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The Influence of Teachers' Attitudes on Junior High School Students' Academic Motivation in Learning English Language: An Ex-Post Facto Study

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the relationship between teachers' attitudes and Junior High School students' academic motivation in learning English at Tubod National High School, Cebu, Philippines, during School Year 2025–2026. A quantitative descriptive-correlational design with an ex-post facto approach was employed, involving 114 students selected through proportionate stratified random sampling. Data were collected using a modified questionnaire and analyzed through weighted means, standard deviations, and Spearman's rho correlation. Findings revealed highly positive perceptions of teachers' attitudes (M = 4.46), particularly fairness, respect, enthusiasm, and patience, alongside high student academic motivation (M = 4.48), primarily associated with recognizing English proficiency as essential for future educational and career opportunities. A strong, statistically significant positive relationship was established between teachers' attitudes and students' academic motivation ($\rho = 0.78$, $p < 0.001$). The findings indicate that favorable teacher attitudes are closely associated with stronger student motivation in English language learning. Accordingly, strengthening interactive instruction, constructive feedback, classroom management, and teacher–student relationships through a strategic intervention plan is recommended. The study's single-school setting, self-reported measures, and correlational design limit generalizability and causal interpretation. Nevertheless, the findings provide empirical evidence to guide instructional improvement, teacher professional development, and school-level decision-making. Aligned with Sustainable Development Goal 4 (Quality Education), the study contributes to educational and institutional sustainability through evidence-informed strategies supporting inclusive learning environments, sustained academic motivation, and improved English language teaching practices.

Keywords: *Academic Motivation, English Learning, Ex-Post Facto, Junior High School, Quality Education, Teacher Attitudes, Teacher–Student Relationships*

1. INTRODUCTION

Teachers play a significant role in shaping students' academic motivation through their attitudes, instructional practices, and classroom interactions. Positive teacher attitudes, reflected in enthusiasm, fairness, patience, encouragement, and constructive feedback, can establish supportive learning environments that encourage students to participate actively in academic activities. Falcon et al. (2023) demonstrated that teachers' enthusiasm was associated with their use of engaging instructional messages, while Vargas-Madriz et al. (2024) established a positive association between teacher support and students' school engagement. Academic motivation is particularly important in English language learning because acquiring communication skills requires sustained effort, confidence, participation, and perseverance. Ye and Hu (2024) emphasized the importance of teachers' motivational strategies in supporting junior secondary students' language learning. Similarly, Muth and Lüftenegger (2024) identified associations between autonomy-supportive teaching, perceived competence, and intrinsic motivation in English education. These findings highlight the importance of examining how students perceive their teachers' attitudes and how these perceptions relate to their willingness to learn. This study examined the relationship between teachers' attitudes and Junior High School students' academic motivation in learning English at Tubod National High School, San Fernando, Cebu, during School Year 2025–2026. Using a quantitative descriptive-correlational design with an ex-post facto approach, the research investigated naturally occurring classroom attitudes and students' academic motivation without manipulating the variables. The findings served as the basis for developing a strategic intervention plan intended to strengthen students' motivation and improve English language teaching practices.

Research Problem

Students' academic motivation is an essential component of successful English language learning. However, learners may differ in their willingness to participate, confidence in communicating, persistence in completing academic tasks, and enthusiasm for learning. These differences make it necessary to examine classroom-related factors, particularly teachers' attitudes and their interactions with students. Recent research has established that supportive teacher–student relationships are associated with greater academic motivation and engagement. Vargas-Madriz et al. (2024), in a meta-analysis involving 141 studies and 525,129 students, identified a positive relationship between teacher support and school engagement. Burns and Van Bergen (2025) likewise highlighted the importance of teacher–student relationships in adolescent motivation while emphasizing the need for clearer distinctions between teachers' interpersonal relationships and instructional support. In English language education, Ye and Hu (2024) found that teachers' beliefs about motivational strategies did not always correspond with their reported classroom practices. Furthermore, Gan et al. (2023) demonstrated that students' perceptions of task value, self-efficacy, and motivation were associated with their engagement in English learning feedback activities. These findings suggest that teachers' attitudes and motivational practices should be examined alongside students' actual learning experiences. Despite the availability of international research, context-specific evidence is necessary to determine how Junior High School students at Tubod National High School perceive their English teachers' attitudes and how these perceptions are associated with their academic motivation. Accordingly, the study addressed the relationship between teachers' attitudes and students' motivation in learning English and used the findings to develop a strategic intervention plan suited to the school's educational context.

