

Learning engagement and teachers' misbehavior among Chinese college students

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Abstract

This study focuses on the relationship between teacher misconduct and college students' learning engagement. A standardized questionnaire was used to investigate 2094 students of different majors in 7 universities in Shandong Province of China. Their grades ranged from first grade to senior grade. The results show that the overall performance of college students is better; In the view of college students, the teacher's misconduct is not serious, and the teacher's teaching behavior makes them feel more satisfied. There is a significant negative correlation between learning engagement and teacher misbehavior. Teacher misbehavior can significantly negatively predict learning engagement. Based on this, “the thrive & flourish: sustaining student success program” is proposed, and together these strategies emphasize the importance of supportive educational environments, positive psychological interventions, effective classroom management, and personalized support.

Keywords: teacher misbehavior, learning engagement, program

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1. Introduction

For college students, teachers are their models of thought and guides of knowledge. The influence of teachers on students' learning, especially on learning engagement, is crucial, because any educational reform is ultimately implemented through teachers' teaching behavior, which is an important component of teaching activities and an external expression of teachers' professional quality, and has a more direct and specific impact on students' learning behavior and learning effect. Learning engagement is an individual learns with high energy and resilience (vitality), derives a sense of value, enthusiasm, and vision from learning (dedication), and is able to concentrate and happily engage in learning (concentration). Researchers have found that Learning engagement is an important guarantee to improve the learning effect of college students, and their learning can be influenced on how they perceived the misbehaviors of their teachers in the classroom.

Teacher misbehaviors are defined as “those teacher behaviors that interfere with instruction and thus, learning” (Mendoza, 2023). Kearney et al. identified three primary types of teacher misbehaviors that students experience: incompetence, offensiveness, and indolence. Teacher incompetence includes behaviors that “reflect the lack of very basic teaching skills” (Mendoza, 2023). Teacher offensiveness includes behaviors reflect cruelty, meanness, and condescension toward students. Indolent teachers appear not to care about the class or students through their lack of attention to the class. Teacher misbehavior will make students' physical and mental failure to develop well. The generation of this misbehavior will make students gradually lose interest in learning and slowly produce weariness. The occurrence of weariness of learning, students will be more difficult to learn, and gradually appear resistance and negative learning mentality, students' negative emotions will also bring psychological exhaustion to teachers, thus affecting the best effect of teaching. Scholars believe that the misbehavior of college teachers in teaching can not only affect the reputation of the school, but also affect the relationship between teachers and students and the academic interest of college students, resulting in explicit or implicit class skipping and other academic burnout of college students.

The researcher in this paper searched relevant journals at home and abroad and found that, especially in China, there are more studies on teacher misbehavior itself, but few studies on its relationship with learning engagement. Therefore, it is of great significance to explore the influence of teacher misbehavior on students' learning engagement.

Objectives of the study - This study focused on the relationship among learning engagement, teachers' misbehaviors as perceived by the college students. Specifically, it measured possible correlation among the two variables; determined the extent to which teacher misbehavior predicted the effects of student learning engagement; and proposed an intervention program for better academic performance.

2. Methods

Research Design - This study uses descriptive correlation analysis to explore the relationship between college students' learning engagement and teacher misbehavior. Researchers collected data on teacher misbehavior and how engaged students are in their learning. By analyzing this data, the researchers were able to determine if and how the variables were related. This approach provide valuable insights into the complex interplay between these factors, informing potential interventions to improve student well-being and academic achievement.

Participants - In this study, a total of 3000 participants were randomly selected from different majors of 7 different universities in Shandong Province. After screening invalid questionnaires, there were 2094 valid data. The questionnaires were distributed to randomly selected college students who met the criteria from the above specified city limits and age inclusion criteria by random sampling, following the principles of voluntarism and

confidentiality. Questionnaire survey was conducted by means of network test.

