

The Influence of Teachers' Attitude Towards the Students' Motivation in EFL Class

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Abstract

This study aims to explicitly investigate how teachers' attitudes comprising cognitive, affective, and behavioral components influence students' motivation in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms in Indonesia. The study employed a quantitative, correlational design and involved 300 senior high school students from grades X to XII around Jabodetabek. The participants were selected using convenience sampling techniques. Data were gathered using a structured four-point Likert scale questionnaire adapted from validated instruments: for teacher attitude and for student motivation. Analysis was conducted using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) with SmartPLS 4.0. The findings reveal that teachers' attitudes significantly influence students' motivation ($R^2 = 0.388$; $\beta = 0.623$; $T = 12.205$; $p < 0.000$). The results underscore the importance of fostering a supportive, respectful, and emotionally intelligent teaching atmosphere to increase student engagement in EFL learning. These findings contribute to theory building in the Indonesian EFL context and offer practical implications for teacher training programs.

Keywords: *Teachers' Attitude; Learning Motivation; English Language Learning; EFL Students*

Introduction

As a global language, English is paramount in international education, diplomacy, and global commerce. The increasing need for English skills, especially in non-English speaking countries, has underscored the necessity for better English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teaching. Here in Indonesia, the level of proficiency is still relatively low. The country ranked 80th out of 116 countries about their proficiency level. This data showcases the desperate situation in instructional quality and learner performance that needs to be addressed. It strongly highlights the need for innovative instructional designs that cater to foster learners' linguistic skills far beyond the current expectations.

Indonesia's EFL education gap goes hand in hand with the students' sociocultural factors-particularly their learning motivation. The teaching process is greatly affected by the broad culture and environment, alongside with minimal access to the English language outside the classroom (Wei et al., 2024). This gap puts teachers in a difficult position. Educators have the greatest opportunity to improve learning and create the conditions that directly affect student motivation, leading to active participation in the language learning process. Thus, the role of teacher disposition in relation to EFL contexts is equally important.

Along with other dimensions of participation, engagement and success in learning, as noted by researcher, rests fundamentally on the attitude of the teacher (Zendah, 2025). The researcher writes that offering support goes beyond encouragement to even providing caring

and instructive explanations and structures to the learning at hand. As put by researcher, students get motivated and encouraged to participate actively in learning due to a caring classroom environment created by soft and understanding teachers (Akib et al, 2018).

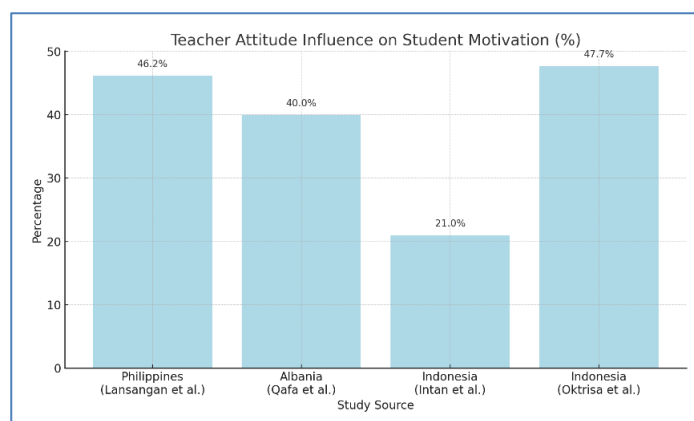


Figure 1. Teachers' Attitude Influence on Students' Motivation (%)

Cross-national studies have persistently proven the connection between teacher attitude and student motivation to be strong. Teachers' attitude accounted for 46.2% motivation levels for students in the Philippines, according to (Akib et al, 2018). Researcher found similar results in the Albanian context, with a 40% influence. Indonesia's data also seems to fall in line with these figures, estimating the motivational impact to be between 21% and 47.7%, depending on the institution (Oktrisa et al, 2025; Ainussamsi et al, 2024). This reinforces the importance of a teacher's attitude towards fostering motivation in learners appreciating the consistency of research findings from different cultures and educational levels (Syamsuddin et al, 2025).

