

Article

The Impact of Family Socioeconomic Status on Learning Conformity among Chinese University Students: Self-Efficacy as Mediating Factor

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Abstract: Background: At present, family socioeconomic status is a significant contributor to the differences in university students' learning motivation, but few studies have examined the effects on different types of motivation to learn conformity. Thus, the present study investigates the effects of family socioeconomic status on different types of learning conformity and the mediating role of self-efficacy. Methods: 339 Chinese university students were surveyed using the general self-efficacy scale, the learning conformity scale, and the family socioeconomic status questionnaire. We analyzed the effect of family socioeconomic status on learning conformity and the mediating role of general self-efficacy through common bias tests, correlation analysis, structural equation modeling, and tests of mediating effects. Results: (1) There are three types of learning conformity, as follows: learning abundance, learning obedience, and learning compliance. (2) The mediation model concluded that family socioeconomic status had a positive and significant effect on learning abundance and learning obedience, and general self-efficacy played a partially mediating role, with an adequate ratio of 59.7% and 26.26%, respectively; family socioeconomic status had a negative and significant effect on learning compliance, and general self-efficacy played a partially mediating role, with an adequate ratio of 52.02%. Conclusions: This study provides first-hand empirical data to support studies of learning motivation, learning conformity behavior, and self-efficacy among Chinese university students. It also provides a theoretical basis for subsequent research on family socioeconomic status and learning conformity.

Keywords: family socioeconomic status; general self-efficacy; learning conformity; mediating role; structural equation model



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1. Introduction

The essence of the talent cultivation goal of colleges and universities is to pay attention to the learning aspirations of university students. This raises the question of how best to recognize the learning aspirations of university students. It is a significant issue that has deserved considerable attention in recent years [1]. From the perspective of need levels, university students have different learning needs. On the one hand, university students form confidence in themselves, society, and the future through learning, producing achievements, and realizing self-respect needs [2]. On the other hand, university students improve their moral concepts in education and gain core competencies, including creativity, problem-solving skills, and the ability to accept reality, so that they obtain self-fulfillment needs. This manifests the higher human needs realized using university students' learning. Additionally, based on the general characteristics of conformity, it is known that the study of learning conformity focuses on exploring the inner psychological laws of college students' learning, which reflects the differences in learning motivation behind different student groups and has important practical significance for motivating students to learn and produce learning gains [3].

Conformity is a widespread psychosocial phenomenon. The earliest study of conformity dates back to 1759, when Adam Smith, in his book *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*, understood conformity as “herding,” also known as “herd behavior” [4]. The scientific study of conformity originated from Sharif’s “automatic effect” experiment in ambiguous and uncertain situations and Asch’s “line comparison” experiment in some instances, both of which confirmed the occurrence of conformity behavior [5,6]. Traditionally, conformity is considered a social pressure to conform to the majority behavior, called “herding” [7]. However, the concept of “minority influence” based on the Moscovici experiment contradicts the idea that the majority and the minority can influence individuals to produce consistent behavior [8]. Theoretical and empirical tests by scholars later concluded that herding is only narrowly defined as conformity and that conformity is a motivated behavior of individuals influenced by social information [9].

The literature that has studied university students’ motivation to study is known [10]. The cause of university students learning is not only influenced by individual perceptions but can also be influenced by family and economic factors [11]. Since the 1980s, scholars have begun to study the relationship between general self-efficacy and learning motivation, and these studies have shown that general self-efficacy not only influences individuals’ intrinsic motivation and behavior but also positively affects their psychological tolerance [12], academic gains, and growth and development [13]. Students with higher general self-efficacy tend to have higher educational levels and learning abilities, and are more clearly motivated to learn [14]. Meanwhile, it has also been pointed out that family socioeconomic status positively influences college students’ academic achievement and motivation, and this influence is stable and long-lasting [15]. Influenced by social capital theory, scholars have paid more attention to the power of family background in education acquisition, and most studies have pointed out that family socioeconomic status, as an external support system, tends to indirectly influence university students’ learning behavior and academic achievement [16]. General self-efficacy directly correlates with studying guides and educational outcomes of college students, more so than family socioeconomic status factors. Therefore, in recent years, scholars have also started to learn how family socioeconomic status affects students’ behaviors by influencing their general self-efficacy with an integrated perspective [17].

Based on information processing psychology [18], individuals are influenced by social information to produce conformity behavior, which includes internal and external information [19,20]. Internal information includes an individual’s perception and self-efficacy, while external information includes family income, social policies, and regulations. Therefore, this paper draws on information processing psychology to analyze the conformity behavior of university students under different motivations generated in the learning process, mainly involving the following two variables: self-efficacy for internal information, and family socioeconomic status for external information. Currently, the author has studied the effect of self-efficacy on learning conformity, but few scholars have studied the effect of family socioeconomic status on learning conformity [21]. Among the literature available, some scholars have indicated that family socioeconomic status can impact learning motivation among university students [16]. In contrast, there is a severe lack of research on learning conformity. There is a lack of research exploring the relationship between family socioeconomic status, self-efficacy, and individual learning conformity behavior. Only by fully considering the external triggers of family socioeconomic status and the internal triggers of general self-efficacy can we improve university students’ learning efficiency and ability at the level of their own learning needs, the support level of their family background, and the level of their self-ideology. We examined the distinctive motivation of university students in learning behavior and the significant talent value that university students have in leading high-quality development of higher education. In this way, a sustainable school education, sustainable family education, and sustainable self-directed education system are formed, not only as a reflection of the social responsibility of university students themselves, but also as a way to promote innovative pedagogical orientations and strategies for higher edu-

cation institutions to achieve sustainable learning concepts from the micro-psychological level of students and the level of family support. On this basis, this paper explores the following three main issues through theoretical and empirical studies: (1) To decompose the classification of learning conformity; (2) To explore the effects of family socioeconomic status on learning conformity behavior for different types of learning motivation; (3) To explicate the mediating mechanisms of general self-efficacy.

