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Student behaviour as a factor influencing the psychological comfort of academic teachers during classes: the perspective of academics at a public university

Abstract

Research background and purpose: Current students are Generation Z, in their adolescence and after experiencing the COVID-19 pandemic. All these factors determine their, sometimes specific, behaviour, which is becoming an increasingly common problem for academic teachers. The aim of the study based on primary sources is to identify problems in students' behaviour that cause difficulties encountered by academic teachers in the teaching area and the relationship between the perceived frequency of these problems and the extent to which they generate difficulties during classes and affect the teacher's psychological comfort.

Design/methodology/approach: A pilot study was conducted using a direct survey among a deliberately selected sample of academic teachers working at one of the public universities in Poland.

Findings: It was found that the more frequently respondents experience problems related to the personal culture, their engagement in classes and the scope of problems related to the lack of students' skills necessary to perform classes, the more these problems make teachers' job difficult and reduce their psychological comfort. It was shown that, in particular using the mobile phone for purposes unrelated to classes, the lack of sufficient knowledge of students that should be obtained at the secondary school level, and difficulties in performing tasks with a higher level of abstraction are behaviours that occur very often, significantly hinder work with students, and greatly reduce the psychological comfort of an academic teacher during the implementation of didactic classes.

Value added and limitations: Recommendations have been formulated that may make it easier for academic teachers to conduct classes and improve their psychological comfort. Furthermore, these suggestions should help

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students cope with some of the problems they encounter during their studies, such as lack of sufficient knowledge from high school knowledge, ignorance of the rules of conduct during classes, and (perhaps) a reduction in the need to live on social media in favour of real life. The research was conducted among academic teachers at one public university in Poland, but its implementation at other domestic universities, including private ones, as well as at foreign universities, might yield different results.

Keywords: *psychological comfort, academic teachers, student behaviour, difficulties and challenges, teacher's work*

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1. Introduction

The quality of educational services depends on the work of academics, as well as on the conditions under which they are required to carry out their work for the benefit of students. The work consists of a set of tasks. The concept of tasks for university and higher education teachers can be found in the International Standard Classification of Occupations (ISCO-08, 2008). The description of tasks identifies nine categories, including five related to teaching, one related to working with doctoral students, one related to research, one related to publications, and one for other tasks. The tasks of university and higher education teachers in the field of teaching are: designing and modifying curricula and preparing courses of study in accordance with requirements; preparing and delivering lectures and conducting tutorials, seminars, and laboratory experiments; stimulating discussion and independent thought among students; supervising, where appropriate, experimental and practical work undertaken by students; administering, evaluating, and marking examination papers and tests. Completion of these tasks involves the effort that the teacher must put into them. Good teaching results also require cooperation between the teacher and the students. The overriding priority of an academic teacher is to achieve satisfactory results in all of these areas. It is clear that a lecturer, as a person performing multiple roles and tasks, is highly likely to experience role conflict due to lack of time and energy, which is consistent with the scarcity model (Rafsanjani et al., 2020).

When a person strives to carry out their duties conscientiously, but fails to 'see' the results of their hard work and effort, and when they cease to see the point of their tasks, they fall into various unhealthy situations that pose a threat to their health (Polańska, 2008). In the classical approach to work management, effort was a component of individual work expressed in terms of working time and its

organisation. Today, an employee's physical and mental effort is captured in the Job Demands–Resources (JD-R) model as demands (Rafsanjani et al., 2020). The characteristic features of demands in this context are that they cost the employee energy, affect work engagement, and also affect well-being. The demands initiate a health impairment and can lead to fatigue and health problems. Employees exposed to high job demands can burn out and enter a loss cycle, in which their accumulated fatigue leads to self-undermining behaviours and increased job demands (Bakker, 2015). As reported in studies, many academics are on the verge of burnout (Springer, 2023). This is related to their fatigue, lack of adequate sleep, and proper rest and regeneration after work, as they often work during their vacations in order to use the time without teaching for research. Another study found a relationship between academic stress and life satisfaction with all three dimensions of burnout (Wilczek-Rużyczka & Wyszynska-Michalec, 2023). Furthermore, these studies showed that 62.7% of the surveyed academic and teaching staff had a high level of loss of sense of personal achievement. This background is compounded by difficult situations related to the teaching process, when academics encounter incomprehensible student behaviour. Signals about academic teachers feeling inadequately prepared to cope with various such difficulties come from various centres around the world. They concern, for example, working with students with psychological illnesses or personality disorders (Marais, 2023; Hughes & Byrom, 2019), the need to change the teaching model related to the characteristics of new-generation students (Mondragon et al., 2024), or working with foreign students (Parada & Tour, 2022). The reasons for the difficulties that academic teachers encounter in their teaching work can be grouped into several sets resulting from: i) the specificity and characteristics of generation Z, ii) neurodevelopmental or personality disorders of students, iii) their problems resulting from COVID-19 and iv) the growing number of foreign students.

The first factor that influences student behaviour is the specificity of their generation, Generation Z. People from Generation Z are attributed with certain characteristic features (Chang et al., 2023; Dolot, 2017; Dimitriou & Abouelgheit, 2019; Grobelna et al., 2023; Leung et al., 2021; Niemczyk et al., 2020; Robinson & Schänzel, 2019; Sakdiyakorn et al., 2021), including mobility, flexibility, multitasking, diversity of interests, excellent knowledge of foreign languages and constant being 'online' (Kukla & Nowacka, 2019; Wasiluk & Kowalczyk-Kroenke, 2025). Due to the enormous advances in electronics over the past two decades, today's students have had the opportunity to use electronic devices from a very young age, thus gaining access to social media. This means that their attention can only be captured by engaging ways of conveying information, such as through engaging graphics, animations, games, quizzes, etc. The effectiveness of such forms of student engagement and the developed ways of pushing boundaries in teaching are demonstrated by the results of teaching at Finnish universities (Vuojärvi, 2024). Generally, teachers appreciate the development of technological skills, as well as

the introduction of new methodological proposals and the use of digital tools to reach all their students, and see the associated benefits (Donnelly, 2017). However, this very often increases their anxiety, workload, and a stressful sense of need for continuous training stemming from their own inadequacies in this area (Rangel-Pérez et al., 2021). Moreover, young people's constant access to social media results in a transfer to a virtual life that demonstrates and imposes certain standards, as well as rapid, and often painful, assessment. Taking into account these characteristics of Generation Z people, both potential employers and teachers need to know how to deal with them in such a way as to motivate them to maximum efficiency (at work or in studies) and at the same time not exceed their comfort level, which could affect their psychological health (Nieżurawska, 2023).

The consequences of continuing changes and the demands of modern civilisation include anxiety, lifestyle diseases, burnout, inability to regulate emotions, etc., among young people. Research conducted by Advance HE and the Higher Education Policy Institute (HEPI) among undergraduate students in the UK indicates that the level of psychological problems among students is rising alarmingly quickly (Sanders, 2023). In addition, starting university coincides with the maturation of the nervous system (ages 18-25), a period during which various diseases and disorders can develop. WHO data indicate that globally one in seven people aged 10-19 experiences a mental disorder (World Health Organisation, 2025). Depression, anxiety, and personality disorders are currently the main problems among adolescents. Suicide is the fourth leading cause of death among people aged 15 to 29 years. In Italy, in 2018, suicide among young men was the third leading cause of death, after accidents and cancer (Granieri et al., 2022). Psychological health problems in young people are often linked to neurodevelopmental disorders, which also impede their ability to function in society. These disorders primarily affect individuals with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), but also include dyslexia, eating disorders, and others (Platos et al., 2023). According to WHO data, one in 100 children currently has an autism spectrum disorder (World Health Organisation, 2023). Depending on the severity of these disorders, people on the spectrum can experience varying difficulties with social interactions and communication. They may also exhibit unusual behaviour, for example, when transitioning from one activity to another. They often struggle to focus on the details and react to experiences disproportionately to the scale of the problem.