There is little research that focuses on the emotional aspects of teaching English as a Foreign Language (EFL) in Indonesia, despite increasing attention being paid to educational innovation. Other studies have concentrated on teaching methods and 'digitalization', as noted in, where they reported a digitally laden "pandemic" pedagogy wielded by lecturers who were proficient with Google Classroom and WhatsApp (Fauzan et al., 2022). Yet, these digital instruments do not consider the psychology or emotions of the educator. On the other hand, noted that teacher impact is fundamental to student motivation (mean score = 4.67), while the classroom environment was less favorable (mean score = 4.00) (Muslim et al, 2020). This indicates dissonance between what teachers try to do and what students experience. This juxtaposition demonstrates the need to address both the technological and emotional components in pedagogical research and implementation. However, there is a lack of empirical research that directly examines how the components of teachers' attitudes affective, behavioral, and cognitive impact students' intrinsic and extrinsic motivation in Indonesian EFL contexts. While previous studies emphasized technological tools or general teacher behaviors, they seldom focused on the emotional and attitudinal dimensions of teaching. This forms the central gap that the present study aims to address.

Previous studies have focused heavily on teaching strategies and digital tools, often overlooking the emotional and attitudinal dimensions of teachers in the EFL context. To address this gap, the current study explores how teachers' attitudes in terms of their beliefs, emotions, and behaviors affect students' intrinsic and extrinsic motivation to learn English. The study integrates ABC Model of Attitude and Self-Determination Theory, offering a novel theoretical framework rarely applied in Indonesian EFL research (Ch et al, 2019). Through this

examination, the study aims to contribute both theoretically and practically by providing insights for educational policy and teacher training programs. As highlighted by empathetic and motivational teaching behaviors are essential for improving students' engagement and learning outcomes in English language education (Setiadi et al, 2023).

The ABC Model of Attitude is noted within social psychology for its applicability towards understanding how people form and express attitudes towards specific objects or situations (McLeod, 2023). Attitude comprises of an affective part emotional responses to the attitude target, a behavioral part action tendencies toward the target, and a cognitive part beliefs and knowledge of the target. The ABC Model of Attitude may play a role in the attitudes of students toward teachers (i.e., affective- being respected by teachers, behavioral being controlled in the classroom, cognitive- believing in a teacher (McLeod, 2023). This theoretical perspective was also cited by in their study of motivation of English learning in South Punjab (Khan et al, 2024).

Motivation, on the other hand, plays a central role in shaping student behavior in the classroom. According to Self-Determination Theory (SDT), proposed by researcher motivation is divided into intrinsic (driven by curiosity or interest) and extrinsic (driven by external rewards or expectations) (Owusu et al, 2021). It is reported that self-efficacy have positive correlation with intrinsic motivation, especially in academic activities like English writing (Mei et al, 2018). And also that, external support like, praise from a teacher can help to develop extrinsic motivation which will make a learning environment more supportive and successful.

Teacher behavior acts as a critical external stimulus. Researcher notes that consistent positive reinforcement such as praise or acknowledgment of effort can significantly enhance student enthusiasm and classroom involvement (Hossain, 2022). This supports the behavioral aspect of the ABC model, showing that what teachers do has a direct effect on how students feel and perform. Several empirical studies have explored the role of teacher attitude and motivation in EFL. found a gap between teachers' positive beliefs in rewards and their actual classroom practice synthesized 21 studies showing that gamification improves motivation and engagement but has mixed effects on performance (Fadillah et al, 2024). Similarly, highlighted increased student motivation via Flipgrid, while emphasized that technological and social support, especially from teachers, enhances motivation (Debreli et al, 2019). However, many of these studies focused on tools or methods rather than internal teacher characteristics. showed that graphic organizers improved speaking motivation but did not address teacher affective dimensions (Nguyen et al, 2025).

The gap is clear, while motivational strategies and tools are well documented, fewer studies have directly investigated how teachers' attitudes, cognitively, affectively, and behaviorally affect students' motivation in EFL classrooms. This research addresses that gap by integrating McLeod's ABC model with researcher SDT framework to analyze how teacher attitudes contribute to student motivation holistically. Together, these theories and studies offer a foundation to understand the psychological and interpersonal factors at play in language education. They highlight the need to focus not just on pedagogy and technology but on the emotional and relational dynamics that shape effective learning.

Method

In this research, a quantitative explanatory research design was employed to systematically examine and measure the extent to which teachers' attitudes influence students' motivation in learning English as a Foreign Language (EFL). This approach allows the

researcher to not only identify patterns and correlations but also to establish a cause-and-effect relationship between the independent variable (teachers' attitudes) and the dependent variable (students' learning motivation). Explanatory design is employed to determine cause and consequence (Apuke, 2017). The study's primary aim was to examine both the direct and indirect effects of the independent variable teachers' attitudes on the dependent variable student motivation. By focusing on this relationship, the research sought to provide insights into how various aspects of teachers' dispositions, including cognitive, affective, and behavioral components, influence learners' motivation in language learning.