Measures - The Utrecht Work Engagement Scale-Student(UWES-S). In the study of foreign countries, the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale-Student (UWES-S) meters was used for measuring students learning engagement (Schaufeli, 2002). This test was formed by the lyrics based on the work input table Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES), such as replacing "Work or Job" to "Studies or Class". The topics of each dimension are 6, 5, and 6 respectively. The questionnaires appear in the form of a statement, and the subject is required to conduct a 7 - level score of the project based on their emotions and attitudes. The scoring method: 0 means that there are never. There are few representatives/one month a month or less, 3 represents sometimes/several times a month, 4 representatives often/once a week, 5 represents very frequent/several times a week, 6 representatives are always /daily. Based on the UWES-S developed by Schaufeli et al., a learning engagement scale suitable for Chinese college students was revised to provide a measurement tool for the study of learning engagement and lay the foundation for the study of learning engagement (Li ,2010). The revised scale includes a total of 17 items, and the questionnaire adopts the Likert 7-point scoring method, from 1 to 7, respectively, representing: never, almost never, rarely, sometimes, often, very frequently and always. The questionnaire is divided into three dimensions, namely, motivation, energy and concentration. Three factors were named. Factor one: Motivation. It means that individuals like learning very much and are interested in learning, understand the meaning of learning, and experience happiness in learning; Factor two: Energy. It means that individuals have abundant energy and good psychological toughness, pay hard for their own learning and are not easy to tire, and can persevere in the face of difficulties; Factor three: Focus. The characteristic of concentration is that the individual is engrossed in his own study, immersed in his own study, and achieves the state of selflessness. The scale has good stability and internal consistency on the whole. From the results of exploratory factor analysis, it can be seen that the load of each item is above 0.5, and the cumulative contribution rate of variance of the three factors is 59.153%, indicating good validity of the scale structure.

Instructor Misbehavior Scale(IMS). Goodboy (2018) reconstructed and expanded their research upon Kearney, Plax, Hays, and Ivey's seminal research on teacher misbehaviors. Study revealed 43 categories of perceived teacher misbehaviors; 27 of the misbehaviors were originally identified by Kearney et al. and 16 new misbehaviors were identified in this study, and the Instructor Misbehavior Scale (IMS) was created to operationalize underlying dimensions of teacher misbehaviors; three dimensions (i.e., antagonism, lectures, and articulation) were uncovered through principal axis factoring. Additionally, the antagonism and lectures dimensions of teacher misbehaviors were correlated negatively with student learning outcomes (i.e., affective learning, cognitive learning, state motivation, student communication satisfaction) and served as unique predictors in multiple regression analyses. Collectively, these studies provide an updated typology along with a reliable and a valid measure of teacher misbehaviors.

Based on the two studies, the researcher conducted a revision of the Chinese version. The scale is based on 43 categories of perceived teacher misbehaviors revealed by Goodboy (2018) , and is scored by likter5 points. The scale consists of three dimensions: incompetence, rudeness and indolence. The misbehavior represented by incompetence reflects the teacher's lack of very basic teaching skills. Rudeness includes many anomie behaviors that suggest that teachers can be mean, cruel, and ugly. Lazy, this is the stereotypical, absent-minded college professor image of the best example. Teachers who are considered lazy are those who are absent from class, are late to class, and make lame excuses for their absenteeism. The higher the score, the more serious the teacher's misbehavior. The Cronbach alpha reliability coefficient of each factor of the scale and the whole scale was 0.940. The scale has good reliability and validity.

Data Gathering Procedure - Based on the principle of voluntary and confidential, eligible college students were randomly selected from the above inclusion criteria of city scope and age to conduct a questionnaire survey. The questionnaire survey was conducted by means of network test. After data collection, the respondents' answers were carefully recorded for statistical calculation, and then SPSS software was used to analyze the data. Finally, the data results are discussed and summarized. Before the creation of this research topic, the researchers have

accumulated rich research data and clinical practice experience in their own thinking and discussion, actual work and life. After conducting a large number of observations and interviews in China, the researchers found that many students were dissatisfied with some teaching behaviors of teachers, the relationship between teachers and students was tense, and even some students were tired of learning. For example, some teachers are unwilling to ask and care more about students' learning and mental health status, and use lesson plans to deal with daily teaching tasks in classroom teaching, "filling the classroom" and "cutting across". In the process of teaching organization, some teachers still restrict the classroom with traditional old concepts and focus on a single textbook and teaching material. Some teachers vent their frustrations in life or work on students, and even punish students in disguise. Some teachers have teaching bias, favoring students with good academic performance while ignoring students with poor academic performance.