2. Literature Review and Research Hypothesis

This section provides an overview of the university student learning conformity theories and explains the research hypothesis associated with the present study. The following discusses previous studies examining learning conformity, family socioeconomic status, and self-efficacy.

2.1. Learning Conformity Can Categorize into Three Types Based on Learning Motivation

From the perspective of internal attribution of conformity, Song et al. found through survey research and analysis that the concept of conformity, although defined by the description of external behavior [22], is determined by the degree of internal information processing. However, it is proposed that the explanation of the nature of conformity can be divided into rational conformity and irrational conformity (blind conformity) according to the degree of human mental processing of external information, among which rational conformity can be divided into three types, namely abidance, compliance, and obedience according to the differences of individual behavioral motives [23]. Furthermore, university teachers' research conformity is divided into research abidance, research obedience, and research compliance [9].

By drawing on this division, this paper classifies learning conformity into the following three types: learning abidance, learning obedience, and learning compliance. Learning abidance refers to university students' interest in learning from the inside out, which manifests the consistency between willingness to learn and behave, and which reflects the cognitive motivation in learning [24]. Learning obedience refers to the desire to avoid punishment or the influence of authority, which manifests as inconsistent willingness to learn and behave, and reflects the practical motivation in learning [25]. Learning compliance refers to university students' behavior to satisfy their families and friends while learning, which is also a manifestation of inconsistent learning intentions and behaviors, and reflects the emotional motivation in learning [26]. In contrast, learning conformity is the motivational behavior of university students influenced by different social information, such as personal psychological perceptions, teachers' punishment and rewards, family support, etc., which includes learning abidance, learning compliance, and learning obedience (Figure 1). Therefore, the following hypotheses are proposed.

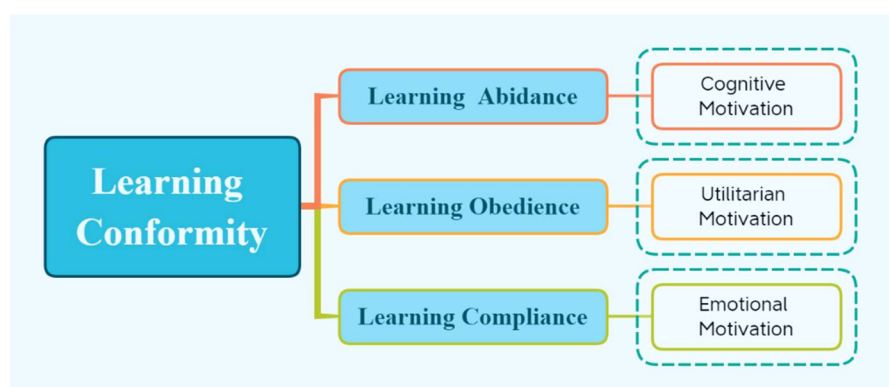


Figure 1. Classification of learning conformity.

H1. *There are three categories of learning conformity, as follows: learning abidance, learning obedience, and learning compliance.*

2.2. *The Effect of Family Socioeconomic Status on Learning Conformity*

The family socioeconomic status reflects a family's ability to access resources, both material and social, and is used to measure a family's objective economic status [27]. Scholars have mainly measured this indicator by the parent's income and education levels [28]. The family is a fundamental forum for influencing and developing university students' subjective consciousness, personal characteristics, and personality. Many researchers have concluded that family background, family income, and parental occupation positively impact the academic achievement of university students [29]. Some also argue that college students with higher family socioeconomic status have more motivational levels, educational opportunities, and social support [30]. Nevertheless, one study pointed out that family socioeconomic status has an effect on college students' gender orientation conformity behavior [31], and another study pointed out that family socioeconomic status is negatively related to the conformity behavior known as cultural values [16]. However, the current study has not explored the effect of family socioeconomic status on learning conformity. In addition, based on the concept of learning conformity, it is evident that a variety of social information influences different motivations for learning conformity. Some scholars also indicate that the family environment in which university students grow up is undoubtedly an essential factor influencing motivation to learn [32]. However, the effects of family socioeconomic status on university students' motivation to learn are different [33], meaning that the impact on learning abidance, learning obedience, and learning compliance will all be distinct. Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed in this paper.

H2. *Family socioeconomic status has a significant effect on learning conformity, but the magnitude of the effect varies for different types of learning conformity.*

2.3. *Mediating Effects of General Self-Efficacy*

The current study suggests that university students' general self-efficacy is possibly an important mediating variable between family socioeconomic status and learning conformity based on the literature review. The reason is that the author has conducted a previous study on learning conformity based on general self-efficacy and concluded that there is a significant link between general self-efficacy and learning conformity [21]. Bandura, an American psychologist, first proposed the concept of self-efficacy, which is an individual's subjective judgment, as well as their subjective assessment of their ability to achieve a specific achievement or accomplish a particular task; the results of their evaluation can affect behavioral motivation [34]. General self-efficacy is the role of the subject's self-awareness generation from the perspective of the individual's internal triggers. It is important to note that this paper does not use context-specific self-efficacy, because it has been established that general self-efficacy used in most scenarios is consistent with scenario-specific self-efficacy, thus, this paper follows this perspective [35]. Some of the literature has confirmed an interactive relationship between self-efficacy and university students' learning motivation. Some scholars believe that the level of self-efficacy has an important influence on learning motivation [36]. The generation of self-efficacy among university students involves a process of self-regulation, self-persuasion, and self-construction based on the individual's involvement in the cognitive processing of self-efficacy information. Additionally, the results of most studies have shown that family economic background has an important implication for the development of students' self-efficacy [37]. There is also a significant link between family socioeconomic status and conformity, as shown in the limited literature [38]. In addition, a large number of empirical studies have provided a basis for the mediating effect of general self-efficacy between family socioeconomic status and learning motivation [39]. Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed in this paper:

H3. Family socioeconomic status has a significant positive effect on general self-efficacy.