Data collection was carried out through a structured, closed-ended questionnaire disseminated online via Google Forms. The study targeted senior high school students from grades X to XII across multiple regions in Indonesia. A total of 300 students participated, selected through convenience sampling a non-probability sampling technique that relies on the accessibility and willingness of respondents, as explained by (Etikan, 2016). Although this method may limit generalizability, it is considered suitable for preliminary studies with practical constraints in reaching larger populations. The questionnaire was adapted from two well established instruments in educational research. The first part assessed teachers' attitudes, drawing from the framework developed by (Abid et al., 2019), which includes 13 items addressing cognitive, emotional, and behavioral dimensions. The second part evaluated students' motivation using Attitude/Motivation Test Battery (AMTB) which included 14 items capturing both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation (Gardner, 2004).

The *Attitude/Motivation Test Battery* (AMTB) developed by continues to be widely utilized in recent studies to assess both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation among language learners (Gardner, 2004). For instance, adapted the AMTB to examine motivational types among students in an English Language Education program at the university level (Widiarsih et al, 2024). Their findings confirm the ongoing relevance and validity of the AMTB as a reliable instrument for evaluating motivational dimensions in contemporary second language learning contexts. Each item was rated on a 4-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 4 (strongly agree), deliberately excluding a neutral midpoint. This design choice was inspired by the approach of, aiming to reduce central tendency bias and encourage respondents to take a more definitive stance (Joshi et al., 2015). By eliminating the neutral option, the scale compels participants to reflect more critically and commit to a direction in their responses, thereby enhancing the discriminative power of the instrument.

To analyze the data, the study used Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) analysis with SmartPLS software. PLS-SEM is particularly useful for nowadays studies which employ small to medio sample sizes, as it allows for non-normally distributed data and can accommodate complex models with latent variables (Hair et al., 2021). The steps of the analysis included validating the measurement model by assessing outer loadings, Average Variance Extracted (AVE), and construct reliability through Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability. Also, discriminant validity was assessed using the Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT) and the Fornell-Larcker Criterion as proposed by (Hair et al., 2021). The researcher ensured that ethical standards were observed throughout all stages of the research. Participation was entirely voluntary, and all the participants were informed about the purpose of the study, how confidentiality would be maintained, and anonymity would be provided. These ethical measures followed principles for conducting internet-based research as recommended by the British Psychological Society (The British Psychological Society, 2021). By combining methodological and ethical considerations, the study was able to report credible and responsible findings and the scholarly debate pertaining to language instruction.

Results

Table 1. Demographic Characteristics of Respondents by Gender and Grade Level

Grade	Male	Female	Total
X	21	32	53
XI	32	94	126
XII	32	91	123

This research included a sample of 302 students from grades X, XI, and XII. Based on demographic data, the gender distribution revealed 232 female and 85 male participants. Class-wise distribution showed 53 students in Grade X, 126 in Grade XI, and 123 in Grade XII.

Table 2. AVE Students' Motivation and Teachers' Attitude

Construct	AVE	Interpretation
Motivation (M)	0.646	Valid → 60% of variance explained
Teacher Attitude (S)	0.602	Valid → 60% of variance explained

The two main variables assessed in this study were Teacher Attitude (S) and Student Learning Motivation (M). Indicator reliability and validity were evaluated using the SmartPLS application. Indicators with outer loading values below 0.70 were removed following (Hair et al., 2021). The indicators met convergent validity requirements. AVE values were 0.646 for Motivation and 0.602 for Teacher Attitude, confirming over 60% variance explanation by constructs.

Table 3. Reliability and Analysis Constructs of Students' Motivation and Teachers' Attitude

Construct	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability	Interpretation
Motivation (M)	0.954	0.959	Very Reliable
Teacher Attitude (S)	0.933	0.943	Very Reliable

Reliability analysis yielded high values: Cronbach's Alpha was 0.954 for Motivation and 0.933 for Teacher Attitude. Composite Reliability was 0.959 and 0.943, respectively, indicating strong internal consistency (Hair et al., 2021).

Table 4. HTMT Ratio Between Constructs

Constructs	HTMT Value	Threshold	Interpretation
Motivation – Teacher Attitude	0.652	< 0.90	Discriminant Validity Achieved

As shown in Table 4, the HTMT value between the two constructs Teacher Attitude and Student Motivation was 0.652, which is well below the accepted threshold of 0.90 (Hair et al., 2021). This result confirms that the two constructs are empirically distinct.