The COVID-19 pandemic, declared in 2020, has had a significant impact on the behaviour of young people currently studying. Months of significantly limited face-to-face contact with peers resulted in disruptions in social relationships. A study conducted at the end of the 2020 summer semester among students at a Polish university showed that 61% of the participants had moderate to high levels of isolation-related disturbances (Długosz & Liszka, 2021).

Many countries that were relatively closed to the influx of people from other countries with different languages and cultures have now, for various reasons (economic, political, and touristic), welcomed visitors from abroad. This, of course, has a huge impact on the economy and social relations, but also on conditions in the workplace and at school. A study of Chilean teachers conducted in 2009 after the influx of Haitian immigrants showed that teachers often struggled to teach their culturally and linguistically diverse students (Parada & Tour, 2022). These difficulties were attributed to the low level of professional preparation of teachers for working with these students and the limited support from schools. In recent years, a growing number of students from other countries have also been studying in Poland. Very often, especially in the first semester of their studies, they have poor command of the Polish language, which significantly complicates the process of conducting classes and assessing their knowledge.

These factors often lead young people to exhibit certain unusual behaviours that academic teachers had rarely encountered before. This has a significant impact on the way academic teachers conduct their classes. Jean M. Twenge believes that currently American universities place more emphasis on the emotional state of students than on their intellectual development, which results in the omission of ambitious and provocative discussions because they could cause discomfort to the student (Twenge, 2019).

In this article, the authors identified the difficulties that teachers face in their teaching work with students. These difficulties were found to be due to student behaviour, as manifested in their reactions in the didactic area. The above factors determine specific student behaviours that cause difficulties that teachers face in their work (job demands in the JD-R model). These difficulties are associated with the work and effort of the teacher, that is, the energy of the body, mind, and emotions directed towards achieving a state in which a person feels a sense of balance between the long-term cognitive and emotional effort expended by academic teachers in working with students and the psychological costs they incur. This state in the article we called psychological comfort, which is a part of the well-being of the mind in Ryff's concept (Ryff, 1989; Figure 1). This linear relationship between student behaviour and the difficulties it induces in the academic's teaching, and consequently in his or her psychological well-being, does not differ significantly from the working model proposed by Aldrup et al. for teacher-student relationships in a German secondary school (Aldrup et al., 2018). The difference, however, is that the time a teacher spends with students in the classroom is significantly longer than in the academic setting, therefore, the mutual teacher-student relationship and its strengthening have a greater impact on the teacher's well-being.

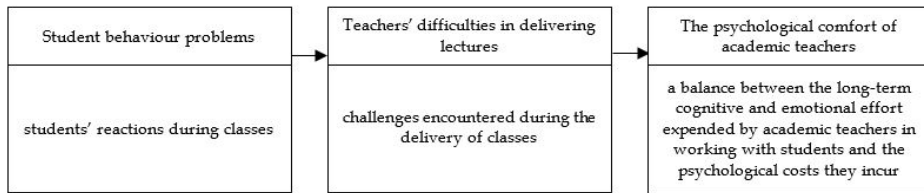


Figure 1. **Operationalisation of concepts**

Source: author's elaboration

The results of the literature review indicate that few studies have been conducted linking reduced teacher psychological comfort with broadly defined student behaviour in foreign and Polish universities. Typically, these studies have focused on determining the impact of student incivility on academic well-being (Vashisht & Vashisht, 2019; Karim et al., 2024), with “incivility” associated with discourtesy, disrespect, and violation of common manners (Vural & Bacioğlu, 2020). The quality of life of both teachers and students has also been studied (Piotrowski et al., 2024), including neurodiverse students (Pisula et al., 2024; Accardo et al., 2024). Rakow and his team (Rakow et al., 2025) attempted to assess the impact of student behaviour on teachers’ psychological well-being. The authors demonstrated that student behaviour, along with factors related to the university’s organisational culture and external factors (not directly related to teachers’ work), is perceived by students as a factor determining teachers’ mental well-being. However, this research was limited to assessing students’ perceptions of the impact of their behaviour on teachers’ mental well-being, without attempting to classify these behaviours or analysing the relationship between the frequency of specific behaviours and this well-being.

Student behaviours that can be broadly defined as “difficult” may stem from the causes presented in this article. These findings clearly demonstrate that they are not always the result of rudeness and an unwillingness to learn, but very often stem from factors beyond the student’s control, such as dysfunctions, inability to communicate with others, or a misunderstanding of the interdependencies between them. Teachers are often aware of this, but this does not change the fact that working with such students significantly complicates teaching and, consequently, can lead to a decrease in the instructor’s psychological comfort.

The aim of the study based on primary sources is to identify problems in student behaviour that cause difficulties encountered by academic teachers in the teaching area and the relationship between the perceived frequency of these problems and the extent to which they generate difficulties during classes and affect the teacher’s psychological comfort.

To address this objective and fill the identified research gap, the following research questions were formulated:

- RQ1: What types of difficulty related to student behaviour are experienced most frequently by academic teachers in the didactic area?
RQ2: To what extent do the identified student behaviour-related difficulties experienced by academic teachers hinder the delivery of their classes?
RQ3: To what extent do identified student behaviour-related difficulties affect the psychological comfort of academic teachers at work?

Based on the defined research questions, the following research hypotheses have been formulated:

- H1. *When teaching classes, academic teachers often encounter students whose skills are not sufficient to achieve the intended learning outcomes.*
H2. *There is a positive correlation between the frequency of student behaviour experienced by academic teachers and the extent to which these behaviours affect the performance of their teaching duties.*
H3. *There is a positive correlation between the frequency of student behaviour experienced by academic teachers and their psychological comfort at work.*

2. Background

To identify the areas of existing research on student-teacher relationships, particularly in the context of student behaviour that shapes these relationships, and to analyse trends in the latest research in this field, a bibliometric analysis was performed using VOSViewer 1.6.20 (Centre for Science and Technology Studies, Leiden University, The Netherlands). VOSViewer is a programme widely used in bibliometric research, including in the field of education (Patty et al., 2024), enabling the creation and visualisation of co-occurrence networks of keywords identified by authors of academic publications (Bukar et al., 2023). The procedure is described in Table 1.

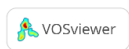
Table 1. **Bibliometric analysis procedure**

Step	Method of implementation	Result
Selection of key-words related to the issue under analysis	Heuristic method used: brainstorming	Keywords with Boolean operators: „student AND teacher OR lecturer AND academic AND relationship* OR behaviour”

Selection of a database of academic publications	Selection criterion: an international database widely used for bibliometric analyses	Web of Science database
Selecting the scope of the research	Selection criterion: A broad timeframe encompassing changes in student-teacher relationships and students' behaviour, which are influenced by various factors (e.g., the digitalisation of daily life, the pandemic, wars, and population migrations, and shifts in educational models) Restrictive criterion: development of research on teacher psychological comfort and changes in teacher-student relationships	A period of: 2000 – 2025
Generating a list of publications	Database used: Web of Science (Clarivate, 2025)	2000 articles with selected keywords
Export text files containing a list of publications	Export files in groups of 1000 records	2 files
Opening a file in VOSViewer	Option selected: • analysis type: co-occurrence • analysis unit: author keywords • counting method: full counting • minimum number of keyword occurrences: 5	266 keywords
Keyword verification and selection	Heuristic method used: brainstorming Selection criterion: keywords appearing in the 'Keywords' section, the title, abstract or text that are directly related to the subject of the study	97 keywords
Creating graphic maps	Tool used: VOSViewer	Network visualisation map and overlay map

Source: author's elaboration

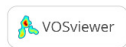
The result of the analysis performed using VOSviewer is a network visualisation map and an overlay map. The network visualisation map (Figure 2) consists of ten clusters (marked with different colours), which group the elements most similar to each other and allow them to be distinguished from other clusters. The map also shows the frequency of keywords cited by authors in academic publications, as well as the relationships between these keywords (Bukar et al., 2023).



