Relation between Teachers' Disciplinary Strategy, Students' Recognition, and Student Behavior

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Abstract In recent years, the misconduct of students has become increasingly serious, and many teachers are worried that there may be complaints by parents if they are too easy or too hard on students. Thus, they tend to avoid disciplinary issues to avoid complaints, and retire one day without causing many troubles. This paper found that there are six kinds of statistical strategies for teachers in middle and primary schools, including reprimand and punishment, social pressure and role models, expert counseling and social assistance, multiple respect, self-monitoring, strict implementation of class rules. The results of regression analysis and structural equation analysis showed that: in terms of the misconduct of primary school students, primary school teachers can still strictly implement class rules to control misconduct; while middle school teachers should adopt the compound strategy of expert counseling and student assistance to improve discipline recognition and indirectly reduce misconduct. Regarding student's moral behavior, the research data showed that improving discipline recognition has great relevance on the promotion of students' moral behavior.

Keywords Students' misconduct, Disciplinary strategy, Student's moral behavior

1. Introduction

Many countries around the globe are witnessing their politics moving towards democratization. This is also true for schools, with adjustments being made to disciplinary matters between teachers and students. Due to democratization in schools, the traditional discipline of teachers is limited by governments, which results in students' increasingly serious misconduct (Kinch, Lewis-Palmer, Hagan-Burke, & Sugai, 2001, p480). Many teachers worry that there may be complaints by parents if they are too hard or easy on their students, thus, they are inclined to protect themselves from such complaints. Hence, researchers have found that teachers adopt relatively passive disciplinary strategies, meaning they do not necessarily employ appropriate disciplinary strategies. Inappropriate discipline may bring about discontent among students, teacher-student conflicts, and even give rise to serious educational problems in the future.

However, schools are not short of experienced teachers who spare no efforts to actively control the misconduct and irregularities of students, and yield good results. This study seeks to conduct a systematical study and draw conclusions for teachers who wish to improve students' behavior. Some

expert teachers are capable of correcting the behavior of students, thus, winning students' recognition for their disciplinary strategies (Lapointe, 2003, p11), which may also lead students to positive moral behavior and perception (Zsolnai, 2003).

This study intends to examine the disciplinary strategies of teachers with high student recognition, in order to reduce misconduct and cultivate moral behavior. In addition, this study analyzes the impact of the disciplinary strategies on the students' disciplinary recognition, misconduct, and moral behavior, as well as the effects of disciplinary strategies in elementary schools.

2. Literature Review

Barbetta et al. suggested that when the general teachers deal with the misconduct of students, they tend to adopt the following two strategies, yelling in a loud voice or punishment (Barbetta, Norona, & Bicard, 2005, p12). Lane, Pierson, and Givner (2003, p413) revealed that teachers have three main disciplinary strategies: the self-monitoring strategy, cooperation strategy, and arbitrary strategy. Kulinna (2007: p23) pointed out that the disciplinary strategies of US schools' are, as follows: remove/refer, positive action, behavior modification, punishment, expert, peer, threats, and keep busying.

The survey of Heaviside et al. showed that schools' disciplinary issues are related to students' misconduct (Heaviside, Rowand, Williams, & Farris, 1998, p15). Hayes

et al. pointed out that the cultivation of moral behavior depends on whether students abide by the rules, meaning teachers' discipline of students' moral behaviors are relate to the cultivation of students' moral behavior. Lapointe pointed out that whether students accept or agree with teachers' discipline will affect students' behavior (Lapointe, 2003, p11).

3. Research Design

(1) Research Structure and Hypotheses

1. Research Structure

This research mainly discusses the impact of teachers' disciplinary strategies on students' misconduct and moral behaviors, as well as the relation between these variables, with the intermediary variables being students' recognition of disciplinary measures. Therefore, the preposition variable is teachers' disciplinary strategies, the results variables are student's misconduct and moral behavior, the intermediary variables are students' agreement with discipline, and gender is the control variable of this study. On the basis of the differences in the degrees of misconduct among middle and primary school students, or differences in teachers' teaching experiences, this study attempts to analyze the impact of middle school teachers' disciplinary strategies on students' misconduct and moral behavior, as well as the relation between these model variables, the impact of primary school teachers' disciplinary strategies on students' misconduct and moral behavior, and the relations between the model variables.

2. Research Hypotheses

This study is based on the abovementioned literature to explore and study the structure contents, and proposes the following hypotheses.

H1 The teachers' disciplinary strategies affect students' misconduct and moral behavior, as well as students' agreement with the disciplinary strategies.

The impact of teachers' disciplinary strategies on students' misconduct and moral behavior is reflected by the students' agreement with the disciplinary strategies.