H4. General self-efficacy has a significant positive effect on learning conformity.

H5. General self-efficacy has a mediating effect in the process of family socioeconomic status influencing learning conformity.

In response to the literature review and analysis mentioned above, the hypothesis of this paper are formed, as shown in Figure 2.

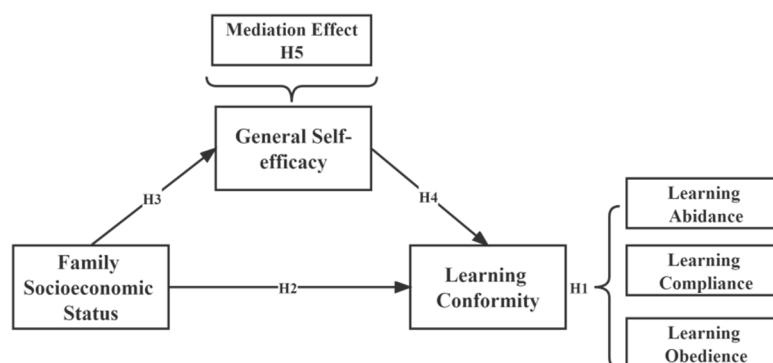


Figure 2. Mediation effect model and hypothesis diagram.

3. Materials and Methods

3.1. Participants and Procedures

A sample of university students from Northeast China was enrolled in this study. The Northeastern University, Agricultural University, Technology University, and other schools participated. A convenience sampling survey and an online questionnaire were used to address the problem of scattered participants. All participants' information was guaranteed to be anonymous and confidential from the beginning to the end. The ethics committee approved the study at Northeastern University, China.

At the beginning of the online questionnaire, the researcher explained the research topic, the data's purpose, and the separate way to complete it. It was stipulated that the respondent must meet the following two requirements: (1) Be an undergraduate student currently enrolled in a university; (2) Have an understanding and ability to answer questions about their family's financial situation subjectively and truthfully. This study used the Google survey tool to distribute the online questionnaires. Questionnaires were posted on the university platforms and the college pages on the subject.

A priori power analysis determined the sample size for current study, which was set at 0.05 with a power of 0.08 and assumed a small effect size ($r = 0.20$). For this study, $n = 194$ was the minimum sample size required based on the power analysis. Finally, 355 questionnaires were collected, and 16 questionnaires that did not answer more than 20% of the questionnaire items were excluded. The final sample used for data analysis was 339, with an effective rate of 95.5%. The sample analysis based on students' personal situation shows that the demographic breakdown was as follows: gender: male, 58.17%, female, 41.83%; grade: freshman, 36.54%, sophomore, 23.08%, junior, 17.79%, senior, 22.6; subject classification: philosophy, 19.23%, economics, 25%, management, 20.19%, engineering, 20.67%, and agriculture, 14.9%. The gender classification and grade classification in the sample are well-balanced and represent the soundness of the data; broad subject categories cover five categories and are well represented.

The survey results on the socio-economic status of students' families are available. According to China's development index, students' families come from 25 provinces across the country, of which 55 families (16.2%) are from developed regions, 117 families (34.5%) are from developing regions, and 167 families (49.3%) are from the underdeveloped

area [40]. The mean age of the father and mother was 46.67 years ($SD = 4.23$) and 43.57 years ($SD = 4.33$).

3.2. Measures

3.2.1. Learning Conformity Scale

In designing the survey items, reference was made to the concept of research conformity classification in the Scientific Research Conformity Scale (SRC) proposed by Song et al. [22], as well as the “conformity scale of students using Facebook” in the Facebook Conformity Scale (FCS) offered by Sun et al. [41].

A 5-point Likert scale, including the ranking of “strongly adherent, moderately adherent, average, somewhat non-adherent, and strongly non-adherent”, was designed. The higher the score, the greater the tendency to comply with the behavior. The item was categorized as learning abidance (7), learning obedience (6), and learning compliance (5) for a total count of 18 items. An illustration of the learning abidance question is as follows: “I am passionate about learning and enjoy learning from the inside out.” An illustration of the learning obedience question is as follows: “I study diligently to obtain various awards, including scholarships, etc.”. The learning compliance question is as follows: “I get good academic performance so that the family can be honored”.

The exploratory factor analysis (EFA) resulted in a KMO statistic of 0.93, and Bartlett’s spherical test ($p < 0.001$) also possessed statistical significance. Based on Kaiser’s research, a KMO value greater than 0.80 is more consistent with factor analysis, so the KMO of the learning conformity scale fits this criterion perfectly [42]. The final three factors were extracted as follows: learning abidance, containing five items with factor loadings between 0.89 and 0.91, and an explanatory variable of 37.5%; learning obedience, containing five items with factor loadings between 0.88 and 0.89, and an explanatory variable of 28.2%; learning compliance, containing four items with factor loadings between 0.81 and 0.91, and an explanatory variable of 21.3%. Cronbach’s alpha value of 0.93 across the instrument was more significant than the 0.70 recommended by Ledyard [43].

