., & Basim, N. 2024)

Firstly, Students with high self-esteem tend to have a more positive attitude towards learning English. They are more likely to be willing to face the challenges of learning and learn from their mistakes rather than avoiding or escaping from them.

Secondly, self-esteem can influence students' learning behavior. Students with high self-esteem are more likely to actively seek out learning opportunities, participate actively in classroom activities, and interact with teachers and peers.

What's more, self-esteem can help students reduce learning anxiety. When students encounter difficulties in the learning process, students with high self-esteem are more likely to

remain calm and confident in their ability to overcome them.

Lastly, self-esteem enhances students' learning motivation. Students with high self-esteem tend to be more willing to invest time and effort in English learning because they believe their efforts will be rewarded.

## **4. Self-Confidence**

Self-confidence enhances students' English learning effect. When students have confidence in their own learning ability, they are more likely to adopt effective learning strategies, such as making learning plans and actively seeking learning resources to enhance their learning outcomes. For example, self-confidence is crucial for oral expression in English. Confident students are more likely to be willing to express themselves in English and participate in discussions in class, thus practicing their oral skills (Wen 2022).

At the same time, self-confidence can encourage students to explore and innovate. In English learning, confident students are more likely to try new learning methods and strategies and express their unique opinions, thus promoting deeper and innovative learning.

Confidence also can help students reduce academic stress. When students have confidence in their own learning, they are more likely to face the challenges and pressures of learning in a positive frame of mind, thus reducing learning stress.

## **2.3. Causes of Emotional Factors**

The causes of emotional factors in middle school students' English learning are manifold. First of all, students' personality traits and family background will affect their emotional state. For example, some students may be naturally introverted and sensitive and easily influenced by the external environment (You 2019); while some families may lack the atmosphere and resources for English learning, resulting in students' lack of interest and motivation in English learning.

Secondly, teachers' teaching methods and attitudes also affect students' emotional state. Some teachers may pay too much attention to the transmission of knowledge and the training of test-taking skills, neglecting the cultivation of students' emotions; while some teachers may lack patience and love, and lack sufficient attention and support for students.

Finally, the school and social environments may also have an impact on the emotional state of junior high school students. For example, the learning atmosphere of the school, the competitive relationship among classmates, and the social expectations of English proficiency will all have an impact on students' affective states.

## **3. The Influence Mechanism of Emotional Factors in Middle School Students' English Learning**

### **3.1. Interaction between Affective Factors and Cognitive Processes**

Affective factors and cognitive processes are mutually influencing and interacting. Affective factors affect students' cognitive process, and cognitive process also affects students' affective state. For example, when students have a strong interest in English learning, they will participate in classroom activities more actively, thinking and expressing themselves actively, thus improving the learning effect; while when students encounter difficulties in the learning process, they may have anxiety, which affects the learning effect. Therefore,

teachers should pay attention to cultivating students' positive emotions in English teaching, and at the same time pay attention to the difficulties and problems encountered by students in learning and give them timely help and support.

### **3.2. Relationship between Affective Factors and the Learning Environment**

Learning environment is one of the important factors affecting junior high school students' English learning. A good learning environment can stimulate students' interest and motivation in learning and improve their learning effect. At the same time, the learning environment also affects students' emotional state. For example, a learning environment full of love can make students feel warm and sense of supportive, so that they will be more actively engaged in learning; while in an indifferent and depressing learning environment will make students feel lonely and helpless, which will affect their learning effect. Therefore, teachers should endeavor to create a good learning environment in English teaching so that students can feel the love and support of teachers.

## **4. Suggestions**

### **4.1. Attention to Students' Emotional Needs**

Teachers should pay attention to the emotional needs of students in English teaching and understand their interests, learning motivation and anxiety. By communicating with students, teachers can better understand their inner world and help them solve the difficulties and problems they encounter in learning. At the same time, teachers can also organize a variety of interesting English activities to stimulate students' interest and motivation in learning and improve their learning effect.

Each student has his or her own unique personality, interests and emotional needs. Teachers should respect these differences and provide individualized attention and support based on students' diverse characteristics.

Meanwhile, students' emotional states may change due to the time and environment. Teachers should pay continuous attention to students' emotional changes, and identify and deal with any emotional problems that may arise in a timely manner. When students encounter difficulties in learning or life, teachers should give them timely emotional support. This includes encouraging students, recognizing their efforts, providing necessary help and resources, and facing challenges together with students.

Furthermore, for students with particularly strong emotional obstacle or psychological problems, teachers can provide professional psychological counseling. This helps students to better deal with emotional problems and improve their psychological quality and adaptability.

In conclusion, paying attention to the emotional needs of students is one of the important responsibilities of teachers.

### **4.2. Creating a Supportive Learning Environment**

A supportive classroom atmosphere plays a great role in the enhancement of students' learning motivation. In English learning, teachers should create a relaxed and pleasant classroom atmosphere. Emotional interaction between teachers and students is very important. Teachers should establish a sincere teacher-student relationship with students, which is the basis for understanding students' emotional

needs. Teachers should treat students with an open attitude so that students feel accepted and respected.

First of all, teachers should respect the individuality and differences of each student and give them enough attention and support. According to students' different English proficiency and interests, they should choose different teaching methods and provide personalized tutoring.

Secondly, teachers should encourage students to actively participate in classroom activities and express their opinions and ideas. Teachers should provide positive feedback and evaluation of students' answers, accepted students to make mistakes and correct their mistakes or errors in a positive way. If someone make a progress, teachers should praise and reward those in time to improve their self-confidence.

Finally, teachers should create a relaxed and enjoyable learning atmosphere, without overemphasizing scores and grades. Teachers should also listen to students patiently and pay attention to their expressions and reactions, taking effort to create a positive, harmonious and inclusive learning environment where students feel comfortable and safe. This helps to reduce students' anxiety and increase their motivation and self-confidence in learning.

### **4.3. Giving Students Expectations and Boosting Their Self-confidence**

Boosting students' self-confidence is a crucial part of the educational process.

First of all, teachers can explore each student's unique talents and potential by communicating with each student and clearly expressing their expectations of them. It is important for middle school students to get the expectations from teachers, which give their motivation to learn. Ensure that these expectations are specific, measurable and commensurate with students' learning abilities and interests to help build their self-confidence.

Next, Teachers should praise and encourage students when they make progress or accomplishments. It should be noted that the praise should be specific, pointing out what students have done well. Avoid empty compliments such as "You are great" or "You have done a great job" instead describe the student's performance specifically, such as "Your pronunciation is very accurate" or "Your writing is logical."

Finally, feedback and guidance can be given. Give students timely, specific and constructive feedback. Let them know what they are doing well and what they need to improve. Provide specific and useful suggestions to help students and encourage them to put it into practice.

## **5. Conclusion**

Affective factors and English complement each other. Focusing on students' affective factors can identify students' difficulties in learning English and help them learn more efficiently. At the same time, affective factors such as learners' anxiety and self-confidence, self-esteem are also important dimensions that affect students' mental health. Teachers should pay attention to the students' emotional changes in the classroom. Teachers can use different teaching methods to actively build equal harmonious teacher-student relationship, relax and good classroom atmosphere to enhance students' self-confidence.

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