

# Students' Negative Attitudes Toward Learning and Their Psychological–Behavioral Outcomes: Implications for Schools

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## Abstract

Students' learning attitudes strongly influence their academic success, psychological well-being, and behavior in school. When students develop negative learning attitudes—shown through low interest, weak motivation, poor engagement, and pessimistic views about education—their mental health and classroom conduct can be adversely affected. This study examines the psychological and behavioral outcomes linked to negative learning attitudes among students and discusses the implications for educational practice. A descriptive survey design was used. Secondary school students were surveyed using standardized instruments that measured learning attitudes and behavioral adjustment. The findings show that students with negative learning attitudes experience higher levels of anxiety and stress, lower self-esteem, greater academic avoidance, and more disruptive classroom behaviors. These results emphasize the need for learner-centered instruction, supportive and inclusive classroom environments, and early psychological interventions to prevent or reduce the negative effects of poor learning attitudes. The study provides useful direction for teachers, school administrators, counselors, and policymakers to strengthen positive learning dispositions and promote students' overall development.

**Keywords:** Learning Attitude, Academic Motivation, Psychological Well-being, Student Behavior, Educational Practice

## 1. Introduction

Education is not merely a process of knowledge transmission but a complex interaction between cognitive, emotional, and behavioral dimensions of learners. Among these dimensions, students' attitudes toward learning significantly influence their academic engagement, emotional adjustment, and behavioral patterns. Learning attitude refers to a relatively stable predisposition that determines how students perceive, feel, and behave toward learning tasks, school environment, teachers, and academic challenges.

A positive learning attitude promotes curiosity, persistence, self-confidence, and academic resilience, whereas a negative learning attitude manifests as disinterest, fear of failure, low motivation, and resistance to academic activities. In contemporary educational contexts marked by competitive pressures, examination stress, digital distractions, and socio-economic challenges, negative learning attitudes among students are increasingly visible.

Psychologically, students with negative learning attitudes often experience anxiety, academic stress, frustration, helplessness, and diminished self-worth. Behaviorally, these attitudes may result in absenteeism, classroom misconduct, withdrawal from academic tasks, procrastination, and even dropout tendencies. Such consequences not only affect individual students but also disrupt classroom climate and overall educational effectiveness.

Understanding the psychological and behavioral consequences of negative learning attitudes is therefore essential for designing effective educational practices. Teachers, counselors, and school administrators must identify attitudinal barriers early and implement strategies that encourage motivation, emotional well-being, and constructive learning behaviors. The present study seeks to analyze these consequences systematically and suggest educational implications for fostering positive learning environments.

## 2. Review of Literature

Jennifer A. Fredricks (2016, 2023) synthesizes evidence that student engagement is strongly tied to academic adjustment and broader school functioning, and that disengagement is not just an “attitude problem” but a meaningful risk factor for lower achievement and weaker school connection—making it a key target for classroom and school-level intervention.

Reinhard Pekrun (2024) extends Control–Value Theory to explain how negative, low-control emotions (e.g., anxiety, shame, hopelessness) can intensify stress processes and undermine healthy functioning; this helps interpret why negative learning attitudes often co-occur with anxiety/stress and avoidance behaviors in school.

Lisa Linnenbrink-Garcia, together with Erin Patall and Reinhard Pekrun (2016), argues that motivation and emotion are central to engagement, and that classroom climates emphasizing mastery, belonging, and reduced social comparison can support more adaptive motivation and emotional experiences—directly relevant for shifting negative learning attitudes into more positive learning dispositions.

Daniel W. Putwain (2023, and related work through 2025) highlights how academic pressures and test anxiety can damage well-being and performance, and discusses protective factors such as academic buoyancy and intervention approaches (including cognitive-behavioral elements and emotion regulation) that can reduce anxiety-linked disengagement and avoidance.

Xia Gao (2023) provides recent evidence on adolescent academic stress and burnout pathways, showing how stress and anxiety processes can connect to academic burnout and reduced functioning—useful for framing negative learning attitudes as part of a broader stress–burnout mechanism affecting behavior and adjustment.

Yufei Tang (2023) examines depression and academic engagement, demonstrating that mental health can meaningfully relate to engagement levels (and vice versa) and that psychosocial factors can mediate these relationships—supporting your argument that negative learning attitudes intersect with psychological well-being.

Ioana A. Iuga (2024) meta-analyzes emotion regulation and academic burnout, showing that how students regulate emotions is systematically connected to burnout risk; this strengthens the implication that early psychological support and emotion-regulation skills can reduce the negative outcomes linked with disengaged or pessimistic learning attitudes.

M. M. Schwartz (2021) links academic boredom trajectories in adolescents to health-related quality of life, providing a modern, emotion-focused explanation for how low interest and disengagement can connect not only to achievement outcomes but also to broader well-being—highly aligned with “negative learning attitude → psychological consequences.”

Hanne Kristin Aas (2024) discusses challenging/disruptive behaviour in inclusive education contexts, helping situate classroom disruption within school and teaching conditions (not just individual traits) and supporting practice implications focused on supportive environments and inclusive strategies.