The overall model fit test revealed that $\chi^2 (74) = 0.963$ and $p = 0.57$, which has reached statistical significance. The model fit indicators also yielded CFI = 1, GFI = 0.97, RMSEA = 0.00, and RMR = 0.05, all of which met the criterion of a good fit [44]. And the three factors’ composite reliability (CR) ranged from 0.93 to 0.97, and AVE ranged from 0.78 to 0.88. This indicates that the learning conformity scale has good reliability and validity. As for the discriminant validity, the learning abidance was 0.921, the learning obedience was 0.938, and the learning compliance was 0.886, indicating that the scale has relatively good discriminant validity. Examples of the learning conformity scale are shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Description and sample items of the learning conformity scale.

Scale	Scale Dimension Items	Description and Sample Items
Learning conformity scale	Learning abidance	Studying at university is my favorite and hobby.
	Learning obedience	Studying at university can develop and worth my career in the future.
	learning compliance	Studying at university can satisfy and happily benefit the family.

3.2.2. Family Socioeconomic Status Questionnaire

Family socioeconomic status was calculated using parents’ educational levels and income [45]. Parents were asked to assess their monthly earnings on an 8-point scale ranging from 1 (less 1000 Renminbi) to 8 (over 10,001 Renminbi). The parents’ most significant level of finished education was measured on a 7-point scale ranging from 1 (illiterate) to 7 (Master’s degree or higher). The father’s education level, mother’s education level, and monthly household income were standardized by class score and added to obtain the overall family socioeconomic status score, with higher scores indicating higher family socioeconomic status.

3.2.3. General Self-Efficacy Scale

The paper used the Chinese version of the general self-efficacy scale (GSES), revised and tested by Schwarzer [46]. The scale was scored on a 4-point Likert scale, with 1 indicating completely incorrect and 4 indicating entirely correct. There are 10 items in total. The sum of all item scores was the general self-efficacy score. The total score ranged from 10 to 40, with higher full scores representing higher self-efficacy of the study participants.

An exploratory factor analysis (EFA) revealed a KMO statistic of 0.97, and Bartlett's spherical test reached statistical significance ($p < 0.001$). A final factor was extracted with 10 questions and factor loadings between 0.92 and 0.95. The Cronbach alpha value for the entire questionnaire was 0.98.

3.3. Statistical Analysis

Data were analyzed using SPSS 26.0 and AMOS 22.0. In the first stage, we examined the questionnaire data using the Harman test to ensure no common bias problems with the data. In the second stage, Pearson conducted a binary correlation analysis to test the relationship between family socioeconomic status, general self-efficacy, and learning conformity. In the third stage, structural equation modeling was constructed, and mediated analysis was conducted to test the indirect relationship between family socioeconomic status and learning conformity through self-efficacy by AMOS 22.0.

Preacher and Hayes suggested that all indirect effects in the model are assessed by bias-corrected 95% confidence intervals based on 5000 samples [47]. The significance of the mediating variable is reflected by not including zero in the confidence interval. The specific steps of the research are shown in Figure 3.

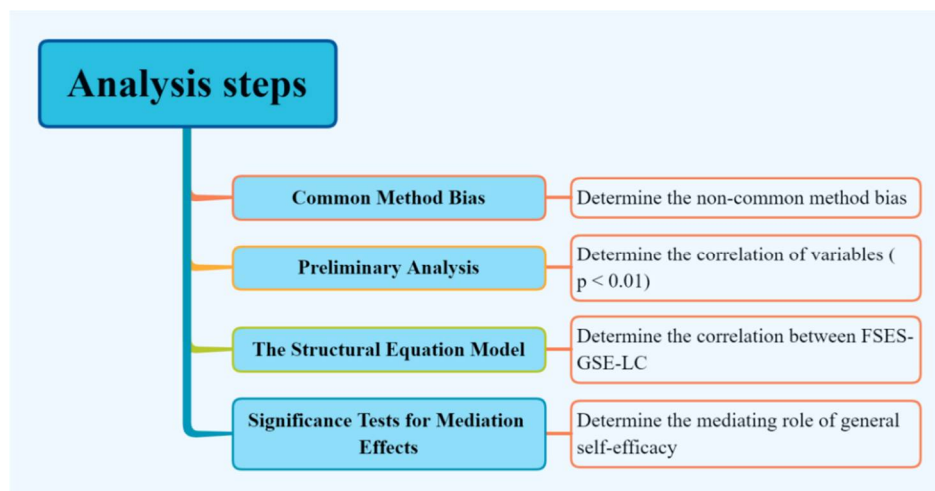


Figure 3. Research steps diagram.

4. Results

4.1. Common Method Bias

To avoid the problem of common method bias in the questionnaire data, the common variance bias was identified based on the Harman test. The results showed that the eigenroot values of the first common factor were all greater than 1, and the cumulative variance explained by the rotation of this single factor was $37.558\% < 40\%$, implying that there was no common method bias in the data of this study.