H2 Middle school teachers' disciplinary strategies fit the relationship model between students' agreement with the disciplinary strategies, students' misconduct, and moral behavior.

H3 Primary school teachers' disciplinary strategies fit the relationship model between students' agreement with the disciplinary strategies, students' misconduct, and moral behavior.

(2) Research Subjects and Sampling

This study is conducted on teachers in the four regions of northern, central, southern and eastern parts of Taiwan and their students. In stratified sampling, the total number of teachers in each stratified area are considered, and the ratio of teachers in each district are calculated and sampled according to the ratio. The questionnaires were issued from April 15 to 25, 2016, and the recovery time was from May 15 to the end of May. There are 59 people in the northern region, 176 in the central region, 259 in the southern region, and 138 in the eastern region, for a total of 629. There are 235 middle school students and 381 primary school students, and 40 (class) primary school teachers and 24 (class) middle school teachers, as well as a missing value of 13.
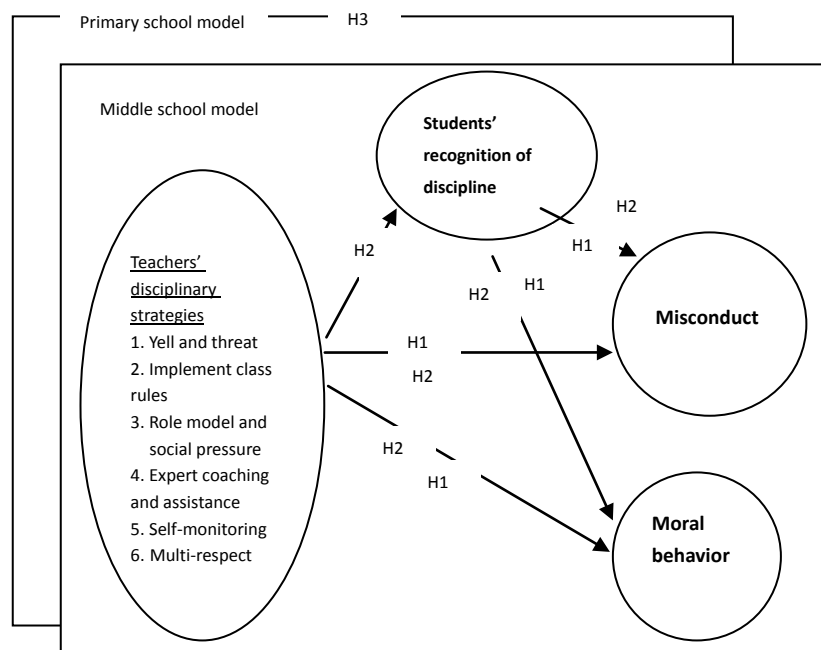

Figure 1.   The Research Structure Model of Compound Disciplinary Strategy and Student Behavior

(3) Research Tools

1. Teachers' Disciplinary Strategy Questionnaire

The Teachers' Disciplinary Strategy Questionnaire of this study is prepared by referring to the research of Barbetta, Norona, and Bicard (2005); Kulinna (2007); Lane, Pierson, and Givner (2003); Roache and Lewis (2011). After factor analysis, there are six strategies for this study.

2. Students' Disciplinary Recognition Questionnaire

The Disciplinary Recognition Questionnaire of this study is prepared by referring to the definitions agreed upon for discipline, and confirmed by experts. Lapointe's so-called discipline recognition refers to the degree of students' perceptions and acceptance of teachers' discipline (Lapointe, 2003, p11).

3. Students' Misconduct Questionnaire

In this study, the Students' Misconduct Questionnaire refers to the definitions put forward by Chang (2013, p800) and Lapointe (2003, p14). Students' misconduct in Chang's study referred to the common misconduct and classroom disturbances of students (Chang, 2013, p800); Lapointe considered it as student behaviors that violate school or class rules (Lapointe, 2003, p14). For specific details, please refer to the study of Heaviside et al. (1998), Morrison and Skiba (2001), and Anguiano (2001, p53). Misconduct in school irregularities includes late arrivals, absenteeism, non-compliance with classroom norms, speaking in class, playing class, etc.

4. Students Model Behavior Questionnaire

The Students Model Behavior Questionnaire in this study is prepared based on the definitions proposed by Reynolds and Ceranic (2007), who argued that moral behavior shall be in line with social norms, such as honesty and observance of rules (Reynolds, & Ceranic, 2007, p1610).

(4) Questionnaire Reliability Evaluation

In terms of the construct validity of this study, SPSS statistical software is adopted for exploratory factor analysis. The reliability of each questionnaire is analyzed by internal consistency reliability analysis. In addition, Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficient is used to review the reliability of the questionnaire, with the reliability value being set at .70 or above.