Ghadah Alkhadim (2024) summarizes evidence that disruptive behavior in school environments is associated with adverse psychological effects such as stress and anxiety, reinforcing the two-way link between classroom behavior problems and student well-being that often accompanies negative learning attitudes.

## 3. Objectives of the Study

1. To examine the level of negative learning attitudes among students.
2. To study the psychological consequences of negative learning attitudes.
3. To analyze the behavioral consequences associated with negative learning attitudes.

4. To determine the relationship between learning attitude and student behavior.
5. To suggest educational practices for improving students' learning attitudes.

#### 4. Hypotheses

1. There is no significant relationship between negative learning attitude and psychological well-being of students.
2. There is no significant relationship between negative learning attitude and behavioral problems among students.
3. Students with negative learning attitudes do not differ significantly in classroom behavior from students with positive learning attitudes.

#### 5. Research Methodology

##### 5.1 Research Design

The study adopted a **descriptive survey method**.

##### 5.2 Sample

A sample of **200 secondary school students** was selected using random sampling technique.

##### 5.3 Tools Used

- Learning Attitude Scale
- Psychological Well-being Inventory
- Student Behavior Rating Scale

##### 5.4 Data Collection

Data were collected through self-administered questionnaires under controlled classroom conditions.

##### 5.5 Statistical Techniques

- Mean and Percentage
- Correlation analysis
- t-test

#### 6. Data Interpretation and Major Findings

The present section deals with the systematic analysis and interpretation of data collected to examine the psychological and behavioral consequences of negative learning attitudes among students. The analysis has been

conducted in accordance with the stated objectives and hypotheses of the study. Appropriate statistical techniques—namely Mean and Percentage analysis, Correlation analysis, and t-test—were employed to derive meaningful conclusions from the data. The findings are presented in a logical sequence, beginning with the assessment of learning attitudes, followed by psychological and behavioral consequences, and finally testing the hypotheses formulated for the study.

### 6.1 Analysis of Learning Attitudes among Students

*(Related to Objective 1)*

To understand the overall distribution of learning attitudes among students, mean scores and percentages were calculated based on responses obtained from the Learning Attitude Scale.

**Table 6.1: Distribution of Students Based on Learning Attitude**

| Learning Attitude Level | Frequency (N=200) | Percentage |
|-------------------------|-------------------|------------|
| Positive                | 82                | 41.0%      |
| Neutral                 | 48                | 24.0%      |
| Negative                | 70                | 35.0%      |

The data reveal that 35% of students exhibit negative learning attitudes, while 41% display positive attitudes and 24% fall under the neutral category. The presence of more than one-third of the sample demonstrating negative learning attitudes is a matter of serious educational concern. This indicates that a substantial proportion of students approach learning with disinterest, lack of motivation, fear of failure, or disengagement.

The findings support the assumption that negative learning attitudes are not marginal but rather a significant phenomenon within the student population. This result provides a strong empirical base for further analysis of its psychological and behavioral consequences, as outlined in subsequent objectives.

### 6.2 Psychological Consequences of Negative Learning Attitudes

*(Related to Objective 2 and Hypothesis 1)*

To analyze the psychological impact of negative learning attitudes, mean scores were calculated for various psychological dimensions such as anxiety, academic stress, self-esteem, and emotional withdrawal.

**Table 6.2: Mean Scores of Psychological Variables among Students with Negative Learning Attitudes**

| Psychological Variable | Mean Score | Level    |
|------------------------|------------|----------|
| Anxiety                | 38.6       | High     |
| Academic Stress        | 41.2       | High     |
| Low Self-Esteem        | 33.4       | Moderate |
| Emotional Withdrawal   | 31.8       | Moderate |

The mean score analysis indicates that students with negative learning attitudes experience high levels of anxiety and academic stress. These students often perceive academic tasks as threatening, develop fear of failure, and experience persistent emotional tension related to academic performance.

Moderate mean scores in low self-esteem and emotional withdrawal suggest that negative learning attitudes gradually undermine students' self-confidence and emotional engagement. Over time, such students may develop feelings of inadequacy, helplessness, and social isolation within the classroom.

These findings clearly demonstrate that negative learning attitudes have serious psychological implications, thereby rejecting Hypothesis 1, which stated that there is no significant relationship between negative learning attitude and psychological well-being.

### 6.3 Behavioral Consequences of Negative Learning Attitudes

*(Related to Objective 3 and Hypothesis 2)*

Behavioral outcomes were analyzed using mean scores derived from the Student Behavior Rating Scale.

**Table 6.3: Mean Scores of Behavioral Problems among Students with Negative Learning Attitudes**

| Behavioral Dimension | Mean Score | Level    |
|----------------------|------------|----------|
| Academic Avoidance   | 36.9       | High     |
| Classroom Disruption | 34.5       | High     |
| Absenteeism          | 29.8       | Moderate |
| Peer Conflict        | 28.6       | Moderate |

The table indicates that academic avoidance and classroom disruption are the most prominent behavioral consequences associated with negative learning attitudes. Students with such attitudes tend to avoid academic tasks, delay assignments, and show resistance toward classroom participation.