4.2. Preliminary Analysis

The Pearson correlation analysis of the variables in this study are shown in Table 2. It can be seen that there is a positive significant effect relationship between family socioeconomic status and learning abidance and obedience ($t = 0.627, p < 0.01$; $t = 0.312, p < 0.01$), while there is a negative significant effect relationship between family socioeconomic status

and learning obedience ($t = -0.338, p < 0.01$). This provides support and prediction for further validation of the mediating effect mechanism of general self-efficacy. In addition, gender was only significantly and negatively correlated with family socioeconomic status ($t = -0.020, p < 0.01$) and general self-efficacy ($t = -0.030, p < 0.01$) and was not significantly associated with learning abidance, learning compliance, and learning obedience. On the one hand, students from rural areas were more likely to be motivated by learning abidance ($t = -0.544, p < 0.01$) and learning compliance ($t = -0.400, p < 0.01$). On the other hand, family socioeconomic status ($t = -0.341, p < 0.01$) and general self-efficacy ($t = -0.476, p < 0.01$) were better for students attending “double first-class” universities than for students in general institutions.

Table 2. Correlations among variables ($N = 339$).

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Sex (1)	1									
Place of origin (2)	−0.064	1								
Grade (3)	0.059	−0.093	1							
School Level (4)	0.101	0.308 **	0.043	1						
Subject (5)	0.019	0.025	−0.025	−0.036	1					
Family socioeconomic status (6)	−0.020 **	−0.368 **	0.036	−0.341 **	0.116 *	1				
Self-efficacy (7)	−0.030 **	−0.266 **	0.025	−0.476 **	0.155 **	0.523 **	1			
Learning abidance (8)	−0.028	−0.544 **	0.015	−0.429 **	0.034	0.627 **	0.048	1		
Learning Obedience (9)	−0.020	0.482 **	−0.014	0.002	0.108 *	0.312 **	0.425 **	−0.421 **	1	
Learning compliance (10)	0.082	−0.400 **	0.027	−0.294 **	−0.060	−0.338 **	0.299 **	−0.238 **	−0.328 **	1

Note: Gender is a dummy variable, male = 1, female = 2; place of origin is also a dummy variable, urban = 1, rural = 2; school level is also a dummy variable, double-class institutions = 1, general institutions = 2. * $p < 0.05$ ** $p < 0.01$.

4.3. The Structural Equation Model

We constructed a structural equation model (shown in Figure 4). Learning abidance, learning compliance, and learning obedience was the dependent variable, family socioeconomic status was the independent variable, and general self-efficacy was the mediating variable. Structural equation modeling was conducted to test hypotheses regarding (a) the relationship of family socioeconomic status on learning abidance, learning compliance, and learning obedience, and (b) the mediating effect of self-efficacy between the family socioeconomic status and learning conformity dimensions. These associations were tested in a structural equation model. At the same time, the model was constructed by reflecting the theory of information processing psychology. Namely, individuals are influenced by internal and external information to produce learning conformity behaviors [19]. Bandura’s social learning theory further explains the mediating significance of self-efficacy, whereby family socioeconomic status as a carrier of external information influences learning conformity behavior, primarily through the mediating influence of self-efficacy [48]. Additionally, the model’s goodness-of-fit index consists of values of CMIN/DF = 1.218, RMSEA = 0.031, CFI = 0.982, and GFI = 0.912, all of which are within its acceptable range; this indicates that the model fits well [44].

The SEM analysis showed that the path coefficient of family socioeconomic status → learning abidance was 0.11, $p < 0.01$, indicating that family socioeconomic status significantly and positively predicted learning abidance. Higher levels of family socioeconomic status corresponded to higher levels of learning abidance. The path coefficient of family socioeconomic status → learning obedience was 0.86, $p < 0.01$, indicating a significant predictive effect of family socioeconomic status on learning obedience. The higher the family socioeconomic status, the stronger the students’ motivation towards learning obedience. The path coefficient of family socioeconomic status → learning compliance was −0.72, $p < 0.01$, indicating a significant predictive effect of family socioeconomic status on learning compliance. The higher the family socioeconomic status, the weaker the students’ motivation towards learning compliance. Self-efficacy has a negative effect on learning obedience ($\beta = -0.42, p < 0.01$), but has a positive effect on both learning abidance ($\beta = 0.38, p < 0.01$) and learning compliance ($\beta = 0.69, p < 0.01$). The path coefficient for family socioeconomic

status \rightarrow general self-efficacy was 0.54, $p < 0.01$, representing that the higher the family socioeconomic status, the stronger the students' self-efficacy. The above study's findings are essential for testing the mediating effect.