Source: author's elaboration

It should be noted that the research undertaken so far has primarily concerned the relationship between academic teachers and students (the most numerous clusters, red and purple in Figure 2). Research in this area was conducted in connection with the issues of student's behaviour, their motivation, and engagement. Relations between teachers and students were also analysed in the context of teachers' expectations, attitudes, and behaviours, as well as their emotional exhaustion and stress. Numerous studies were also devoted to academic teachers (green). Research in this area, in addition to the previously mentioned teacher-student relationships, concerned, among others, teacher engagement, teacher training, quality and effectiveness of teaching, as well as teachers' work under the conditions of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The overlay visualisation map (Figure 3) indicates the associations between keywords and publication year. Keywords ‘student’, ‘teacher’, ‘lecturer’, ‘academic’, ‘relationship’, ‘behaviour’, which were indicated in the most recent publications (from around 2022), are coloured yellow in the figure.



Source: author's elaboration

Despite a noticeable increase in research that focusses on the psychological well-being of both students and academic teachers, very few studies have examined the factors that determine the psychological well-being. Only a marginal amount

of research has analysed the links between student behaviour during classes and the psychological well-being of teachers. These studies indicate that student incivility, including absenteeism and presenteeism, low student engagement, lack of preparation for classes, and negative reactions during lessons are important factors determining teacher psychological well-being (Rakow et al., 2025). On the contrary, receiving recognition from students has a positive impact on psychological well-being (Kusumowardhani, 2025). However, according to Forster et al. negative feelings related to students' undesirable behaviour have a greater impact on psychological comfort (Forster et al., 2022).

Therefore, there are only few studies aimed at identifying and classifying behaviours (including both uncivil behaviours and those resulting from students' dysfunctions and their personal predispositions), as well as analysing the relationship between the frequency of students' behaviours and the psychological comfort of lecturers while conducting classes.

3. Research method

This study is a pilot study. It was carried out among a deliberately selected sample of academic teachers working at one of the public universities in Poland. The study was conducted in 2024. At the design stage, conceptualisation was used to define the research problem. The survey was aimed at identifying the difficulties faced by academic teachers today in the area of didactics when working with students and how these difficulties affect the psychological comfort of academic teachers. The survey was comprehensive, which means that all academic teachers from the selected university were asked to participate in the survey. A face-to-face survey was chosen as the primary method of data collection. The interviewees directly approached the respondents and handed them paper questionnaires. After completing the questionnaires, the respondents submitted them to a designated location. The face-to-face survey was chosen as the data collection method due to its high response rate. In the introduction to the questionnaire, the respondents were informed about the purpose of the survey, the voluntary nature of participation, and the confidentiality of their data.

The questionnaire, as a measurement tool, was designed in stages. At the first meeting, the authors of the article, who are experienced academic teachers, used brainstorming to identify a range of difficulties faced by teachers. The meeting was preceded by a review of the literature on the topic by each of the authors. The teachers present at the meeting also spoke on behalf of their colleagues who deliver teaching sessions. The ideas collected during the brainstorming session were analysed and arranged into four categories of problems: related to personal culture,

active participation in classes, teamwork, and lack of skills necessary to carry out classes. In our opinion, this division organised the student behaviours identified by Johnson et al. (Johnson et al., 2017) in terms of the difficulties that teachers face in conducting classes. Furthermore, it also introduced the factor of students' lack of appropriate skills and knowledge necessary for their active participation in classes. Each of these categories of problems was analysed in terms of frequency of occurrence, the degree to which it causes difficulties during the implementation of classes, and affects the reduction of the teacher's psychological comfort. As a result, problems related to personal culture were described by 13 statements, problems related to active participation by 4 statements, problems related to teamwork also by 4 statements, and lack of skills necessary to carry out classes by 5 statements (Table 2). The frequency of these problems was analysed and it was identified which of the student's behaviours cause particular difficulties in the work of an academic teacher and significantly reduce their psychological comfort during the implementation of didactic classes.

Theoretical principles for formulating questions were used in the construction of the questionnaire as to the content, form, and order of questions. The principles of the necessity of the question, the respondent's ability to provide precise answers to the question, the principle of moving from general to specific questions, and the principle of gradual exhaustion of the topic were followed. Instructions were also formulated for the respondents, informing them about the method of providing answers, guiding the measurement process (by filtering questions), and explaining a specific question in more detail. In the case of measuring the frequency of problems, respondents marked their answers on a 5-point scale, where 1 meant very rarely and 5 - very often. In the case of measuring the degree to which these problems make classes difficult and reduce the comfort of the teacher's work, the respondents also marked their responses on a 5-point scale, where 1 meant definitely not and 5 - definitely yes. In the metric questions, a nominal scale (about gender), an interval scale (about year of birth), and relative scale (about work experience as an academic teacher) were used. The choice of the measurement scale used in closed-ended questions (including the formula for another answer to the question) and the relationships between variables determined the choice of reduction methods, data analysis, and presentation of the study results. The questionnaire was validated by six academic teachers. Following the validation process, modifications were made to the questionnaire to ensure that the questions contained were understandable to respondents, according to the authors' assumptions and the purpose of the study.

After collecting the data, they were processed and then entered into a computer using SPSS software, followed by tabulation and analysis using descriptive and inferential

statistical methods (including Pearson's correlation analysis), and the results were presented in the form of tables and graphs.

The reliability of the scales was assessed using Cronbach's alpha, whose values were as follows:

- for the frequency of problems occurrence: 0.87 (students' personal culture); 0.71 (students' active participation in classes); 0.78 (students' teamwork); 0.88 (students' skills necessary to perform the classes);
- for the extent to which problems generate difficulties in teaching work: 0.89 (students' personal culture); 0.84 (students' active participation in classes); 0.88 (student teamwork); 0.89 (students' skills necessary to perform classes);
- for the extent to which problems diminish psychological comfort of teacher: 0.93 (students' personal culture); 0.89 (students' active participation in classes); 0.93 (student teamwork); 0.94 (students' skills necessary to conduct classes).

All measures showed high reliability, with alpha coefficients above the cut-off value of 0.70 (Nunnally, 1978). In this study descriptive statistics and Pearson's correlation analysis were applied. All university teachers were invited to participate in the study. Finally, 148 usable surveys were obtained, after deleting those of questionnaires in which respondents indicated that they had no teaching problems related to student behaviours (43 surveys). The purpose of the study was to focus on the types of difficulty faced by the respondents; therefore, a filtering question was included at the beginning of the questionnaire: 'In your teaching work, have you encountered behaviour from students that has made it difficult for you to conduct your classes?'. Respondents who answered 'no' to this question were unable to provide substantive responses to the subsequent questions in the questionnaire, which concern the assessment of the impact of students' behaviour on psychological comfort of teachers, and therefore were asked to withdraw from the study. It should be noted, however, that this approach limits the possibility of generalising the findings to all academic staff at the university under study, as the results presented relate exclusively to those who have experienced the phenomenon under investigation. Consequently, the results should be interpreted as a description of the relationships observed within the group of lecturers who witnessed inappropriate student behaviour, rather than across the entire population of academic staff at the university under study. Furthermore, it should be noted that the statements regarding the absence of problems related to student behaviour were based on subjective assessments. The same behaviour may be perceived differently by individual lecturers, depending on their professional experience, personality traits, accepted standards for conducting classes, or their level of tolerance towards specific student behaviours.

