

Attitudes of Middle School Teachers Toward Internet Buzzwords: A Survey Study

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ABSTRACT

This study examines Chinese middle school teachers' attitudes towards internet buzzwords and the factors influencing their classroom use. Using a mixed-methods approach, 54 teachers completed a questionnaire and interviews were conducted with those selecting "other" responses. The questionnaire included basic information, attitude questions, and an open-ended question with four response options. SPSS 26 was used for quantitative analysis, revealing a significant correlation between teachers' age and familiarity with internet buzzwords, with younger teachers being more familiar. The majority of participants identified personal values, understanding of buzzwords, and student acceptance as key attitude influencers. Interviews uncovered additional factors such as buzzword evolution, timeliness, applicability, and teaching style. The study suggests that integrating younger teachers' perspectives is crucial for effectively incorporating internet buzzwords into teaching, offering insights for educational policymakers to foster an inclusive teaching environment.

Keywords: *Internet buzzwords, Classroom discourse, Teacher attitudes, Educational policy.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Internet buzzwords, as a product of the information period, have become an integral part of modern linguistic culture with the proliferation of the internet and the rise of social media. They play a significant role in online communication and their influence has permeated into daily life and the educational domain. The diversity and innovation of internet buzzwords reflect the cultural characteristics and psychological states of contemporary society, particularly appealing to the youth demographic. Dong & Xiao (2024) noted that students not only frequently employ internet buzzwords in informal conversations but also integrate them into their written expressions. Therefore, this study aims to investigate the attitudes of secondary school teachers towards internet buzzwords and the factors influencing these attitudes, in hopes of providing insights for educational policymakers and practitioners to improve educational practices.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Scholars from various fields have conducted in-depth studies on internet buzzwords from different perspectives. For instance, linguistic analyses have been conducted on the structural characteristics, pragmatic efficacy, semantic features, and semantic evolution of internet buzzwords (Yang & Ni, 2011; Yang, 2019; Zhou & Zhu, 2022; Zhang, 2023; Ma & Lei, 2022; Ji, 2020). From a communication studies perspective, the symbolic meaning, dissemination breadth, and metaphorical connotations of internet buzzwords have been analyzed (Lin & Wen, 2022; Cai & Zhao, 2022; Wu & Liu, 2022). From sociological and psychological perspectives, the mechanisms of dissemination of internet buzzwords and how they reflect the psychological changes of netizens have been explored (Guo, 2023; Guan, 2023).

Research on internet buzzwords in the educational field is scarce and mostly concentrated at the higher education level (Ni, 2016; Qi & Wang, 2019; Lian, 2016; Hu, 2018). Studies on the primary and secondary school environment have mainly focused on surveys in the Chinese language

discipline, with students as the main research subjects (Hu, 2022; Dong & Xiao, 2024). For example, Hu (2022) surveyed the use of internet buzzwords in Malaysian primary school Chinese language classrooms and concluded that internet buzzwords have both positive and negative impacts in the classroom. Dong and Xiao (2024) provided systematic teaching suggestions on the impact of internet buzzwords on Chinese writing quality in their research.

These studies indicate that internet buzzwords have a double-edged sword characteristic in the educational field, satisfying students' personalized needs while potentially affecting their recognition of mainstream culture and self-discipline. The double-edged nature of internet buzzwords requires educators to effectively harness their positive effects, turning them into educational opportunities to enhance educational standards (Zhou & Wang, 2014). Therefore, this study attempts to explore the following two research questions:

- 1. What are the attitudes of different teachers towards internet buzzwords?
- 2. What factors influence their attitudes?

3. RESEARCH DESIGN

3.1 Participants

This survey employed convenience sampling to select 54 in-service teachers from different subjects at a junior high school in Hubei Province, China. There were 35 participants aged 20-30, 13 aged 31-40, and 6 aged over 40. There were 19 males and 35 females. Thirty-one novice teachers with 1-5 years of teaching experience and 23 relatively experienced teachers with over 6 years of experience were included. Due to the use of convenience sampling, the sample may not fully represent all junior high school teachers, which could affect the generalizability of the research results.

3.2 Survey Process

The questionnaire for this survey consisted of 9 questions (details in the appendix), with questions 1-4 for participants to fill in basic information, questions 5-8 for attitude tests scored on a 1-5 scale, and question 9 as an open-ended question to investigate the factors influencing teachers' attitudes towards internet buzzwords. To improve the response rate for this question, the questionnaire

provided 4 options for reference. The questionnaire was designed by the researcher without reliability and validity testing, which may limit the reliability and validity of the measurement results.

