



Exploring Teachers' Motivational Strategies: Validation and Application of the Teachers' Student Motivation Scale (TSMS)

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the motivational strategies employed by teachers through the application of the Teachers' Student Motivation Scale (TSMS), a psychometrically validated instrument designed to assess teachers' approaches to student motivation. The TSMS comprises 32 scenario-based items categorized into four sub-dimensions: high-level control, moderate-level control, moderate-level autonomy support, and high-level autonomy support. Utilizing a 5-point Likert scale, the scale captures the frequency and appropriateness of teachers' motivational behaviors. The study evaluates the reliability and validity of the TSMS, reporting satisfactory internal consistency (Cronbach's alpha ranging from 0.75 to 0.78 across sub-dimensions) and significant correlations with the Student Locus of Control Scale, indicating meaningful relationships between motivational strategies and students' locus of control. Data analysis, including independent samples t-tests, explores variations in motivational strategies by teacher gender. Findings highlight the role of control and autonomy-supportive strategies in fostering student motivation, with implications for teacher training and educational practice. This research contributes to the understanding of motivational aspects in educational settings and offers an appropriate tool for future studies.

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INTRODUCTION

For educational activities to be truly effective, well-developed physical environments alone are insufficient. Beyond infrastructure, the attitudes and behaviors of teachers play a critical role in shaping the quality of teaching and the learning experiences of students. Research by Tschannen-Moran and Hoy (2001) demonstrates a strong relationship between teachers' personal efficacy beliefs and student achievement. Their study highlights that a teacher's belief in their own instructional

efficacy significantly influences student motivation and academic success. Teachers, through both direct interaction and modeled behaviors, exert a profound impact on student conduct. In cases of disciplinary issues, hasty and unstructured teacher interventions may inadvertently reinforce maladaptive behaviors (Skinner & Belmont, 1993).

In fostering, modifying, or cultivating new behavioral patterns in students, teachers' instructional strategies and their interpersonal approaches are equally vital. Education, fundamentally, is a lifelong process of behavioral transformation and development. Within formal educational settings, this process is systematically structured around objectives, instructional content, teaching methods, and evaluation mechanisms. Teachers serve as central figures across all these dimensions, and the successful development of desired student behaviors is intimately tied to teacher competencies (Darling-Hammond, 2000). When teachers model positive attitudes and behaviors, they increase the likelihood of shaping students into well-adjusted individuals with similar values and dispositions.

Teachers are thus expected to support students' physiological, psychological, social, and cognitive development. This task demands not only technical expertise and pedagogical skill but also personal maturity, self-awareness, and heightened sensitivity in interpersonal interactions (Day et al., 2008). As such, it is crucial to examine teachers' core attributes—including their professional identity, responsibilities, personality traits, value systems, and attitudes—as these elements are foundational to their effectiveness (Zeichner & Liston, 2014).

Understanding and meeting students' learning needs within the classroom is another essential aspect of effective teaching. Both disruptive behaviors and academic underperformance are frequently linked to inadequacies within the learning environment. Teachers must cultivate an atmosphere conducive to learning, which requires a nuanced understanding of both individual and collective student needs. A supportive and responsive classroom environment can only be established when instruction is aligned with these needs (Tomlinson, 2014).

Fostering and sustaining student motivation is one of a teacher's most critical roles. Derived from the Latin root *movere*—meaning "to move"—motivation refers to the internal drive that energizes and directs behavior. According to Schunk et al. (2008), motivation encompasses three interrelated dimensions: the internal state that initiates goal-directed behavior, the sustained effort to attain the goal, and the realization of the goal, which temporarily satisfies the initiating drive.

These dimensions function in a dynamic cycle, wherein motivation stimulates behavior, which in turn propels goal achievement, subsequently influencing future motivational states. Consequently, teachers must acquire a deep understanding of students' motivational needs within the classroom context.