Data analysis - In this study, SPSS27.0 software was used for data analysis mainly by the following methods: correlation analysis and regression analysis. Specifically, Pearson product difference correlation was used to discover whether there was a relationship between teacher misbehavior and learning engagement. Finally, the regression equation is used to predict the influence of teacher misbehavior on learning engagement.

Ethical considerations- The study design must be reviewed and approved by the University of the Philippines Batangas Campus Ethics Committee before the study can proceed. This study resolutely protects the rights of the subjects and strictly follows the principles of ethics, voluntariness, confidentiality and harmless interests. At the beginning of each questionnaire, participants were given a detailed explanation of the purpose and significance of the study. An informed consent form was issued to all participants before they took the test. After obtaining the informed consent of the participants, the survey will be conducted and the privacy of the participants and the contents of the questionnaire will not be disclosed. Each participant was voluntary, anonymous, and asked to answer the questions truthfully. They were also told that if they did not want to take part in the survey, they could voluntarily withdraw. If the scale in the investigation induces the patient's bad mood, the researcher can also provide appropriate psychological support.

3. Results and discussion

Table 1

Percentage Distribution of the Respondents Profile

	Frequency	Percentage %
Sex		
male	535	25.5
Female	1559	74.5
Major		
Liberal arts	970	46.3
science	1124	53.7
Grade		
1	1090	52.1
2	728	34.8
3	268	12.8
4	8	0.4

Table 1 illustrates college student's sex, major and grade level respectively with a total of 2094. In terms of sex representation, males accounted for 25.5 percent (535), while females constituted the majority with 74.5 percent (1559). This is because the colleges surveyed are mainly normal and comprehensive schools, and there are almost no pure science and engineering colleges, so female students account for a relatively large proportion. Regarding their major, liberal arts comprised 46.3 percent (970), whereas science disciplines represented 53.7 percent (1124). This is because the schools surveyed in this survey are mainly normal and comprehensive schools, so the proportion of science and liberal arts is not very different.

With respect to academic standing, freshmen constituted the largest proportion at 52.1 percent (1090), followed by sophomore at 34.8 percent (728) and junior at 12.8 percent (268). It is worth noting that only a minimal

percentage (0.4 percent, 8) of seniors participated in the survey due to their engagement in graduate exams or job-seeking activities during graduation season; hence their limited sample size does not warrant further discussion. In addition to seniors, freshmen are curious and fresh about participating in psychological surveys, so they have high enthusiasm and account for the largest proportion. However, juniors have seen some similar surveys, and their academic pressure and postgraduate entrance exam pressure are increasing, so they do not have high enthusiasm in participating in surveys, accounting for a relatively small proportion

Table 2*Respondents Type of Learning Engagement*

Sub-scales	Mean TotalScore	Standard Deviation	M/Item	Interpretation
Motivation	19.4723	3.83722	3.245	moderate
Energy	19.1824	3.82715	3.320	moderate
Focus	16.6027	3.30612	3.197	moderate
TOTAL UWES	55.2574	10.07180	3.251	Positive Learning Engagement level

Table 2 shows the statistical results of the respondents' learning engagement. The scale includes 17 items across three dimensions: motivation, energy and attention. According to Likert 5 scale scores, higher scores indicate more persistence in learning. The statistical results of UWES student engagement Scale included motivation (M = 19.47, SD = 3.84), energy (M = 19.18, SD = 3.83) and focus (M = 16.60, SD = 3.31), and the total engagement score was 55.26 (SD = 10.07). Taking into account the 5-Likert scale used, a median of 3 is the benchmark for the level of engagement. The results showed that the students' overall engagement score was 3.251 points, and the average score of each dimension was 3.245 points (motivation; Vitality 3.320; Dedication (3.197) exceeds this median, indicating that college students are more engaged than average. It can be seen that the overall level of college students' learning engagement, motivation, energy and concentration is above the average level, indicating that college students have strong learning motivation, like and are full of interest in learning, understand the meaning of learning, and feel happy in learning. And in the learning process has more energy and good mental toughness, for their own learning to pay hard and not easy to get tired, more able to concentrate on their own learning, immersed in their own learning, to achieve selfless dedication and perseverance in the face of difficulties.