When analysing the structure of the respondents by gender, it should be noted that a similar number of women and men participated in the study, 52.4% and 47.6%,

respectively. More than half of the respondents were born between 1965 and 1979 (52.4%), the next largest group were respondents who declared their year of birth between 1980 and 1995 (28.6%). Regarding experience in academic's work, it is worth noting that the respondents were mainly people with more than 10 years of teaching experience (75.2%), and, what is particularly important, slightly more than half of the respondents (55.2%) were people who had been working as academic teachers for more than 20 years. Therefore, it can be assumed that the feedback obtained from such an experienced group of respondents may have significant cognitive value. Data analysis showed that seniority, age of the respondents and sex had no influence on the perception of difficulties related to students' behaviour during classes.

4. Results and discussion

The results of the primary data are presented in Sections 4.1–4.4. Sections 4.1–4.2 contain the results of the descriptive statistical analysis in tables, together with an interpretation of student behaviour that causes difficulties in the work of an academic teacher (in Section 4.1), and student's behaviour that has an impact on the decrease in psychological comfort during the implementation of teaching activities (in Section 4.2). Sections 4.3–4.4 present the results of Pearson's correlation analysis in graphs, together with an interpretation regarding: relationships between the frequency of students' behaviour that causes difficulties in the academic teacher's work and the degree to which it hinders the implementation of classes and affects psychological comfort during the implementation of teaching activities (in Section 4.3) and to students behaviour problems and the difficulties it causes and its impact on the psychological comfort of the teacher in the academic's work (in Section 4.4).

4.1. Student's behaviour that cause difficulties in the work of an academic teacher

Most lecturers (60.8%) responded that they faced students' behaviour that has made it difficult to conduct classes. More than half of the lecturers (62.9%) noticed an increase in difficulties in their teaching work due to student behaviour in recent years.

When asked which student's behaviours and how often do respondents encounter in their academic work, respondents mainly pointed to problems related to students' lack of the necessary skills for class delivery (3.51) and the active participation in the class (3.26).

Table 2. **Summary of the frequency of problems encountered by academic teachers when working with students and the difficulties caused by these problems**

Variables	Frequency of problems occurrence		Degree of difficulties caused by problems		Degree in which problems decrease teachers' psychological comfort	
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
Problems with student personal culture (PC)						
Unpunctuality (PC1)	3.47	1.11	3.49	1.09	3.15	1.19
Too casual behaviour (PC2)	2.95	1.23	3.21	1.14	3.15	1.25
Too loose language (PC3)	2.80	1.24	2.88	1.16	3.00	1.20
Using profanity (PC4)	2.01	1.14	3.15	1.56	3.65	1.39
Failure to observe the rules of etiquette (<i>savoir vivre</i>) (PC5)	2.91	1.19	3.31	1.19	3.48	1.19
Ostentatiously expressing reluctance to perform a task (PC6)	2.30	1.09	3.54	1.27	3.72	1.21
Verbal aggression (PC7)	1.53	0.87	3.30	1.55	3.73	1.36
Showing boredom (PC8)	3.15	1.09	3.57	1.04	3.58	1.20
Using the telephone for purposes unrelated to classes (PC9)	3.96	1.08	3.95	1.05	3.79	1.13
Conducting private conversations with other Students in the room (PC10)	3.60	1.14	3.71	1.13	3.59	1.19
Eating (PC11)	2.56	1.15	2.89	1.17	2.97	1.25
Disregarding the teacher's instructions (PC12)	1.77	0.76	3.58	1.46	3.90	1.24
Submission of written work / reports on "messy" sheets of paper (PC13)	2.97	1.26	3.23	1.19	3.18	1.34
Total (PC)	2.76	0.70	3.42	0.79	3.48	0.93
Problems with students' active participation in classes (AP)						
Lack of engagement / attention / focus (AP1)	3.38	1.06	3.80	1.11	3.60	1.17
Going out (AP2)	2.74	1.11	3.15	1.25	3.19	1.22

The need for continuous/new stimuli/incentives to attract the student's attention (AP3)	3.37	1.00	3.12	1.11	3.14	1.13
Reluctance to put in extra effort to complete a task (AP4)	3.51	0.95	3.60	1.04	3.43	1.08
Total (AP)	3.26	0.75	3.41	0.93	3.34	1.00
Problems connected with teamwork (TW)						
Lack of cooperation / unwillingness to cooperate with other students (TW1)	2.40	0.97	3.38	1.14	3.21	1.21
Reluctance to help other students in the group (TW2)	2.36	0.88	3.04	1.06	3.09	1.21
Unfair treatment of other students in the group (TW3)	2.17	0.87	3.17	1.23	3.28	1.25
Inequal participation in teamwork (TW4)	3.14	1.21	3.39	1.22	3.15	1.21
Total (TW)	2.52	0.77	3.25	1.00	3.18	1.11
Problems related to the lack of skills necessary to carry out the classes (LOS)						
Lack of student skills necessary to carry out practical tasks (LOS1)	3.29	1.13	3.75	1.13	3.59	1.11
Lack of reading comprehension (LOS2)	3.47	1.14	4.02	1.04	3.73	1.22
Little independence in laboratory work / field / during exercises (if applicable) (LOS3)	3.26	1.02	3.67	1.02	3.43	1.12
Lack of sufficient knowledge that should be acquired at the secondary school level (LOS4)	3.67	1.15	3.96	1.03	3.67	1.22
Difficulties with tasks with a higher level of abstraction (LOS5)	3.92	1.01	3.93	0.92	3.57	1.14
Total (LOS)	3.51	0.91	3.88	0.85	3.59	1.04

Legend: * M-mean; SD-standard deviation

Source: author's elaboration

Analysing these data at the level of subdistinguishers (Table 2), it is worth noting that in the dimension of problems related to personal culture, teachers most often experienced difficulties during their classes arising from students' use of cell phones for purposes unrelated to class (3.96). Interestingly, the results of a 2016 study conducted in American colleges indicated that the use of phones and other mobile devices was only the eighth-ranked misbehaviour (Johnson, 2017). Teachers indicated also the problem of students having private conversations (3.60) and their unpunctuality (3.47). In the case of the dimension related to active participation in class, the respondents indicated that the most common difficulties for them were the unwillingness of students to put in extra effort (3.51), the lack of attention / focus (3.38) and the need for teachers to constantly introduce new incentives to attract and maintain student attention (3.37). It should also be noted that the respondents were less likely to experience problems related to students walking out of class (2.74). As for the other dimensions of experienced difficulties, in the case of problems related to teamwork, teachers most often experienced unequal participation of students in work (3.14). Other problems in this area, such as lack of cooperation with other students, unwillingness to help other students in the group, and unfair treatment of other students, received an average score of less than 3, meaning that respondents encountered them rarely or very rarely. Among the difficulties related to the lack of students' skills necessary for the implementation of the activities, the respondents most often indicated: students' problems with tasks of a higher level of abstraction (3.92), lack of sufficient knowledge that should have been obtained at the high school level (3.67), and lack of reading comprehension skills (3.47).