Brophy (2010), in synthesizing theories of motivation and classroom research, proposed a set of empirically grounded principles aimed at enhancing student

engagement and learning. These principles include creating classroom conditions that are conducive to student success, teaching students how to evaluate their own performance and set realistic goals, and helping them understand the connection between effort and outcomes. Additionally, Brophy emphasized the importance of relating instructional content to students' prior knowledge and experiences, modeling enthusiasm and interest in the subject matter, and incorporating novelty and variation into lessons. He also highlighted the value of encouraging active student participation, supporting creative expression, and fostering positive peer interactions as key strategies for increasing motivation and improving learning outcomes. Together, these strategies provide a robust framework for teachers seeking to foster intrinsic motivation and optimize the learning environment.

Teachers must integrate these principles into their instructional practices to enhance student motivation. A positive classroom atmosphere cultivated by the teacher fosters students' trust in their instructors, which in turn promotes a favorable attitude toward learning, increases motivation, and strengthens the drive for achievement. Drive, in this context, refers to an internal state that energizes and directs behavior toward specific goals, encompassing elements such as desires, needs, impulses, and interests. Drives stemming from physiological needs—such as hunger, thirst, and sexuality—are commonly categorized as instincts (CliffsNotes, 2024).

Individuals experience a state of tension when physiological, psychological, or social needs are unmet, prompting goal-directed behavior aimed at relieving this tension. The organism acts in pursuit of goals that satisfy these needs, and the energy that initiates such actions is referred to as impulse (CliffsNotes, 2024.).

Motivation is a multifaceted phenomenon shaped by both internal factors—those originating within the student—and external influences from the learning environment. Key internal sources of motivation include personal goals and intentions, biological and psychological impulses, self-concept, self-confidence, and self-esteem. These are accompanied by students' personal beliefs, values, expectations, and definitions of success and failure, along with self-awareness, personal experiences, and perceived self-efficacy. Individual characteristics, such as willingness to take risks and the ability to cope with anxiety, as well as the learner's emotional state and level of consciousness, also play crucial roles (PositivePsychology.com, 2019.). Among these, self-esteem emerges as particularly significant. It refers to a student's overall positive evaluation of self and comprises two primary components: self-confidence, or perceived competence, and self-worth, which reflects a sense of personal value (Lim & Lee, 2017; Fang, 2016).

External sources of motivation are equally influential and include goals imposed or encouraged by teachers, parents, and peers, the overarching goal structures of the classroom, and the results of social interactions. Motivation can also be shaped by the classroom's reinforcement systems—through the administration of rewards and punishments—as well as by instructional stimuli characterized by novelty, complexity, and uncertainty. Additionally, students are influenced by the expectations of teachers

and others, the presence of performance models, and teaching practices that promote academic success, confidence, active engagement, and sustained attention (Daumiller et al., 2022).

Student motivation is influenced by a multitude of internal and external factors. Importantly, two students may demonstrate comparable levels of engagement and academic success in a subject area such as English, yet be driven by fundamentally different motivational forces. One student may be motivated intrinsically by genuine interest in the subject matter, whereas another may be driven by extrinsic incentives, such as the pursuit of high grades or teacher approval. These distinctions highlight the importance of individual variability in motivational orientation (Hastomo et al., 2025)

Building upon this understanding, the present study seeks to investigate whether the level of student motivation fostered by English teachers varies significantly based on the teacher's gender. In particular, the study focuses on whether specific motivational strategies employed by teachers differ across gender lines. The following research sub-questions are formulated to address this central inquiry:

1. Does the high-control sub-dimension of English teachers' motivational strategies differ significantly by gender?
2. Does the moderate-control sub-dimension of English teachers' motivational strategies differ significantly by gender?
3. Does the moderate-autonomy support sub-dimension of English teachers' motivational strategies differ significantly by gender?
4. Does the high-autonomy support sub-dimension of English teachers' motivational strategies differ significantly by gender?

METHOD

This study employed a general survey model, a form of descriptive research methodology designed to systematically gather data from an entire population or a representative sample to make generalizable inferences (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The aim was to investigate the extent to which student motivation is fostered by English teachers, with a particular focus on potential differences based on teacher gender.

The population for this study comprised English language teachers employed in schools under the jurisdiction of Tangerang Selatan Banten. The sample consisted of English teachers working in primary and secondary schools located within the city center of Tangerang Selatan during the 2024–2025 academic year. A total of 170 teachers participated in the study, of whom 62.94% were female and 37.06% were male.