The questionnaire was distributed electronically for ease of completion. All participants voluntarily took part in the survey on an informed consent basis. To ensure the authenticity and integrity of the data, all participants were informed of the importance of providing truthful information before completing the questionnaire.

Finally, due to question 9 being open-ended, interviews were conducted with participants who provided other answers in question 9.

The questionnaire was distributed to 54 people, with 54 valid returns, and a total of 7 participants provided "other" answers in question 9.

3.3 Data Analysis

The survey results were analyzed using inferential statistics with SPSS 26, and some participants were interviewed. To explore the differences in attitudes towards internet buzzwords among teachers with different background characteristics (age, gender, teaching experience, and subject taught), this survey used Chi-square tests to analyze the associations between these variables and the teacher attitudes involved in questions 5-8. By conducting individual analyses of the responses in question 9, attempts were made to identify other potential factors influencing teachers' attitudes towards internet buzzwords.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

4.1 Teachers' Attitudes Towards Internet Buzzwords

In this study, the researchers analyzed the relationship between teachers' background characteristics and their attitudes towards internet buzzwords through cross-tabulation Chi-square tests. Out of 16 Chi-square tests, only the age of teachers showed a significant correlation with their understanding of internet buzzwords, as shown in "Table 1".

Table 1. Chi-Square Tests between age and familiarity of internet buzzwords

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	13.905a	6	.031
Likelihood Ratio	15.219	6	.019
Linear-by-Linear Association	5.413	1	.020
N of Valid Cases	54		

a. 9 cells (75.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .67.

The Chi-square independence test results indicated a significant association between teachers' age and their familiarity with internet buzzwords ($p < 0.05$). The reason might be that younger teachers are more familiar with internet buzzwords because they typically use social media and the internet more frequently, which are the main channels for the dissemination of internet buzzwords. Additionally, the younger generation is generally more open to new technologies and popular culture, which may make them more receptive to and users of internet buzzwords.

4.2 Factors Influencing Attitudes

In this survey, for question 9, among 54 participants, 47 chose personal values and educational philosophy, 43 chose cognition and understanding of internet buzzwords, 31 chose the cultural and policy environment of the school or region, and 41 chose interaction with students and students' acceptance of internet buzzwords. Seven chose other and provided answers such as "The speed at which primary school students use internet buzzwords is very fast, and it's hard to keep up," "Consideration of the timeliness and applicability of internet buzzwords," "Positive impact and potential risks," "Personal interest and impact on classroom innovation," "Subject characteristics and teaching needs," "Teaching experience and teaching style," "Interaction with students and students' acceptance of internet buzzwords."

The highest number of participants (47) chose personal values and educational philosophy as a factor influencing their attitudes towards internet buzzwords. This indicates that teachers' personal beliefs and educational philosophies play a central role in determining their acceptance and willingness to use internet buzzwords. This may reflect that teachers consider whether new teaching tools and methods align with their educational goals and values when adopting them.

43 participants chose cognition and understanding of internet buzzwords, which was the second-highest choice. This indicates that teachers' understanding of internet buzzwords is a key factor in their attitude formation process. Teachers may require more professional development and training to improve their understanding and ability to use internet buzzwords.

31 participants believed that the cultural and policy environment of the school or region influenced their attitudes. This emphasizes the potential impact of external environmental factors, such as school policies and regional culture, on teachers' adoption of internet buzzwords. This may indicate that teachers consider these external factors when deciding whether to use internet buzzwords.

41 participants chose interaction with students and students' acceptance of internet buzzwords. This indicates that teachers pay special attention to students' reactions and acceptance when considering the use of internet buzzwords. This may reflect teachers' sensitivity to student needs and student-centered teaching methods.

7 participants provided other influencing factors, including the update speed, timeliness, and applicability of internet buzzwords, positive impact and potential risks, personal interest, subject characteristics, teaching needs, teaching experience, and teaching style. These responses reveal the diverse factors influencing teachers' attitudes, which may play a role in different educational environments and personal backgrounds. Interviews with participants who provided "other" answers gave us deeper insights.

Participant A stated that the rapid update of internet buzzwords made them feel hard to keep up with students' pace, which not only affected their communication with students but also made them worry that their teaching methods might not be modern and relevant enough. Other teachers emphasized the timeliness and applicability of

internet buzzwords, believing that caution is needed when using them to avoid outdated or inappropriate use. Some teachers also mentioned the positive impact of internet buzzwords on teaching, such as stimulating students' interest and enthusiasm, while also worrying that overuse might affect students' language standards and expressive abilities.