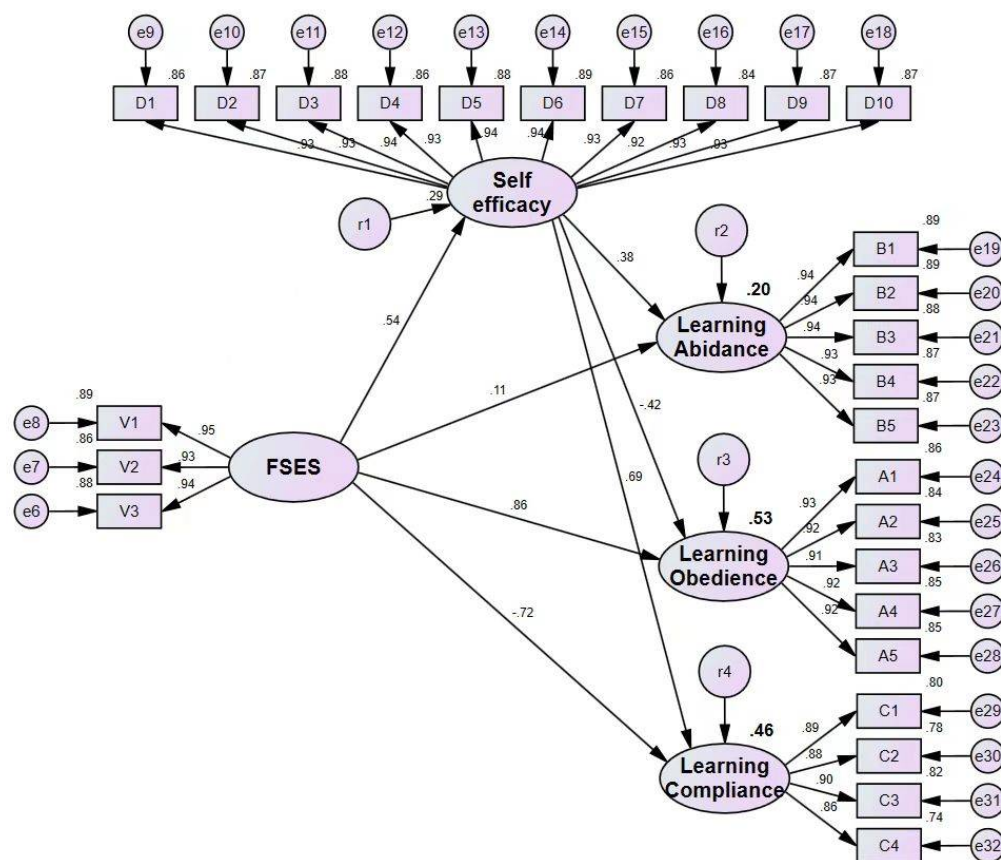


Figure 4. Structural equation model.

4.4. Significance Tests for Mediation Effects

The PROCESS macro was used to investigate the mediating role of self-efficacy in the relationship between family socioeconomic status (FSES) and learning abidance, learning compliance, and learning obedience behaviors. Bootstrap tests for mediating effects were applied, and 95% confidence intervals for mediating effects were calculated with a sample size of 5000. The selection of the PROCESS plugin for mediated effects analysis in this paper draws on research by scholars on the subject [49]. The PROCESS plugin allows for the integration of the bootstrap function in AMOS software, and provides a more intuitive representation of confidence intervals and model fitting effects, in addition to performing model analysis when the data have non-normal distributions [49]. The results are shown in Table 3.

Firstly, the results of the study showed that the indirect effect value of family socioeconomic status (FSES) affecting learning abidance was 0.197, with a point estimated 95% confidence interval of [0.142 to 0.271]. The break did not include the number zero, indicating a significant mediating effect of general self-efficacy in family socioeconomic status affecting learning abidance. Because the indirect and total impacts have the same sign, the mediating effect can be calculated as follows: indirect effect/total effect = $0.197/0.33 = 59.70\%$ [50].

Secondly, the indirect effect value of family socioeconomic status (FSES) influencing learning compliance was 0.386, with a point estimated 95% confidence interval of [0.266 to 0.548], which did not include the number zero in the gap, indicating a significant mediating effect of general self-efficacy in family socioeconomic status influencing learning compliance. Because the indirect and total effects have different signs, the absolute value of the mediating effect

is as follows: $|\text{indirect effect}/\text{direct effect}| = |0.386/-0.742| = 52.02\%$ [50]. Further analysis of the mediating effects indicated that the direct effect of family socioeconomic status on learning compliance was the opposite of the indirect effect. The indirect effect of general self-efficacy between family socioeconomic status and learning compliance was manifested as a masking effect [51]. The direct effect of independent family socioeconomic status on learning conformity was negative. That is, when general self-efficacy was not considered as a mediating variable, college students were more likely to be motivated to learn compliance in families with lower family socioeconomic status. On the contrary, the effect becomes positive after introducing mediating variables. This suggests that the moderating effect of general self-efficacy can reduce the motivation to learn compliance among students with low family socioeconomic status. This may be related to the personal learning perceptions and emotions of college students; the more confident and competent students are [52], the more they consider the emotional appeals of others, but when such students have low family socioeconomic status, they are more likely to be psychologically motivated to learn in order to gain the approval and praise of others [37]. In addition, students with lower family socioeconomic status have an increasing sense of self-efficacy when they are nurtured by the school and supported by society's education. However, the family environment can negatively psychologically hold students' motivation by the power of habituation, resulting in motivation for learning that stems from expectations of family development.

Table 3. Bootstrap analysis of mediation effects.

Analysis Path	Total Effect	Indirect Effect	Direct Effect	SE	95% CIs of Indirect Effect		Percentage of Total Effects (%)
					Lower	Upper	
FSES → Self-efficacy → Learning Abidance	0.33	0.197	0.133	0.032	0.142	0.271	59.70%
FSES → Self-efficacy → Learning Compliance	−0.356	0.386	−0.742	0.07	0.266	0.548	52.02%
FSES → Self-efficacy → Learning Obedience	0.654	−0.233	0.887	0.032	−0.301	−0.173	26.26%