Asked to indicate to what extent certain groups of students' behaviour problems hinder their ability to teach, the respondents most often indicated a problem related to the lack of skills necessary for the implementation of classes (3.88). The respondents declared that the greatest difficulty for them was the lack of students' ability to read with comprehension (4.02), the lack of sufficient knowledge that should have been obtained at the high school level (3.96), and the difficulty in performing tasks with a higher level of abstraction (3.93). These results partially coincide with the conclusions reached by Vural and Bacioğlu in their study of rude behaviour among Turkish university students (Vural & Bacioğlu, 2020). They found that the most common rude behaviours included students not studying, being busy with their cell phones, and not listening to lectures.

4.2. Students behaviour that have an impact on decreasing psychological comfort during the implementation of teaching activities

The results of this study indicate that teacher psychological comfort is most significantly impacted by difficulties related to the lack of skills of students required

for proper participation in classes (3.59). The results of this study indicate that teachers' psychological comfort is most significantly impacted by difficulties related to students' lack of skills necessary for proper class participation (3.59). Difficulties related to the personal culture of the students (3.48) and active participation in classes (3.34) have a slightly lesser impact. The difficulties related to student teamwork (3.18) have the least significant impact on teachers psychological comfort. Based on the results of a partial analysis of students' behavioural distinctions that have an impact on lowering the psychological comfort of a university teacher (Table 2), it can be seen that in the dimension of problems related to personal culture, teachers most often experienced problems during their classes due to students' disregard for their instructions (3.90), students' use of a cell phone for purposes unrelated to class (3.79), verbal aggression (3.73) and ostentatious expression of unwillingness to perform a task (3.72). Regarding the dimension related to the difficulties caused by problems of active participation in class, the academic teachers surveyed indicated that the most common problems were lack of student involvement/attention/focus (3.60) and students' unwillingness to put extra effort into the task (3.43). In the case of problems related to teamwork, teachers often witnessed unfair treatment of other students in the group that they themselves formed (3.28) and lack of cooperation/unwillingness to cooperate with other students (3.21). In turn, among the problems related to the lack of student skills necessary for the implementation of activities, the teachers surveyed most often indicated the appearance of difficulties connected with the lack of reading comprehension skills of students (3.73) and the lack of their sufficient knowledge that should be obtained at the upper secondary school level (3.67).

4.3. Frequency of disruptive student behaviour and its impact on teaching and teachers' psychological comfort

In the present study, it was also decided to test whether there were significant correlations between the frequency of individual student behaviour problems and the difficulties they cause and the psychological discomfort of teachers that these problems generate. The above relationships were analysed using the r -Pearson correlation coefficient in four categories of problems: student's personal culture, active participation in classes, student's teamwork, and lack of skills necessary to carry out classes.

The results of the analysis show that the more often a teacher experiences problems related to students' personal culture during the implementation of his classes, the more these problems hinder the teacher's work and reduce his psychological comfort. Significant and positive relationships are observed between the variables analysed (Figure 4).

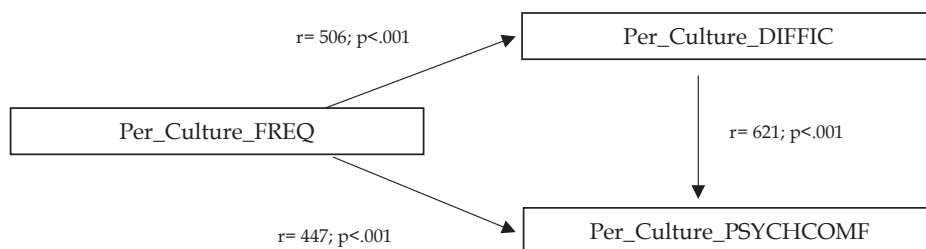


Figure 4. Problems with students' personal culture: relationships between the frequency of problems occurrence, the resulting difficulties, and the psychological comfort at work

Legend: Per_Culture_FREQ (Personal Culture_Frequency), Per_Culture_DIFFIC (Personal Culture_Difficulties), Per_Culture_PSYCHCOMF (Personal Culture_psychological Comfort).

Source: author's elaboration

Generation Z, at work and at university, expects linear relationships. Many studies confirm that such relationships have a positive impact on the student's psychological state and their participation in learning at every stage (Wang et al., 2024; Göktaş & Kaya, 2022; Zheng et al., 2025). However, the relaxed behaviour of students (such as shown in Table 2) associated with such relationships is often a great inconvenience for a traditional teacher. There is a very thin line between respect for the teacher, even that "based on equality", and disregard for him and too familiar treatment by the student. On the other hand, a teacher's too traditional attitude can lead to the other extreme, tipping the scales of respect for the teacher toward fear of him, which adversely affects the student (Chien et al., 2024).

Analysing the correlations between the frequency of problems related to active participation in classes and the difficulty in carrying out classes and the decrease in respondents' psychological comfort, it was found that there were also significant and positive correlations between these variables (Figure 5). This means that the more often the respondents experience difficulties in this area, the more difficult it is for them to conduct classes and reduces their psychological comfort. These results confirm the observations made by Gibson and Pohlmann in business universities that student incivility harms the physical and psychological well-being of individual faculty through increased burnout and lower job satisfaction (Gibson & Pohlmann, 2024).

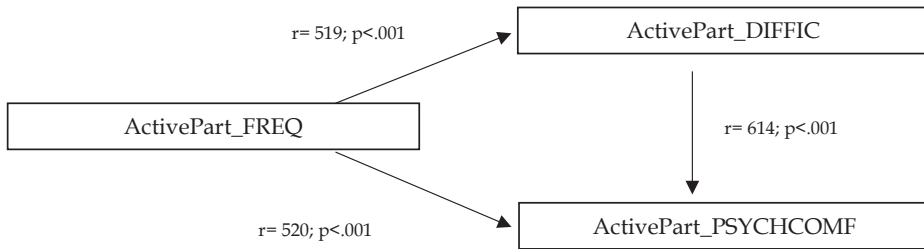


Figure 5. Problems with active participation in classes: relationships between the frequency of problem occurrence, the resulting difficulties, and the psychological comfort at work

Legend: ActivePart_FREQ (Active Participation in Classes Frequency), ActivePart_DIFFIC (Active Participation in Classes Difficulties), ActivePart_PSYCHCOMF (Active Participation in Classes Psychological Comfort).

Source: author's elaboration

A separate issue is the inability of young people to work in teams. As Nieżurawska (2023) states, Generation Z is a generation of only children, individualists who struggle with teamwork. They constitute the most individualistic group of experts. It is also worth mentioning the social difficulties of current students, which result in their blocking of speaking in public and reluctance to cooperate in a group. In Sweden, already in 2007, 16.1% of students struggled with the problem of social phobia, which severely limited their ability to speak in a public forum (Tillfors & Furmark, 2007). Oxley et al. (2024), based on semi-structured virtual interviews conducted with nine teachers in the UK following the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic, found that previously assertive students became more demanding, and previously calm students became more withdrawn. Both of these factors directly impact active participation in classes, and therefore their quality, as well as teacher comfort.

Classes that are primarily based on teamwork, discussion, and presentation of the lessons learnt are impossible to conduct without the active participation of all students. This poses a significant challenge and frustration for teachers, who are unable to achieve the intended learning outcomes for a given subject. This work has shown that the more often respondents experience difficulties related to students' teamwork, the more these problems hinder them in their teaching activities, reducing their psychological comfort. Significant and positive relationships were observed between these variables (Figure 6).