Table 5. Fornell-Larcker Criterion Matrix

Construct	Motivation ($\sqrt{\text{AVE}} = 0.804$)	Teacher Attitude ($\sqrt{\text{AVE}} = 0.776$)
Motivation	0.804	0.623
Teacher Attitude	0.623	0.776

Supporting this, the Fornell-Larcker Criterion Matrix in Table 5 also indicates discriminant validity. The square root of the AVE for Motivation (0.804) and Teacher Attitude (0.776) are both greater than the correlation between the constructs (0.623). These consistent outcomes confirm that each construct captures a conceptually unique dimension, satisfying the requirements for discriminant validity in PLS-SEM analysis (Hair et al., 2021).

Table 6. *R-square Value of Endogenous Variable*

Endogenous Variable	R-square	Interpretation
Motivation (M)	0.388	Moderate(Sufficient Contribution)

The R-square value for Motivation (M) was 0.388, indicating that Teacher Attitude (S) accounts for 38.8% of variance in student motivation—a moderate level of explanatory power (Hair et al., 2021).

Table 7. *Hypothesis Testing Result*

Path	Coefficient (β)	T-statistic	p-value	Significance
Teacher Attitude → Motivation	0.623	12.205	0.000	Significant

These findings confirm that teacher attitude significantly affects student motivation in EFL learning contexts, validating the hypothesis. The analysis follows methodological procedures consistent with PLS-SEM recommendations (Hair et al., 2021).

Discussion

The findings of this study strongly indicate that a teacher's attitude exerts a significant and positive influence on students' motivation to learn English as a Foreign Language (EFL). This relationship is not merely speculative but is statistically substantiated, as demonstrated by a robust path coefficient of 0.623, a highly significant T-value of 12.205, and a p-value of 0.000 all of which underscore the strength and reliability of the observed effect. Moreover, the coefficient of determination ($R^2 = 0.388$) reveals that approximately 38.8% of the variance in students' learning motivation can be directly attributed to the teacher's attitude.

These results not only validate the original hypothesis but also highlight the profound impact that teachers' affective, cognitive, and behavioral components have on student engagement and enthusiasm for learning. In essence, the manner in which teachers think about, feel toward, and interact with their students plays a crucial role in shaping a classroom climate that nurtures both intrinsic motivation and extrinsic motivation. This underscores the pivotal role of teacher disposition in cultivating a dynamic and supportive language learning environment.

Theoretically, these findings align with Self-Determination Theory, which posits that student motivation is enhanced when their basic psychological needs competence, autonomy, and relatedness are satisfied (Islahi et al, 2019). Teachers who establish respectful, supportive, and equitable classroom environments directly contribute to the fulfillment of these needs. As a result, learners experience a heightened sense of value and agency in their educational journey. Extensive research confirms that emotionally supportive teacher-student relationships characterized by mutual trust, care, and respect significantly enhance intrinsic motivation, engagement, and academic achievement by making students feel seen, safe, and inspired to learn (George et al., 2024). Therefore, the emotional and interpersonal dimensions of teacher-student interactions should be considered integral components in the development of effective motivation-enhancing strategies.

When compared with regional studies, the 38.8% influence found in this study aligns moderately with research conducted by researcher in the Philippines, which reported a 46.2% contribution of teacher attitude to student motivation (Ainussamsi et al, 2019). Although slightly lower, the Indonesian context particularly in EFL classrooms with diverse socio-cultural challenges still reveals a statistically and pedagogically meaningful relationship. Moreover, these results confirm and extend previous Indonesian research that reported varying levels of

teacher influence, such as 21% at SMP Negeri Yogyakarta and 47.7% at MA Manbail Futuh Jenu (Oktrisa et al., 2025). This range of findings underscores the contextual sensitivity of teacher impact across regions and school types, suggesting that local variables such as institutional culture, language exposure, and community engagement may play a mediating role in shaping student motivation (Ainussamsi et al, 2019).

From a methodological standpoint, the research also meets robust psychometric criteria. Both constructs demonstrated strong convergent validity ($AVE > 0.60$), discriminant validity ($HTMT = 0.652$), and internal consistency (Cronbach's Alpha > 0.90), confirming that the instrument was reliable and theoretically coherent (Hair et al., 2021). These methodological strengths enhance the credibility of the observed relationships and support broader application of the findings in similar educational contexts. Moreover, the statistical rigor employed ensures that future replications or cross-cultural validations of the instrument can be conducted with greater confidence and comparability.