Table 3*Teachers Misbehavior as Perceived by the Respondents*

IMS Sub-variables	Mean TotalScore	Standard Deviation	M/Item	Interpretation
Incompetence	38.1929	14.06286	1.3580	low
Offensiveness	26.7025	10.21063	1.2715	low
Indolence	19.0119	6.79200	1.3170	low
TOTAL Misbehavior	83.9074	30.28667	1.3111	Relatively satisfied with their teachers behavior

Table 3 shows the statistical results of the Teacher Misbehavior Scale (IMS), which includes scores for incompetence, offense, and laziness. Using a Likert 5 scale, the scale ranges from "completely inconsistent" to "completely consistent." The higher the teacher's misbehavior score, the more serious it was, with incompetence scoring 38.19 (SD = 14.06), offense scoring 26.70 (SD = 10.21) and laziness scoring 19.01 (SD = 6.79). The total bad behavior score was 83.91 (SD = 30.29). Using a Likert-5 scale with 3 scores as the median reference for misbehavior, it is clear that college students' overall evaluation of teacher misbehavior (M = 1.311) and the mean value of each dimension (incompetence M = 1.358; Offense M = 1.271; Laziness M = 1.317) was significantly lower than the median 3. This shows that from the perspective of students, the teacher's misbehavior is not serious, and they are relatively satisfied with the teaching behavior. To sum up, teachers' incompetent behavior has a profound impact on students' participation and enthusiasm for learning, which requires teachers not only to master the course content, but also to possess effective teaching skills, good interpersonal communication skills and high professional ethics. Education administrative departments and schools should strengthen the training and evaluation of teachers in order to improve the quality of teaching and promote the all-round development of students.

Table 4

Correlational Matrix of Learning Engagement and Teachers' Misbehavior

Variable	UWES			IMS		
	r_{xy}	p-value	I	r_{xy}	p-value	I
UWES				-.083	0.000	HS

Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 4 illustrates the correlation between academic engagement (as measured by the Utrecht Job Engagement Scale - Student Scale [UWES]) and teacher misbehavior (as measured by the Teacher Misbehavior Scale [IMS]). The data show that there is a significant negative correlation between academic engagement and teacher misbehavior (correlation coefficient = -0.083, $p < .001$), which means that higher academic engagement is associated with lower perceptions of teacher misbehavior, and vice versa. These results show a significant association between academic engagement and teacher misbehavior, revealing their interaction in student learning experiences.

Regarding teacher misbehavior and academic engagement, a large number of studies have found that teacher behavior styles, such as supporting or inhibiting, are significantly correlated with students' academic engagement. For example, there is a strong positive correlation between perceived teacher autonomy support and middle school students' academic engagement. In addition, students' autonomous motivation plays an intermediary role between teachers' autonomous support and students' academic engagement, suggesting that teachers considering problems from students' perspectives and minimizing coercive behavior - acknowledging and supporting students' viewpoints - can significantly improve students' academic engagement by enhancing their intrinsic motivation (Chen J, 2015).

The study also explores the positive correlation between teacher support and students' academic achievement and engagement, which means that teachers' supportive behavior is crucial to improving students' academic engagement and engagement (Guo Min, 2018). These studies highlight the importance of teacher support behaviours in promoting engagement in learning, particularly in enhancing intrinsic motivation and promoting academic achievement in students. By providing positive feedback, understanding student needs, and creating a supportive learning environment, teachers can significantly increase student academic engagement.

Table 5

Regression analysis of the dependent variable: learning engagement with the Teacher Misbehavior Scale

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
1 (Constant)	57.578	.646		89.085	.000
Instructor Misbehavior Scale IMS	-.028	.007	-.083	-3.817	.000

Table 5 shows the regression analysis of the dependent variable: learning engagement with the Teacher Misbehavior Scale (IMS) as the independent variable. The model uses academic input as the dependent variable. There was a significant negative correlation between teacher misbehavior and academic engagement ($B = -0.028$, $t = -3.817$, $p < 0.001$), indicating that teacher misbehavior had a significant negative predictive effect on academic engagement. This means that the more serious the teacher's misbehavior, the lower the student's participation in learning activities. These findings are critical because they highlight the impact of teacher behavior on student burnout and engagement, key factors in the educational experience.