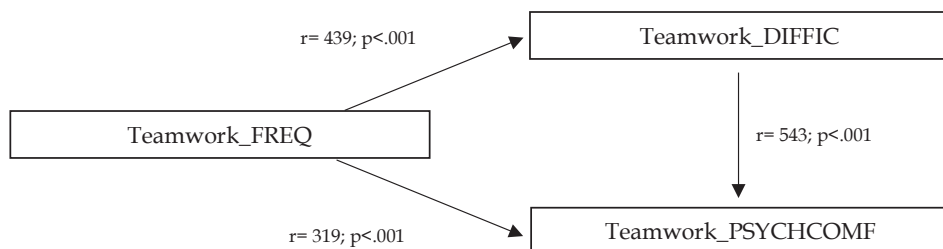


Figure 6. Problems with team work: relationships between the frequency of problem occurrence, the resulting difficulties, and the psychological comfort at work

Legend: Teamwork_FREQ (Teamwork Frequency), Teamwork_DIFFIC (Teamwork Difficulties), Teamwork_PSYCHCOMF (Teamwork Psychological Comfort).

Source: author's elaboration

Finally, significant and positive correlations were also observed between the frequency of problems related to the lack of students' skills necessary for the implementation of classes and the experienced difficulties in the implementation of classes and the reduction of the psychological comfort of teachers (Figure 7). Therefore, it can be concluded that the more often respondents experience problems in this area, the greater the impact of these problems on the difficulty of delivering classes and the decrease in workplace comfort.

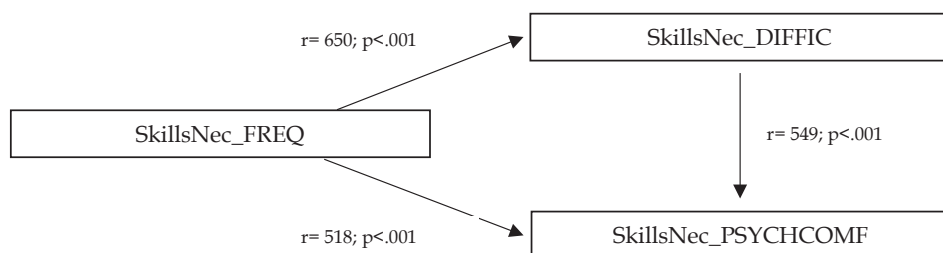


Figure 7. Problems with students' lack of skills necessary to carry out classes: relationships between the frequency of problem occurrence, the resulting difficulties, and the psychological comfort at work

Legend: SkillsNec_FREQ (Skills necessary to carry out the classes_Frequency), SkillsNec_DIFFIC (Skills necessary to carry out the classes_Difficulties), SkillsNec_PSYCHCOMF (Skills necessary to carry out the classes_ psychological Comfort).

Source: author's elaboration

The simplest example of such a difficulty that a teacher encounters is working with a student with severe dyslexia. This person can successfully complete primary and secondary school, taking advantage of the facilities provided by obtaining a dyslexia certificate from a psychological and pedagogical counselling centre. This means that such a student can pass subjects in a manner that is adapted to their abilities. Unfortunately, when starting studies at a university, there is no possibility of using such a document, because it is not formally recognised here. When a student with dyslexia starts classes with an academic teacher, the latter encounters the difficulty of working with a person who has problems with the following: understanding the text being read, reading speed, spelling, and writing text. It seems obvious that instead of classic teaching (e.g. lecture) and classic assessment methods (e.g. written exam with open questions), such a student would have a better chance to demonstrate their knowledge during dynamic or activating teaching methods (e.g. excursion or internship) or alternative assessment methods (e.g. peer assessment; Tops et al., 2022). However, due to many factors, both objective and subjective, the academic has completely different work tools, and the awareness that they are not adapted (for various reasons) to the needs of individual people with such problems often turns out to be a great psychological burden for them. Teachers face similar difficulties when working with students who do not speak Polish well.

Furthermore, academics conducting practical classes in the laboratory, workshops, and during internships complain about major problems with students' low ability to work independently. People who are currently studying are often characterised by low technical skills and low independence in practical activities. This is probably due to an overprotective childhood at home, where parents often helped them with household chores.

4.4. Students behaviour problems and difficulties it causes and its impact on teacher psychological comfort in academic's work

In the present study, it was also decided to develop detailed perception maps for the research threads carried out to identify priority remedial actions. Therefore, the incidence of individual student's behaviour problems was compared with the difficulties they cause and the psychological discomfort of teachers that these problems generate. Detailed summary statements of the results in this regard are provided in Table 2. Graphical illustrations of these summaries are the matrices shown in the following figures (Figure 8-9). The matrices are conventionally referred to as references in the coordinate system (X and Y).

Quarter II in the figures denotes the critical field. Problems identified in this field are the first to be prioritised and addressed. The higher the average values (illustrated by black dots), the more immediate remedial action required in this area. Another area

of attention is the student's behaviour problems identified in Quarter I. This quarter illustrates those behaviours that, although they do not occur very often, when they do occur, they significantly hinder the work of the academic staff. Quarter III, on the other hand, indicates problems which, in the respondents' opinion, occur quite often, but which hinder the work of an academic teacher to a lesser extent. The last quarter (IV) is the so-called 'least concern' field, which includes problematic student behaviour that does not occur too often and does not significantly impede teacher work. This field includes student behaviour that do not require immediate intervention to reduce the difficulties they cause in teacher work.

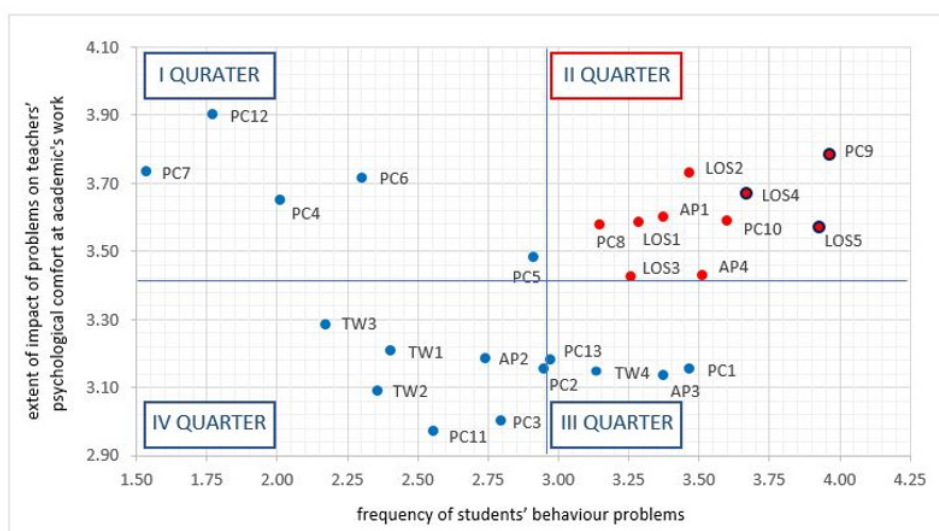


Figure 8. **Perceptual map of the frequency of students' behaviour problems and the extent of their impact on teacher psychological comfort at academic's work**

Source: author's elaboration

When analysing the frequency of problems related to student's behaviour and the degree of their impact on the decrease in teacher's psychological comfort at work (Figure 8), attention should be paid to the results in the mean area above the arithmetic values (Quarter II). These values are above 2.95 and 3.42, respectively, for the arithmetic mean of partial frequencies of identified problems and the arithmetic mean of partial assessments of the degree of impact of identified problems on the decrease in the

teacher's psychological comfort in work. In this area, the following deserve special attention: using the phone for purposes unrelated to classes (PC9), lack of sufficient knowledge that should be obtained at the secondary school level (LSO4), difficulties with tasks with a higher level of abstraction (LOS5). The above-mentioned behaviours occur very often and have a significant impact on the comfort of the academic teacher's work.-

The next area of concern, right after the problems identified in the critical field, are the problems indicated in Quarter I. This includes student's behaviours that, in the opinion of the respondents, do not occur very often, but when they do occur, they significantly reduce the teacher's psychological comfort. Quarter III, on the other hand, illustrates problematic student's behaviours which, according to respondents, although they occur quite often, their occurrence to a lesser extent reduces the comfort of the teacher's work. And finally, the last quarter, IV, is analogous to the above, the so-called 'field of least concern', the behaviours identified here do not occur too often and do not reduce the comfort of work to the same extent as the behaviours of students indicated in quarters I and II.