Finally, the indirect effect value of family socioeconomic status (FSES) influencing learning obedience was -0.233 with a point estimated 95% confidence interval of $[-0.301 \text{ to } -0.173]$, which did not include the number zero in the gap, indicating a significant mediating effect of general self-efficacy in family socioeconomic status influencing learning obedience. Because the indirect and total effects have different signs, the absolute value of the mediating effect is as follows: $|\text{indirect effect}/\text{direct effect}| = |-0.233/0.887| = 26.26\%$ [50]. Further analysis of the mediating effects revealed that the direct effect of family socioeconomic status on learning obedience was opposite to the indirect effect. The indirect effect of general self-efficacy between family socioeconomic status and learning obedience was manifested as a masking effect [51]. The direct effect of independent family socioeconomic status on learning obedience was positive, i.e., when general self-efficacy was not considered a mediating variable, college students were more likely to be motivated to learn obedience when they were in a family with a higher family socioeconomic status. In contrast, the effect becomes negative after the introduction of mediating variables. This suggests that the moderating effect of general self-efficacy can promote motivation to learn to obey in students with high family socioeconomic status. This may be related to college students' family background and personal perceptions, because individual self-efficacy represents students' self-confidence and self-perceptions in schooling. Students with higher general self-efficacy often do not affect their self-perceptions of schooling because of external rewards or punishments [53]. Therefore, with the intervention of general self-efficacy, the influence of family socioeconomic status on academic obedience diminishes when general self-efficacy plays a dominant role. Moreover, students with high family socioeconomic status will promote the enhancement of general self-efficacy after receiving family financial support, social capital support, and sufficient positive guidance from teachers, and enhance

their ability to achieve personal ideals, pursue overall development, and realize personal motivation for academic obedience in their pursuit [17].

5. Discussion

This study aimed to understand whether different learning conformity behaviors of Chinese university students are influenced by family socioeconomic status and the mediating effects of general self-efficacy.

5.1. Explore and Validate the Classification of Learning Conformity

Regarding the first research question, H1 was verified. We used the exploratory factor analysis (EFA) and confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) in this study to show that learning conformity was classified into learning abidance, learning compliance, and learning obedience depending on the motivation for learning. This result is consistent with expectations and is the same as several scholars' divisions [24], so this paper further validates the types of learning conformity based on the behavior of learning as a university student [23]. This division is consistent with the divisional dimension of scholars' research on university teachers' scientific research conformity, and it paves the foundation for the academic establishment and practical extension of conformity in social psychology theories. The classification and definition of learning conformity in this paper is of sustainable research value, as most scholars currently emphasize externally attributed conformity research [3], while this paper belongs to internally attributed conformity research and, based on this classification framework [21], it is able to lay theoretical foundations for sustainable research on conformity behavior.

5.2. Differential Performance of Correlation Analysis

We found significant correlations between family socioeconomic status, learning abidance, learning compliance, learning obedience, and university students' self-efficacy through Pearson's correlation analysis.

First, there was a significant positive relationship between family socioeconomic status and learning abidance and obedience ($t = 0.627, p < 0.01$; $t = 0.312, p < 0.01$), and a negative relationship between family socioeconomic status and learning compliance ($t = -0.338, p < 0.01$). This finding adds new empirical support to the research supporting the impact of family social capital on personal development [32].

Second, there are significant differences in educational support and academic motivation by family socioeconomic status for college students of different genders [54]. Female students are usually less supported than male students in many aspects, such as family economic status support and psychological learning needs attention. Additionally, the general self-efficacy of the female college student population is relatively lower. This result is consistent with several scholarly studies [55]. Therefore, families should pay attention to the cultivation and leadership of self-efficacy in encouraging and educating their children, and should pay more attention to female students' individual academic needs, values, guidance, and social expectations to avoid significant gender bias in children's educational support [56].

In addition, this study also found that college students from rural areas were more likely to be motivated by learning abidance and learning compliance than college students from urban areas [57]. The above results indicate significant differences between the groups regarding the place of origin and school level. Students attending "double-class" universities have significantly better family socioeconomic status and general self-efficacy than students from regular universities [24]. The finding is similar to the research of some scholars [58].

Furthermore, this research has essential value for sustainable school education. Some studies point out that public universities pay less attention to students' learning psychology [2], while this paper suggests the importance of students' learning psychology for personal development. Therefore, for the management model of higher education

in public universities, more attention should be paid to students' psychological development and the basic desire for learning and self-growth to improve students' self-esteem, self-development, and self-recognition, which could improve the sustainable schooling of universities [12].

5.3. *The Effect of Family Socioeconomic Status on Learning Conformity*

Concerning the second research question, family socioeconomic status significantly affects learning conformity, but to different degrees for different types of learning conformity, consistent with the expected hypothesis H2.

First, the present study used structural equation modeling to conclude that students from families with higher family socioeconomic status have a greater tendency to be motivated by learning abidance and learning obedience when pursuing their studies at university. This result represents that, on the one hand, families with higher family economic and parental literacy have a superimposed psychological impact on their children's learning [15], which indirectly promotes students' inside out motivation for learning and, thus, a tendency to academic submissiveness; on the other hand, families with higher socioeconomic status foster students' competitive psychology, making them more impactful for academic rewards and academic development [29], which in turn generates a tendency to learn to obey.

Second, the study concluded that university students with lower socioeconomic status in their families were more inclined to learn compliance motivation in their studies. This is in line with Sengonul's study, which noted that parents living at a lower economic level tend to be more severe and authoritarian in their emotions, behaviors, attitudes, and parenting or social strategies when raising their children [59], which can influence children's motivation to learn, so that they tend to develop a behavior that caters to the wishes of their parents or family and friends. When the family's social and cultural capital is low, it stimulates children's emotional tendencies to equate academic achievement and personal development prospects with the development of the family, which in turn leads to a propensity to learning compliance.

University students are at an essential stage of self-awareness, individual development, and thinking transformation, and their cognitive perceptions, psychological development, and cognitive tendencies are more malleable. At the same time, low self-efficacy, such as low self-esteem and self-denial, may occur once they face insufficient family support or negative educational regulation. In addition, most studies have pointed out that a good family atmosphere, a financially strong family, and a family with sufficient social capital can help to stimulate students' learning potential. The importance of family factors is related to university students' individual cognitive and psychological maturity, academic performance, and learning motivation in school.