(5) Data analysis method

Multiple regression analysis: This study is expected to analyze the influence of teacher disciplinary strategies on students' discipline recognition, misconduct, and moral behavior through the multiple regression analysis method. Structural equation model (SEM) analysis: make teachers' disciplinary strategies fit students' disciplinary approval, misconduct, and moral behavior.

4. Research Results and Discussion

1. Impact of teachers' disciplinary strategies and disciplinary approval on students' misconduct and moral behavior

(1) Impact of primary teachers' disciplinary strategies and disciplinary approval on students' misconduct and moral behaviour

Regression analysis finds that the disciplinary strategies of primary school teachers can predict misconduct. The more the rules are implemented, the less misconduct primary school students commit. Discipline recognition can effectively predict moral behavior, and it can be seen that, the more students agree with teachers' disciplinary strategies, the higher their moral behavior.

(2) Impact of middle teachers' disciplinary strategies and disciplinary approval on students' misconduct and moral behavior

Regression analysis finds that the discipline of middle school teachers can effectively predict moral behavior and misconduct. It can be seen that, the more students agree with teachers' disciplinary strategies, the higher their moral behavior and the less their misconduct. In this study, disciplinary strategy/expert counseling and social assistance may be found from the materials of middle school cases for predicting students' recognition. This means that the disciplinary strategies used by middle school teachers must be recognized by students; the higher the degree of recognition, the higher the moral behavior and the less the misconduct of students. In addition, the compound disciplinary strategy of expert counseling and social assistance is adopted to predict discipline recognition; in terms of the disciplinary issues of middle school students, teachers need to consult experts and ask students to help other students with their misconduct. In this way, disciplinary strategies will be better recognized and students can behave better.
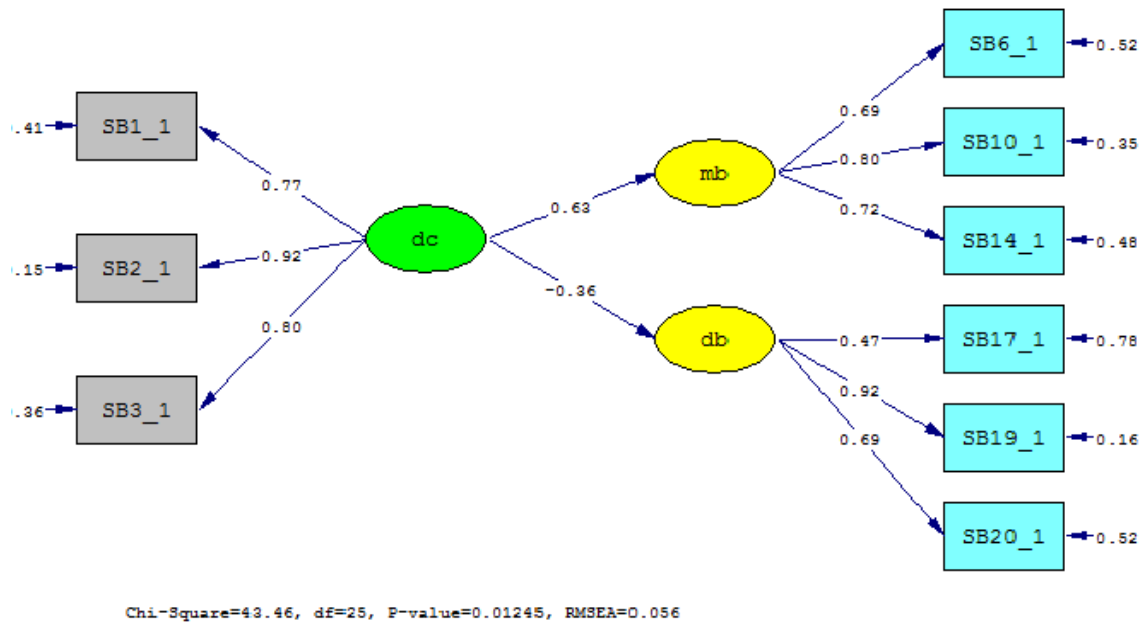
In conclusion, this study finds that students' discipline recognition is significantly correlated to their moral behavior and conduct; this finding is similar to that of Lapointe's research, which revealed that whether students accept teachers' discipline will affect students' behavior (Lapointe, 2003, p11). In addition, this study finds that the result is similar to that of Reynolds and Ceranic (2007, p1610), which held that moral behavior is related to discipline recognition. However, students in middle and primary schools are somewhat different. Middle school students' recognition of discipline can normally predict their moral behavior and misconduct, while primary school students' recognition of discipline may have effect their moral behavior, but not misconduct. Instead, strictly implementing class rules is conducive to significant prediction of primary school students' misconduct. Furthermore, the study also finds that the compound strategy of expert counseling and social assistance can predict discipline recognition, which is most suitable for middle school teachers.