Different teaching practices, including teaching styles, have been shown to predict student engagement. Positive teaching practices, such as promoting understanding and providing choice, are associated with higher levels of student engagement and lower levels of burnout. Conversely, negative behaviors like oppressive criticism can lead to higher levels of burnout. Different teaching practices and motivational styles do affect student

engagement and burnout. For example, studies have found that teachers' organizational citizenship behavior significantly affects students' learning autonomy and academic performance through the mediation of teaching style (Lai, 2019).

Research based on self-determination theory argues that students' motivation and engagement are influenced by the satisfaction of their basic psychological needs (autonomy, competence, and relevance). Teacher misbehavior, such as disrespect or unprofessionalism, can undermine these needs. Negative interactions with teachers can demotivate students and make them less willing to actively engage in learning activities, exacerbating burnout. Wang et al. (2022) explored the influence of teachers' teaching style, especially autonomy support, on students' academic performance through the mediation of psychological needs satisfaction and autonomous motivation.

Some researchers have highlighted that certain teachers are seen as "negative motivators" in clinical Settings, adversely affecting student engagement and motivation. They found that this highlights the need for teacher professional development programs that focus on motivational strategies within the framework of interpersonal communication and self-determination theory. Educational interventions that improve the quality of teaching and teacher-student relationships are essential to increase student engagement and reduce burnout.

The quality of the teacher-student relationship is an important predictor of student engagement and academic success (Miller, 2020). Positive teacher-student relationships are key to effective learning. Teacher misbehavior can disrupt these relationships, causing students to develop feelings of alienation and disengagement, affecting their attitudes toward learning and future behavior in educational Settings.

The “thrive & flourish: sustaining student success” program

Target Audience of the “thrive & flourish: sustaining student success” program: College students demonstrating positive learning engagement, relative satisfaction with teacher behavior, and low academic burnout. Program Goals include: First, strengthen students' active participation in learning activities, maintain and deepen students' intrinsic motivation for learning through participation in activities and challenges. Second, develop a growth mindset, encouraging students to see challenges as opportunities to grow and develop resilience and adaptability. Third, strengthen the teacher-student relationship, promote positive interaction between teachers and students, and promote a supportive learning environment. Fourth, prevent academic burnout by providing students with strategies for stress management, self-care and maintaining balance to prevent academic burnout. Fifth, improve academic skills for students by providing workshops and resources to improve study habits, time management and critical thinking skills. Sixth, build a sense of belonging among students through social activities and peer tutoring opportunities.

4. Conclusion and recommendation

4.1 Conclusion

- Most of the respondents are female students and freshmen, and there is little difference between the proportion of liberal arts students and science students.
- The learning engagement score is above average, and the misbehavior of teachers is not considered serious by college students and they are satisfied with their teachers' behavior
- There is a significant negative correlation between learning engagement and teacher misbehavior.
- Teacher misbehavior is a significant positive predictor of academic burnout and a significant negative predictor of academic engagement.
- The "Thrive: Sustained Student Success" program aims to increase student engagement in all aspects of school, reduce academic burnout, and ensure the improvement of student learning efficiency and quality.

4.2 Recommendation

- Students can make study plans, actively participate in learning, manage time and tasks, complete homework and homework, participate in extracurricular activities, and communicate with parents.
- Teachers can create a positive learning atmosphere and personalized guidance for students, provide regular feedback, give incentives to students, and pay attention to students' mental health
- School administrators can establish academic support systems, provide mental health services to students, and optimize curriculum evaluation and improvement.
- Future researchers may use this study by using other variables not tested in this study, and may replicate studies involving larger sample sizes.
- The proposed Thrive: Sustaining Student Success plan may be evaluated and inspected by school principals prior to implementation.

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