Therefore, on the one hand, purposeful family education should target university students. Parents need to actively promote the correct guidance of university students' educational performance, educational development, and educational planning to enhance their self-efficacy and sustainable learning ability; on the other hand, university students need active career guidance and social support. University teachers, schools, and society should provide targeted guidance, communicate social and vocational needs more clearly to students, and promote the leadership of sustainable social education and the planning of sustainable personal vocational ability [60].

5.4. *Mediating Effects of General Self-Efficacy*

The present study also constructed a mediation model based on the model of "family socioeconomic status → general self-efficacy → learning conformity". The structural equation model concluded that hypotheses H3 and H5 hold and that family socioeconomic status positively predicts general self-efficacy [61], and that self-efficacy exerts a mediating effect. However, hypothesis H4 was not tested because self-efficacy has a different impact on different types of learning conformity, not all of which are positive. It is consistent with

motivational attribution theory that individuals with high self-efficacy attribute academic achievement in college to a lack of effort, meaning that students with higher self-efficacy will believe they will persevere and will not change their academic aspirations due to the influence of teacher authority.

First, general self-efficacy mediates the process by which family socioeconomic status influences learning abidance. It can be seen that family socioeconomic status has a positive effect on students' learning abidance and a partial mediating effect on general self-efficacy [62].

Second, general self-efficacy mediates a masking effect in the process of family socioeconomic status by influencing learning obedience and learning compliance. The masking effects of the two are interpreted differently. On the one hand, the former represents that students with higher general self-efficacy negatively correlate with the tendency to learn obedience. Individual self-efficacy represents students' self-confidence and self-perception in schooling. Students with higher general self-efficacy often will not affect their self-perception of education because of external rewards and punishments, so general self-efficacy plays an important role [63]. On the other hand, the latter represents students with higher general self-efficacy for learning compliance behaviors, which emotions can explain [64]. More confident and competent students consider more emotional appeals to others. Still, family socioeconomic status negatively correlates with students' tendency to comply, so general self-efficacy also plays a masking effect between family socioeconomic status and learning compliance, while also playing a masking effect between family socioeconomic status and learning obedience.

6. Limitations

The results of this study have significant theoretical and practical value. On the one hand, to our knowledge, this study is the first attempt to investigate classifications related to learning conformity among university students and to examine the mediating role of self-efficacy in the relationship between learning conformity and family socioeconomic status among Chinese university students. Based on information processing psychology, this study provides empirical support for enriching the application of information processing psychology to conformity research by linking studies related to conformity, self-efficacy, and family socioeconomic status through practical and theoretical research.

This study argues that family socioeconomic status and general self-efficacy can motivate college students to learn intrinsically. The motivational mechanisms that arise are different for individuals facing different learning motivations. Self-efficacy is not simply a verbal expression of college students based on self-perception and self-competence; it results from cognitive processing from additional efficacy information. Individuals process self-efficacy information to produce motivational choices for learning behavior [26].

On the other hand, family socioeconomic status is also used as external family information that has a subtle influence on students, causing them to internally process family information and, thus, generate different learning motivation processes. Combining the two kinds of information will influence the learning conformity behavior of other individuals and, thus, produce individual differences in learning motivation. Therefore, in the face of the immediate learning demands of college students, all three groups, namely universities, society, and families, should pay attention to the positive guidance of the learning nature of college students, enhance the exploration of the essence of "student-centered" education, stimulate the motivation of students to love learning from the inside out and realize the academic mission of college students empowered by society and the times [65].

Despite these implications, the following limitations of this study are noteworthy:

1. This study was in the form of a questionnaire survey, which may create the problem of compromised sample selection, and subsequent studies could adopt more rigorous cross-sectional and longitudinal surveys. Expanding the scope of the data reduces the data variation of the study.

2. The sample of college students in the study is from universities in Northeastern China, and the range of schools surveyed is narrow. Future studies can conduct comparative studies between northeastern and southern college students to enhance the representativeness.

3. The research in this paper only applies to Chinese university students because of the difference in educational philosophy between countries with democratic and liberal educational differences.

4. This paper applied the PROCESS plugin in SPSS software when conducting the mediation effect analysis, and the mainstream AMOS software was not used to conduct the analysis directly. Although a wide range of scholars have proved the functionality of PROCESS software in conducting mediation analysis, it also lacks universal adaptability. Therefore, future studies on learning conformity sustainability will either revert to using the AMOS software or conduct a comparison of the differences between the two software to facilitate the precision of the study.

5. The study of university students learning conformity is classified based on learning motivation, a more innovative classification. Future studies can explore the differences in conformity between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation to enrich conformity research.

7. Conclusions

This study investigated the classification of learning conformity among Chinese university students and the mediating role of self-efficacy in the relationship between learning conformity and family socioeconomic status. The results indicated that Chinese university students' learning conformity was classified into three categories according to the differences in learning motivation. In addition, family socioeconomic status positively influenced learning abidance and obedience and negative impacted learning compliance. Meanwhile, general self-efficacy showed a mediating role in the process of family socioeconomic status influencing learning conformity. Our findings suggest differences in university students' motivation to learn and that both family financial support and individual self-efficacy deserve substantial attention to motivate university students to learn. This research provides essential support for higher education regarding the sustainability of learning, the sustainability of development, and the sustainability of education for university students. Creating a long-term motivation for university students to pursue a desire to learn is crucial for them to have a philosophy of lifelong learning and the continued pursuit of personal values.

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