2. The relation model between middle school teachers' disciplinary strategy, students discipline recognition, and misconduct and moral behavior

In order to further construct the relation model between the compound disciplinary strategy of middle school teachers, students' recognition, and moral behavior and misconduct, analysis is conducted through structural equation, and the following results are obtained (Figure 2).
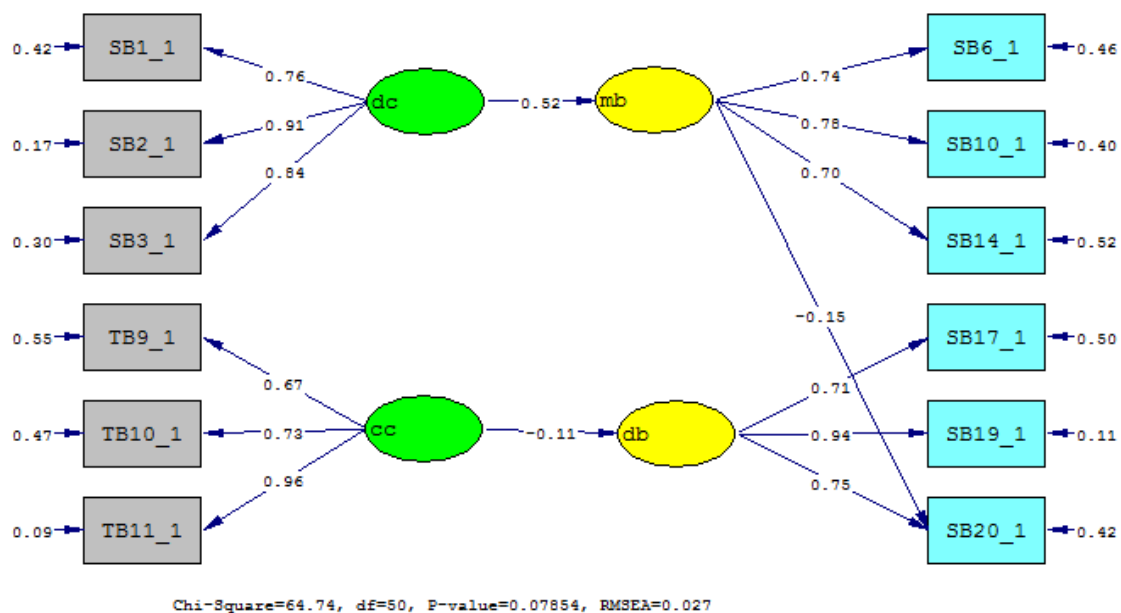
3. The relation model between primary teachers' disciplinary strategy, students discipline recognition, and misconduct and moral behavior

In order to further construct the relation model between the compound disciplinary strategy of primary school teachers, students' recognition, and moral behavior and misconduct, analysis is conducted through structural equation, and the following results are obtained (Figure 3).

Chi-Square=43.46, df=25, P-value=0.01245, RMSEA=0.056

Note: dc/ disciplinary strategies, mb/ moral behavior, db/ misconduct

Figure 2. A Study on the Relationship between Middle School Students' Recognition, Moral Behavior, and Misconduct

Chi-Square=64.74, df=50, P-value=0.07854, RMSEA=0.027

Note: dc/ disciplinary strategies, mb/ moral behavior db/ misconduct, cc/ strictly implement class rules

Figure 3. A Study on the Relation between Primary School Students' Recognition, Moral Behavior, and Misconduct

5. Conclusions and Suggestions

In recent years, the misconduct of students has become increasingly serious, and many teachers are worried that there may be complaints by parents if they are too easy or too hard on students. Thus, they tend to avoid disciplinary issues to avoid complaints, and retire one day without causing many troubles. This paper found that there are six kinds of statistical strategies for teachers in middle and primary schools, including reprimand and punishment, social pressure and role models, expert counseling and social assistance, multiple respect, self-monitoring, strict implementation of class rules, and other strategies. The results of regression analysis and structural equation analysis showed that: in terms of the misconduct of primary school students, primary school teachers can still strictly implement class rules to control misconduct; while middle school teachers should adopt the compound strategy of expert counseling and student assistance to improve discipline recognition and indirectly reduce misconduct. Regarding student's moral behavior, the research data showed that improving discipline recognition has great relevance on the promotion of students' moral behavior.

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