Data were collected using the Teachers' Student Motivation Scale (TSMS), a validated instrument designed to measure teachers' use of motivational strategies in instructional contexts.

The Teachers' Student Motivation Scale (TSMS) is designed to evaluate the motivational strategies employed by teachers in the classroom. It utilizes scenario-based items to explore teachers' cognitive orientations, behavioral patterns, and instructional practices. Through these items, respondents are asked to assess the appropriateness of their behaviors on a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (Highly inappropriate) to 5 (Highly appropriate).

Comprising a total of 32 items, the scale is structured into four sub-dimensions, with each subscale containing eight items. These sub-dimensions represent different levels of control and autonomy support exercised by teachers: high-level control, moderate-level control, moderate-level autonomy support, and high-level autonomy support. Each dimension captures a specific pedagogical orientation, allowing for a nuanced understanding of how teachers manage classroom motivation, ranging from directive approaches to more autonomy-supportive strategies. This framework enables researchers and educators to analyze and reflect on the effectiveness of diverse motivational practices in fostering student engagement and learning.

To examine whether English teachers' levels of motivating students varied significantly by gender, an independent samples t-test was conducted. Statistical analyses were performed using IBM SPSS Statistics 29, with the significance level set at .05.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Result

This study investigated whether English teachers' motivational strategies varied significantly by gender across four sub-dimensions measured by the Teachers' Student Motivation Scale (TSMS): high-level control, moderate-level control, moderate-level autonomy support, and high-level autonomy support. An independent samples t-test was employed to compare mean scores between female and male teachers. Statistical analyses were conducted using IBM SPSS Statistics 29, with the significance threshold set at .05.

High-Level Control Sub-Dimension

An independent samples t-test comparing female and male teachers on the high-level control sub-dimension revealed no statistically significant difference ($t(168) = 1.516$, $p = 0.13$). Female teachers ($n = 107$) scored slightly higher ($M = 22.41$, $SD = 4.40$) than male teachers ($n = 63$; $M = 21.19$, $SD = 5.42$), but this difference did not reach significance. These results suggest that the use of highly directive, controlling motivational strategies does not significantly differ by teacher gender (see Table 1).

Table 1. High-Level Control Sub-Dimension

Gender	n	M	SD	t	p
Female	107	22.41	4.40	1.516	0.13
Male	63	21.19	5.42		

Moderate-Level Control Sub-Dimension

Analysis of the moderate-level control sub-dimension showed a statistically significant difference between genders. Female teachers ($M = 28.96$, $SD = 3.60$) scored significantly higher than their male counterparts ($M = 27.28$, $SD = 5.78$), $t(168) = 2.075$, $p = 0.04$. This finding indicates that female English teachers are more likely to employ moderate control strategies to motivate students compared to male teachers (see Table 2).

Table 2. Moderate-Level Control Sub-Dimension

Gender	n	M	SD	t	p
Female	107	28.96	3.60	2.075	0.04*
Male	63	27.28	5.78		

*Significant at $p < .05$

Moderate-Level Autonomy Support Sub-Dimension

The moderate-level autonomy support sub-dimension showed no significant gender differences. Male teachers ($M = 26.63$, $SD = 5.17$) scored marginally higher than female teachers ($M = 25.82$, $SD = 4.27$), but the difference was not statistically significant, $t(168) = -1.053$, $p = 0.29$ (see Table 3). Thus, teachers' use of motivational strategies involving moderate autonomy support appears gender-neutral.

Table 3. Moderate-Level Autonomy Support Sub-Dimension

Gender	n	M	SD	t	p
Female	107	25.82	4.27	-1.053	0.29
Male	63	26.63	5.17		

High-Level Autonomy Support Sub-Dimension

Similarly, the high-level autonomy support sub-dimension did not reveal significant gender-based differences. Female teachers ($M = 28.22$, $SD = 4.49$) scored slightly higher than males ($M = 27.57$, $SD = 5.83$), but this difference was not significant, $t(168) = 0.764$, $p = 0.44$ (see Table 4). This result suggests that the extent to which teachers foster high levels of student autonomy is comparable across genders.