Contextually, this study contributes to an underexplored area in Indonesian EFL literature by focusing on affective components of teaching, which are often overlooked in favor of technical or linguistic strategies (Fauzan et al., 2022). While numerous studies explore the use of gamification, media, or instructional technology, few have empirically examined how teachers' beliefs, behaviors, and emotions collectively influence learners' motivational outcomes (Debreli et al, 2019).

By incorporating the ABC Model of Attitude (McLeod) and Self-Determination Theory, this study fills a notable theoretical and practical gap in the field of language education (Buendia et al, 2018). This integrated framework enables a more holistic and multidimensional understanding of how teachers' affective dispositions, cognitive beliefs, and behavioral expressions collectively influence students' motivational trajectories. Supporting this, found that combining the ABC Model and SDT provides a structured way to explain how all three attitude components contribute meaningfully to students' intrinsic motivation, highlighting the essential role of emotional and relational elements in sustaining engagement (Yazid et al, 2025). While previous models have often treated affective and relational dimensions as peripheral, this study foregrounds them as central mechanisms that shape students' perceptions of safety, value, and autonomy in the learning process. Particularly in culturally diverse and relationally oriented EFL contexts like Indonesia, the integration of attitude theory and motivation theory provides a culturally responsive lens through which pedagogical effectiveness can be more accurately conceptualized and assessed. It highlights that motivation is not merely a product of instructional technique, but also a function of emotional resonance and interpersonal affirmation within the classroom ecology.

These findings carry significant implications for both teacher education and educational policy. In practice, teacher training programs should place greater emphasis on the affective dimensions of pedagogy, such as building relational trust, promoting inclusive and respectful classroom discourse, and providing sustained emotional encouragement. Emotional intelligence, empathy, and relational competence should be elevated as core professional standards, not optional soft skills. Professional development initiatives must be restructured to include modules on culturally sensitive communication, psychological safety, and motivational scaffolding strategies. Furthermore, education policy frameworks should recognize and promote teacher-student interaction quality as a measurable and impactful dimension within teacher evaluation systems. By doing so, institutions can foster a more holistic and humane vision of teaching effectiveness that balances academic rigor with emotional attunement.

However, this study is not without limitations. While it examines the direct relationship between teacher attitude and student motivation, it does not account for the potential mediating or moderating effects of other contextual variables such as classroom climate, learner self-efficacy, peer influence, or socioeconomic background. The use of non-random sampling may also constrain the generalizability of the findings across diverse educational settings. Future research should consider employing longitudinal or mixed-method designs to explore the dynamic interplay of these factors over time and across contexts. Incorporating classroom observations and student interviews could also enrich our understanding of how relational dynamics unfold in practice.

In summary, the deliberation affirms that teacher attitude is not merely a background trait but a powerful pedagogical lever that shapes the motivational climate of EFL classrooms. By fostering emotionally affirming and cognitively engaging interactions, teachers can catalyze not only language acquisition but also learners' broader sense of identity, agency, and belonging. Ultimately, cultivating strong emotional bonds between teachers and students is not just beneficial—it is essential for building resilient, responsive, and inclusive learning communities.

Conclusion

This study concludes that teacher attitude encompassing empathy, fairness, effective communication, and classroom management plays a pivotal role in fostering both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation in EFL classrooms. When teachers exhibit these positive attributes, students tend to respond with enthusiasm, curiosity, and commitment toward English language learning. The findings reinforce the idea that successful language learning is not solely dependent on instructional methods but also on emotional and interpersonal teacher-student dynamics. This is supported by statistical analysis using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM), which revealed a path coefficient of 0.623, a T-statistic of 12.205, and a p-value of 0.000. Furthermore, teacher attitude accounted for approximately 38.8% of the variance in students' motivation, as indicated by the R-square value. However, the study is subject to several limitations. It focused on a limited set of variables and did not explore other potential factors such as learning environment, peer influence, or socioeconomic background. Additionally, the use of convenience sampling limits the generalizability of the results to the broader population of Indonesian students across different regions and school types.

Future research is recommended to adopt longitudinal or mixed-method designs to better understand the evolving relationship between teacher attitudes and student motivation over time. It is also encouraged to include variables such as parental involvement, peer dynamics, and classroom climate. Qualitative investigations can further uncover the nuanced perceptions students hold regarding their motivational experiences and teacher interactions. The findings carry meaningful implications for educators and institutions. Teacher training programs should place greater emphasis on developing affective and relational competencies in pre-service teachers. Moreover, educational institutions are advised to implement reflective and professional development initiatives that nurture empathy, emotional intelligence, and student-centered pedagogical practices, all of which are essential for sustaining motivated and inclusive learning environments.

Acknowledgment

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