Participant B shared how they combined personal interests with classroom innovation by using internet buzzwords to enhance student engagement and innovative thinking. They believed that internet buzzwords could not only enrich teaching language but also cultivate students' social skills and cultural identity. However, they also pointed out the challenges in practice, including ensuring the relevance of internet buzzwords to teaching content and maintaining the standardization and seriousness of teaching.

Participant C mentioned the integration of internet buzzwords with traditional culture, suggesting that it is a field worth exploring. By combining internet buzzwords with traditional cultural elements, traditional culture can be made more relevant to young people's lives, while also enriching the cultural connotations of internet buzzwords.

These interview results further enrich the understanding of the factors influencing teachers' attitudes, revealing the challenges and opportunities faced by teachers in actual teaching, and how they balance personal interests, teaching innovation, and teaching standardization.

5. CONCLUSION

This survey aimed to explore the attitudes of teachers at a junior high school in Hubei Province, China, towards internet buzzwords and the factors influencing these attitudes. Through convenience sampling, 54 valid questionnaires were collected from in-service teachers of different subjects. The survey questionnaire included basic information, attitude tests, and open-ended questions to assess teachers' understanding of internet buzzwords, recognition of teaching value, frequency of use, and help to students.

The survey results showed a significant association between teachers' age and familiarity with internet buzzwords, with younger teachers generally being more familiar. Additionally, there was a positive correlation between teachers' understanding of internet buzzwords, recognition of teaching value, frequency of use, and help to

students. Specifically, the more teachers understood internet buzzwords, the more likely they were to consider them valuable in teaching, use them more frequently, and believe they were more helpful to students.

There was no consensus on the factors influencing teachers' attitudes. Among the options provided, personal values and educational philosophy were the most significant influencing factors, followed by cognition and understanding of internet buzzwords. A few teachers also mentioned other influencing factors, such as the update speed, timeliness, and applicability of internet buzzwords, positive impact and potential risks, personal interest, subject characteristics, teaching needs, teaching experience, and teaching style. The emergence of internet buzzwords also provides new ideas for teachers in classroom innovation.

Overall, this survey reveals the diversity of teachers' attitudes towards internet buzzwords and the factors influencing these attitudes, emphasizing the role of personal and external environmental factors in teachers' acceptance and use of internet buzzwords. These findings provide valuable insights for further research on the application of internet buzzwords in education and reference for educational policymakers and teacher professional development. However, there are some shortcomings, such as the small sample size of participants, which is not representative of the entire teacher population, and the questionnaire's validity and reliability were not strictly tested. Future research can further expand the sample size to enhance the universality and applicability of the research results. At the same time, stricter validity and reliability testing of the questionnaire can ensure the scientific and accurate measurement tools. Additionally, future research can delve into the application effects of internet buzzwords in different teaching scenarios and how to more effectively integrate internet buzzwords with teaching content to promote students' learning and development.

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Appendix

Teacher's Attitude Survey on Internet Slang

Dear teacher. This questionnaire aims to understand your attitude towards internet slang and the factors that influence these attitudes. Please answer the following questions based on your actual situation. The data collected from this questionnaire will be used solely for academic research, and we will strictly keep your personal information confidential. Thank you for your participation and support!

1. Your age:
 - 20-30 years old
 - 31-40 years old
 - 41-50 years old
 - Over 51 years old
2. Your gender:
 - Male
 - Female
3. Your years of teaching experience:
 - 1-5 years
 - 6-10 years
 - 11-20 years
 - Over 20 years
4. The subject you teach is:
 - Chinese
 - Mathematics
 - English
 - Other (please specify) _____
5. Are you familiar with internet slang? (1 point - not familiar, 5 points - very familiar)
 - 1 2 3 4 5
6. Do you think internet slang has value in teaching? (1 point - completely worthless, 5 points - very valuable)
 - 1 2 3 4 5
7. Do you use internet slang in formal teaching environments? (1 point - never use, 5 points - often use)
 - 1 2 3 4 5
8. Do you think internet slang helps students understand contemporary culture? (1 point - completely unhelpful, 5 points - very helpful)
 - 1 2 3 4 5
9. Which of the following factors do you think may influence your attitude towards internet slang?
 - Personal values and educational philosophy

- Knowledge and understanding of internet slang
- School or regional cultural and policy environment
- Interaction with students and their acceptance of internet slang
- Other (please specify) _____

Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire. Your opinions are crucial to our research. We wish you success in your work and happiness in your life!