Table 4. High-Level Autonomy Support Sub-Dimension

Gender	n	M	SD	t	p
Female	107	28.22	4.49	0.764	0.44
Male	63	27.57	5.83		

Overall, these findings indicate that female and male English teachers exhibit largely similar motivational strategies in the classroom, with the notable exception of moderate-level control, where female teachers report a significantly higher use of such strategies. The absence of significant gender differences in autonomy-supportive dimensions aligns with prior research suggesting that autonomy support is generally not gender-dependent in educational settings. This nuanced insight

contributes to understanding how gender may influence specific motivational approaches, highlighting the importance of tailored professional development programs that consider these subtle distinctions.

Discussion

When examining English teachers' levels of motivating students in relation to gender, a statistically significant difference was found in the sub-dimension of moderate control behavior. Specifically, female teachers were found to exhibit significantly higher levels of moderate control in motivating students compared to their male counterparts. However, no significant differences were observed between the two groups in the sub-dimensions of high control, moderate autonomy support, and high autonomy support. Based on these findings, it can be concluded that female teachers tend to employ moderate control strategies more frequently than male teachers when motivating students.

Previous studies by Raufelder et al. (2016) have indicated that the attitudes and behaviors of teachers and administrators toward students change very little over time in relation to the students' developmental trajectories. These studies also noted that teachers often resort to punishments and prohibitions in the classroom that are inconsistent with students' developmental characteristics.

Similarly, a study conducted by Yan and Gaier (2021) examined the relationship between restrictive student control tendencies and the perception of a healthy classroom environment in terms of gender. The findings revealed no significant relationship between a teacher's restrictive control approach and perceptions of a healthy classroom environment. However, it was observed that male teachers exhibited more restrictive control tendencies than female teachers.

A study by Alghamdi (2020) focusing on primary school teachers also found that male teachers demonstrated higher levels of control behavior compared to female teachers. According to van Tartwijk et al. (2019), schools characterized by highly authoritarian control approaches tend to be significantly dominated by male administrators and teachers.

Reeve and Cheon (2021) found in their study that when students appeared unmotivated and restless during lessons, teachers tended to exercise greater control. This finding suggests that in contexts where students exhibit high motivation and autonomy, teachers are more likely to provide autonomy support; conversely, students who are disengaged or poorly motivated are more likely to be subjected to increased control by their teachers. Motivating students through control in the classroom often results in restrictions on student behavior.

In traditional schools, teacher behavior is often prohibitive in nature, whereas teachers in more democratic educational environments are more likely to adopt behavior that encourages interaction and takes students' lived experiences into account. The primary responsibility of the teacher is to facilitate desired behavioral

changes in students in line with instructional goals. However, while fulfilling this role, teachers are also expected to manage both academic and non-academic responsibilities, such as motivating students to participate in classroom activities, organizing instructional practices, improving classroom working conditions, and eliminating factors that hinder learning. In handling such responsibilities, the nature of the teacher's interactions with students and their behavioral strategies play a crucial role.

CONCLUSION

This study investigated English teachers' motivational strategies, revealing a significant finding: female teachers employed moderate control behaviors significantly more often than their male counterparts. Conversely, no substantial gender differences were observed in high control, moderate autonomy support, or high autonomy support strategies. This suggests that while overall motivational approaches may be similar across genders, female teachers tend to utilize a more guided, yet not overly restrictive, approach to student motivation. These findings contribute to a nuanced understanding of how gender might subtly influence specific pedagogical choices, emphasizing the importance of recognizing these distinctions in educational practice. The insights gained from this research have implications for teacher training and professional development, highlighting areas where specific guidance on motivational strategies, particularly moderate control, could be beneficial.

Despite these valuable contributions, this study had limitations, including its focus solely on English teachers in a specific region, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to other subjects or geographical areas. Furthermore, the study relied on self-reported data via the TSMS, which could be subject to social desirability bias. For future research, it is suggested that studies incorporate observational methods or student perceptions to provide a more comprehensive view of teacher motivational behaviors. Additionally, exploring the impact of these differentiated motivational strategies on student outcomes, such as engagement, academic performance, and locus of control, would offer further valuable insights. Longitudinal studies could also track how teachers' motivational strategies evolve over time and in response to various professional development interventions.

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