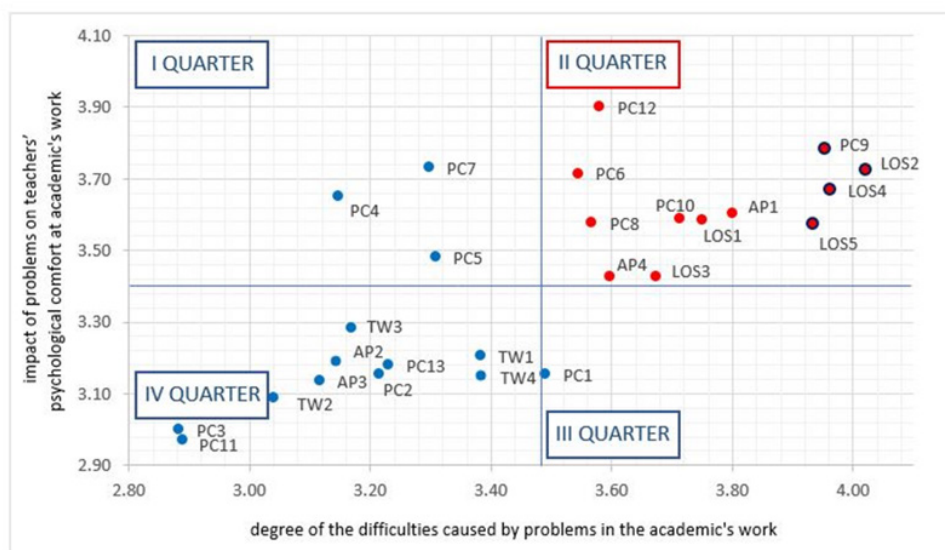


Figure 9. **Perceptual map of the degree of difficulties caused by student's behaviour and its impact on teachers' psychological comfort in the academic's work**

Source: author's elaboration

The analysis of the degree of difficulties caused by problems and the degree of the impact of these problems on the decrease in the psychological comfort in the teacher's work allowed us to distinguish the so-called critical field. In Quarter II (Figure 9), the results were collected in the area above the arithmetic mean values, i.e. above 3.45 (arithmetic mean of partial degrees of difficulties generated by the analysed difficulties) and above 3.42 (arithmetic mean of partial assessments of the degree of impact of the identified problems on the decrease in the psychological comfort in the teacher's work). In this critical area, the following deserve special attention: the use of the phone for purposes not related to classes (PC9), the lack of reading comprehension (LOS2), the lack of sufficient knowledge that should be acquired at the secondary school level (LOS4), difficulties with tasks with a higher level of abstraction (LOS5). The above-mentioned behaviours make the work of an academic teacher very difficult and significantly reduce his comfort. It is worth nothing that apart from LOS2, these remaining difficulties are the same ones which were identified as critical in Figure 8, it means that they occurred very often, and considerably reduced the comfort of the academic teacher's work. However, interestingly, these results revealed also that not only the frequency of problems related to the behaviour of the students but also the degree of difficulties it caused, decreases the psychological comfort in the teacher's work. This is the case with the problem of lack of reading comprehension (LOS 2), although it did not occur as frequently as other critical student behaviours that decreased the comfort – as illustrated by black dots (Figure 8) – it nevertheless caused substantial difficulties, becoming part of the set of key factors that severely reducing comfort of academic teachers' work. All of the above-mentioned recurring problems, require immediate remedial action and urgent intervention. Similarly to the above, it should also be added that the next field of attention would be the problems identified in Quarter I, which, although they do not particularly hinder the teacher's work, significantly reduce their psychological comfort, and in Quarter III, which significantly hinder conducting classes, but do not reduce comfort as much as those identified in the previous areas. Similarly, in field IV there are problems that do not significantly hinder work and do not affect the teacher's comfort as much as the others identified on the perception map.

5. Conclusions and recommendations

The research results show that the more often respondents experience problems related to students' personal culture, teamwork, lack of student activity during classes, and students' lack of skills necessary to carry out classes, the more these problems make the work difficult and reduce the teacher's psychological comfort. It particularly refers to three types of behaviours identified as critical, i.e., lack of sufficient knowledge that secondary school level should possess when applying for university, using the phone for

purposes unrelated to classes, and students' difficulties related to the implementation of tasks with a higher level of abstraction. These most common problems during the implementation of didactic classes, which constitute the greatest difficulty in the work of an academic teacher and reduce his psychological comfort to the greatest extent, require immediate remedial actions. This is consistent with the JD-R model. When work demands exceed organisational and personal resources, academic teachers may be at risk of burnout; however, with the right support, they can commit themselves to overcoming difficulties in their teaching work.

Previous studies have indicated that greater autonomy and work-life balance significantly impact teacher job performance (Johari et al., 2018). Other studies also underline the critical role of autonomy in enhancing employees' work-life balance (Mas-Machuca et al., 2016), which has been widely recognised as an essential factor influencing various aspects of employees' well-being, including job satisfaction, life and family satisfaction and functioning, as well as strengthening employees' commitment to the organisation (Akinyele et al., 2016; Allen, 2013; Helmle et al., 2014) and staff retention (Deery & Jago, 2015). Therefore, it is crucial to provide academic teachers with increased flexibility and autonomy to help them effectively manage their growing workload, particularly in relation to the challenges posed by difficult behaviours.

Based on an analysis of empirical data, which takes into account the frequency of specific student behaviour, its impact on the delivery of classes and the comfort of lecturers, recommendations can be made both from the perspective of teaching participants (students and academic staff) and from the university's perspective.

With regard to students, the following is required:

1. Shaping standards of student behaviour during the academic adaptation phase.
The findings show that the student behaviours that most hinder the delivery of lessons and reduce teachers' comfort include the use of mobile phones for non-academic purposes and a lack of engagement in class. Consequently, it is advisable for the university to develop a set of regulations setting out precise rules on the use of mobile phones during classes and for lecturers to establish and enforce their own rules regarding the use of mobile devices, taking into account the specific nature of the classes they teach. This will help minimise distractions and improve student concentration during classes. It is also appropriate to conduct training during adaptation days for first-year students on the rules of conduct during classes, including rules related to personal culture and using the telephone during classes. This will help to raise students' awareness of the impact of the culture of classes on the quality of the teaching process and the achievement of learning outcomes.
2. Focusing the use of mobile devices on educational purposes. According to teachers, the frequency with which students use their phones for non-educational purposes significantly affects the quality of the lessons and the teachers' psychological comfort. This highlights the need to transfer students' need to use phones to using

them as tools supporting the teaching process and the integration of mobile devices into teaching activities, e.g., activities for searching for important information related to class topics, necessary for completing the tasks covered by the course syllabus, and to conduct educational quizzes, tests and surveys, and thus showing the possibilities offered by using phones for cognitive purposes, and not only to connect to social media.