Assumptions of the Study

The study was guided by the assumption that teachers' attitudes constitute an important aspect of the classroom environment and may be associated with students' academic motivation in

learning English. Positive attitudes, including enthusiasm, fairness, patience, encouragement, organization, and emotional stability, were assumed to contribute to classroom conditions that support students' confidence, participation, and persistence. This assumption is consistent with Falcon et al. (2023), who examined teachers' enthusiasm and engaging messages, and Vargas-Madriz et al. (2024), who established the association between teacher support and student engagement. The study further assumed that students could meaningfully report their perceptions of teachers' observable attitudes and their own academic motivation through structured questionnaires. Such perceptions were considered relevant because students' experiences of classroom support may differ, even within similar instructional environments. Burns and Van Bergen (2025) emphasized the importance of clearly defining and measuring teacher–student relationships and support when examining adolescent motivation. Additionally, the study assumed that teachers' attitudes and students' academic motivation could be examined as naturally occurring variables without experimental manipulation. While these variables were expected to demonstrate a possible relationship, the research design did not assume that teachers' attitudes were the sole determinant of students' motivation or that an observed association would establish causation.

Objectives of the Study

This study aimed to examine the relationship between teachers' attitudes and Junior High School students' academic motivation in learning English at Tubod National High School during School Year 2025–2026. Specifically, it sought to describe the attitudes exhibited by teachers in teaching English; determine students' perceptions of these attitudes in relation to their academic motivation; establish whether a statistically significant relationship existed between teachers' attitudes and students' academic motivation in learning English; and develop a strategic intervention plan based on the findings to enhance students' motivation in English language classes. These objectives were consistent with contemporary research emphasizing the relevance of classroom support, teacher motivational practices, and students' psychological experiences to English language learning (Alrabai & Alamer, 2024; Ye & Hu, 2024).

Theoretical or Conceptual Basis

This study was anchored in Social Learning Theory, Expectancy-Value Theory, and Self-Determination Theory, which collectively explain how teachers' behaviors, students' beliefs about learning, and the classroom environment may be associated with academic motivation. Social Learning Theory, developed by Albert Bandura, emphasizes learning through observation, modeling, and interaction with the social environment. Applied to English language instruction, the theory suggests that teachers may serve as behavioral models whose enthusiasm, patience, fairness, and encouragement provide examples of positive learning-related attitudes. Johnson and Burns (2023) explained that observational learning and modeling are important processes in social cognitive theory, particularly in supporting students' learning and self-efficacy. Within the present study, this perspective provides a basis for understanding how observable teacher attitudes may be related to students' motivation and participation in English classes. Expectancy-Value Theory explains academic motivation through learners' expectations of success and the value they assign to learning activities. Students who believe they can successfully accomplish academic tasks and recognize the usefulness of English language learning may demonstrate stronger motivation and engagement. Gan et al. (2023) found that task value was a significant predictor of students' engagement with feedback in English learning. Likewise, Tsang et al. (2024) demonstrated the relevance of expectancy and task value in understanding English language listening motivation. In the context of this study, teachers' encouragement, constructive feedback, and presentation of meaningful English learning activities may be associated with students' confidence and perceived value of learning English.

Self-Determination Theory, developed by Edward L. Deci and Richard M. Ryan, explains motivation through the satisfaction of three basic psychological needs: autonomy, competence, and relatedness. In English classrooms, these needs may be supported when teachers respect students' perspectives, provide constructive assistance, recognize learners' progress, and establish positive interpersonal relationships. Muth and Lüftenegger (2024) found that constructive teacher support was positively associated with students' perceived competence, which was related to intrinsic motivation in English learning. Similarly, Alrabai and Alamer (2024) demonstrated that teacher motivational practices could support language learning achievement through motivational processes involving autonomy and intrinsic motivation. Collectively, these theories support the conceptual relationship between teachers' attitudes and students' academic motivation. Teachers' attitudes, as perceived through their instructional behavior and classroom interactions, represent the principal explanatory variable, while students' academic motivation in learning English represents the outcome variable. The theoretical perspectives provide complementary explanations for the anticipated relationship without establishing causality. The findings served as the basis for a proposed strategic intervention plan designed to strengthen positive teacher–student interactions and students' motivation in English language learning. The study is also situated within the Philippine basic education context, where the Department of Education (2024) established policy guidelines for implementing the MATATAG Curriculum. The study's emphasis on supportive teaching practices, student motivation, and the improvement of instructional experiences is consistent with the broader objective of strengthening the quality of basic education.