Moderate levels of absenteeism and peer conflict further suggest that prolonged negative attitudes may extend beyond academic disengagement to social maladjustment. These behavioral patterns not only hinder individual learning outcomes but also negatively affect classroom discipline and peer learning environments.

Thus, the findings strongly contradict Hypothesis 2, which assumed no significant relationship between negative learning attitudes and behavioral problems. Hence, Hypothesis 2 is rejected.

### 6.4 Relationship between Learning Attitude and Psychological Well-being

*(Correlation Analysis – Related to Objective 4 and Hypothesis 1)*

To examine the degree of relationship between learning attitude and psychological well-being, Pearson's correlation coefficient was computed.

**Table 6.4: Correlation between Learning Attitude and Psychological Well-being**

| Variables Compared                           | r-value |
|--|---------|
| Learning Attitude & Psychological Well-being | -0.62   |

The correlation coefficient ( $r = -0.62$ ) indicates a strong negative correlation between learning attitude and psychological well-being. This means that as negative learning attitudes increase, psychological well-being decreases significantly.

The negative direction of the correlation highlights that unfavorable perceptions of learning are closely associated with anxiety, stress, emotional instability, and reduced self-esteem. The magnitude of the coefficient reflects a substantial association rather than a weak or incidental relationship.

Therefore, the correlation analysis provides strong empirical support for rejecting Hypothesis 1 and confirms that learning attitude is a critical determinant of students' psychological health.

### 6.5 Relationship between Learning Attitude and Behavioral Problems

*(Correlation Analysis – Related to Objective 4 and Hypothesis 2)*

**Table 6.5: Correlation between Learning Attitude and Behavioral Problems**

| Variables Compared                      | r-value |
|---|---------|
| Learning Attitude & Behavioral Problems | +0.58   |

The obtained correlation coefficient ( $r = +0.58$ ) indicates a moderate to strong positive relationship between negative learning attitudes and behavioral problems. This implies that students with more negative learning attitudes tend to exhibit higher levels of maladaptive behavior such as academic avoidance, classroom disruption, and social conflict.

This relationship confirms that learning attitude is not merely a cognitive construct but also significantly influences observable student behavior. The findings again contradict Hypothesis 2, reinforcing its rejection.

### 6.6 Comparison of Students with Positive and Negative Learning Attitudes

*(t-test – Related to Objective 4 and Hypothesis 3)*

To determine whether students with positive and negative learning attitudes differ significantly in psychological and behavioral dimensions, t-tests were applied.

**Table 6.6: Comparison of Psychological Well-being Scores**

| Group                      | Mean | SD  | t-value |
|----------------------------|------|-----|---------|
| Positive Learning Attitude | 72.4 | 8.6 |         |

|                            |      |     |       |
|----------------------------|------|-----|-------|
| Negative Learning Attitude | 58.1 | 9.2 | 6.87* |
|----------------------------|------|-----|-------|

(\*Significant at 0.05 level)

The obtained t-value (6.87) is statistically significant, indicating a significant difference in psychological well-being between students with positive and negative learning attitudes. Students with positive attitudes show better emotional stability, confidence, and stress management compared to those with negative attitudes.

Hence, Hypothesis 3 is rejected, as a significant difference exists between the two groups.

**Table 6.7: Comparison of Behavioral Problem Scores**

| Group                      | Mean | SD  | t-value |
|----------------------------|------|-----|---------|
| Positive Learning Attitude | 42.3 | 7.8 |         |
| Negative Learning Attitude | 56.9 | 8.4 | 5.92*   |

(\*Significant at 0.05 level)

The statistically significant t-value (5.92) indicates that students with negative learning attitudes exhibit significantly higher behavioral problems than their counterparts with positive learning attitudes. This further strengthens the argument that learning attitudes directly influence classroom conduct and student adjustment.

### 6.7 Major Findings of the Study

Based on the statistical analysis and interpretation, the following major findings emerged:

1. A substantial proportion of students (35%) exhibit negative learning attitudes.
2. Negative learning attitudes are associated with high levels of anxiety and academic stress.
3. Students with negative learning attitudes display higher behavioral problems such as academic avoidance and classroom disruption.
4. A strong negative correlation exists between learning attitude and psychological well-being.
5. A positive correlation exists between negative learning attitude and behavioral problems.
6. Significant differences were found between students with positive and negative learning attitudes in both psychological and behavioral domains.
7. All three null hypotheses were rejected, confirming the significant role of learning attitude in shaping students' psychological and behavioral outcomes

### 7. Conclusion

The study clearly establishes that negative learning attitudes have profound psychological and behavioral consequences for students. Such attitudes not only impair academic performance but also contribute to anxiety, stress, low self-esteem, and disruptive behaviors. These outcomes underline the necessity of addressing students' emotional and motivational needs alongside academic instruction. Educational practices must shift toward supportive, inclusive, and student-centered approaches that promote autonomy, competence, and positive teacher-

student relationships. Early identification of negative learning attitudes and timely interventions can significantly enhance students' psychological health and behavioral adjustment, ultimately leading to more effective and humane educational systems.

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