3. Supporting the development of cognitive skills and motivation to students. Given the shortcomings in students' abstract thinking skills and their low levels of intrinsic motivation – which significantly affect the quality of teaching and teachers' psychological comfort – as noted by lecturers, it is essential to organise workshops for students organising workshops for students to develop their abstract thinking, introducing courses into study programmes that foster students' creativity, involving students in projects focused on problem-solving using heuristic methods and tools. In turn, to increase student motivation, it is advisable to organise workshops for students on achieving personal development goals and career planning, to highlight the practical relevance of the knowledge acquired during their studies, to implement mentoring programmes, and to recognise students' progress and commitment to achieving learning outcomes.
4. Levelling the knowledge base of students starting their studies. Given that teachers have noted that students lack the subject knowledge necessary to participate in classes, which reduces the quality of teaching and the teachers' peace of mind, it is appropriate to conduct classes to level the students' knowledge on the subjects that pose the greatest problems in a given field before the start of the academic year.

Activities at the level of academic staff may include, thereby, increasing personal resources:

1. Psychological support and the development of teachers' teaching skills. Given the demonstrated impact of student behaviour on the quality of lessons and teachers' psychological comfort, it is appropriate to implement a systematic support system for teachers, including access to psychological support, as well as the organisation of training courses and regular workshops for teachers, along with training and regular workshops that enable the sharing of good practices (e.g., establishing rules for using the phone during the first class of a given subject, if they differ from the general rules) and creating a platform for the exchange of experiences and good practices in solving problems when working with students. As research shows, strengthening the mental resilience of university lecturers through appropriate training programmes (Consiglio et al., 2024), as well as learning skills and techniques for dealing with rude and difficult students (Vashisht & Vashisht, 2019), can also be of significant help.

2. Development and promotion of good teaching practices. In light of the student behaviours identified by teachers as posing challenges in their teaching work, it is recommended to develop and make available to teachers guides presenting examples of possible practical solutions to problems related to student misconduct.

In turn, measures at university level may include thereby increasing personal resources:

1. The formalisation of rules for student behaviour within the university's internal quality assurance system. In view of the need to establish standards for student behaviour, it is recommended to create, as part of the documentation that describes the university's internal quality assurance system, a code for the appropriate conduct of students during classes and to make this code available, e.g., on the university's website, as well as to communicate these principles to students during their academic induction and before the start of each course;
2. Adapting the size of student groups to the types of classes. Given the increased risk that behaviour in large groups may compromise teaching quality and the comfort of lecturers, it is appropriate to adjust class sizes to suit the type of course, taking into account the university's staffing and organisational capacity;
3. Monitoring, as part of the internal quality assurance system, the effectiveness of measures taken by the university to mitigate the risk of a decline in teaching quality and the psychological comfort of teaching staff resulting from student behaviour, and improving these measures in line with identified needs.

It should be noted that the recommendations presented here are based on empirical data obtained from a survey conducted among academic staff at a single public university in Poland. Their implementation in other higher education institutions should be preceded by an analysis of the specific characteristics of the institution in question, and the solutions adopted should be tailored to its needs.

As a result of the study, the research objective was achieved and all research hypotheses were confirmed.

When analysing the results of the conducted study, one should be aware of the limitations associated with them. The research was conducted among academic teachers at one public university in Poland. The results may therefore reflect the specific characteristics of this particular institution rather than general trends in higher education. Its implementation in other domestic universities, including private ones, might yield different results. This is because students' behaviour during classes may be influenced by specific characteristics of a given institution, such as its size, organisational culture, student profile, and the nature of the degree programmes. One should also be aware of the limited scope for interpreting the international significance of the findings and for generalising them to different cultural and educational contexts. This is because student behaviour during classes may be influenced by norms specific to the national higher education system

regarding teacher-student relationships, teachers' expectations of student behaviour, the maturity of the national higher education system, differences in educational models, as well as the social perception of the academic teaching profession. Consequently, one of the main limitations of the study is the inability to generalise the results to other higher education institutions or to the entire population of academic staff, both nationally and internationally. However, the results provide important information on general trends in the relationship between student behaviour and the psychological comfort of staff during classes.

Another limitation is that the analysis of the impact of student behaviour on the psychological comfort of academic staff during classes is conducted solely from the perspective of one side of the teaching process – the teachers. Furthermore, the study did not take into account the influence of other factors (e.g., teacher workload in terms of teaching and research activities, university support provided to teachers by the university, job security, individual sensitivity of the respondents, and the subjective perception of student behaviour and their own psychological comfort) on teachers' perception of student behaviour in the context of its impact on their psychological comfort.

The limitations outlined above highlight the need for further research in this area. Such studies should include universities both in Poland and abroad, as well as institutions of different types, including public and private ones. Such research would make it possible to identify differences in student behaviour that affect teachers' psychological comfort, depending on the type of institution, its size, and the country in which it operates. The research could also focus on evaluating the impact of student behaviour on teachers' psychological comfort, depending on the mode of study (full-time, part-time, online) or the field of study. It would also be advisable to broaden the range of issues analysed in relation to academic staff–student interactions. In particular, future research could incorporate challenges associated with the use of AI, as well as those resulting from an unstable geopolitical context, which may influence the nature and frequency of these issues.

Students' behaviour identified in the article as obstacles that require effort and affect the psychological comfort of academic staff. Further research could examine under what conditions the demands posed by these obstacles become challenges (Moczulska, 2024).

Future research could also involve analysing the student–teacher relationship from the students' perspective. Such research could focus on students' perceptions of how their behaviour during classes affects the psychological comfort of both academic staff and the students themselves. Continuing this research would also enable the identification of changes in student behaviour over time and how these behaviours are perceived by teachers, and would serve as a useful complement to the research conducted by Rakow et al. (2019) in British universities.

The research value of this pilot and exploratory study stems from the proposed broad range of student behaviours and their classification (relating to personal conduct, active participation in classes, teamwork, and the skills necessary for the delivery of classes) and the links between student behaviour and the quality of teaching delivery, as well as the issue of teachers' psychological comfort, which are rarely analysed together in the literature on the subject. The research approach employed is an attempt to broaden research into teachers' well-being by taking into account the specific determining factor of student behaviour. The study utilised a standard research tool; however, its application to analyse the relationship between student behaviour and teachers' psychological comfort within the context of a single public university in Poland provides preliminary findings that can form the basis for further research conducted on broader and more diverse samples.

The findings have potential theoretical implications, as they contribute to our understanding of the factors influencing teachers' psychological comfort in the context of teaching. It has been demonstrated that students' behaviour may be one of the key factors determining teachers' psychological comfort. Therefore, the present study provides initial grounds for broadening the scope of research into the factors that shape teacher well-being, which has hitherto focused mainly on individual and individual determinants.

The findings also have practical implications – they highlight the need to implement systematic, comprehensive measures that take into account the perspectives of students, academic staff, and institutions, aimed at fostering appropriate student behaviour, supporting academic staff in responding appropriately to student behaviour that undermines the quality of teaching and the psychological comfort of staff, and eliminating factors that encourage inappropriate student behaviour. They may also serve as a basis for taking into account the student–teacher relationship and the psychological burden on teachers within national and institutional education quality assurance systems.

Authors' contributions

All authors contributed equally to all stages of the research and manuscript preparation.

Declaration of Generative AI and AI-assisted technologies in the writing process

While preparing this manuscript, the author did not use any tool/service.

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