The study primarily aligns with Sustainable Development Goal 4 (Quality Education), which advocates inclusive, equitable, and quality education and promotes lifelong learning opportunities for all. The United Nations (2025) emphasized the continuing need to strengthen educational quality, learning outcomes, and equitable access to effective educational opportunities. Specifically, the research supports the educational objectives associated with SDG Target 4.1, which focuses on effective learning outcomes in primary and secondary education; SDG Target 4.a, which promotes safe, inclusive, and effective learning environments; and SDG Target 4.c, which emphasizes the importance of qualified teachers and teacher development. By examining the relationship between teachers' attitudes and students' academic motivation, the study contributes to educational sustainability through evidence that can inform supportive English teaching practices, student engagement, and sustained motivation. It also contributes to institutional sustainability by providing a basis for a strategic intervention plan that may guide teacher professional development, instructional improvement, and continuing school-level initiatives. The research does not directly measure the achievement of SDG indicators. Rather, its potential contribution lies in generating school-based evidence that can support long-term improvements in the quality and inclusiveness of English language education.

2. METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The study utilized a quantitative descriptive-correlational research design with an ex-post facto approach to investigate the relationship between teachers' attitudes and students' academic motivation in learning English. According to Creswell (2014), descriptive-correlational research examines relationships between variables without experimental manipulation, while Kerlinger & Lee (2000) emphasized its usefulness in identifying patterns and trends in educational research. Johnson and Christensen (2019) explained that ex-post facto research examines naturally occurring variables that cannot be experimentally manipulated. Accordingly, teachers' attitudes were examined as the explanatory variable, while students' academic motivation in learning

English served as the outcome variable. Structured questionnaires were used to obtain quantitative data and determine the nature and strength of their relationship.

Research Locale or Study Setting

The study was conducted at Tubod National High School, a public secondary educational institution located in Tubod, San Fernando, Cebu, Philippines, during School Year 2025–2026. Established in August 2000, the school offers Junior High School and Senior High School programs. Its learning environment accommodates students from different family backgrounds who interact with teachers through classroom discussions, collaborative activities, and other instructional experiences. The institution provided an appropriate setting for examining students' perceptions of teachers' attitudes and their relationship with academic motivation in learning English.

Participants or Data Sources

The study involved 114 Junior High School students from Grades 7 to 10 at Tubod National High School. Proportionate stratified random sampling was employed to ensure representation across six participating sections. The respondents consisted of 37 Grade 7 students from Peace and Love, 34 Grade 8 students from Harmony and Charity, 19 Grade 9 students from Obedience, and 24 Grade 10 students from Humility. The sample size was determined through a reported power analysis, while the number of participants allocated to each section was based on its proportion of the student population. Respondents were randomly selected within their respective strata to provide eligible students an opportunity to participate.

Research Instruments or Materials

The study utilized a modified survey questionnaire adapted from selected items of the Student and Teachers Questionnaires of the National Assessment of Educational Progress, developed by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES, 2019). The instrument was modified to suit the local English language learning context and consisted of two components measuring students' perceptions of teachers' attitudes and their academic motivation in learning English. Teachers' attitudes referred to observable instructional behaviors and interpersonal characteristics, including encouragement, fairness, supportiveness, organization, and approachability. Academic motivation referred to students' internal and external willingness to participate, sustain effort, and pursue learning goals in English. Responses were measured using a five-point Likert scale: 5 for Always, 4 for Frequently, 3 for Sometimes, 2 for Seldom, and 1 for Rarely. The modified questionnaire underwent pilot testing involving 30 randomly selected Junior High School students from the same school who were excluded from the actual study. Cronbach's Alpha was used to assess internal consistency, yielding reliability coefficients of 0.87 for teachers' attitudes and 0.89 for academic motivation. According to Fraenkel & Wallen (2012), coefficients ranging from 0.80 to 1.00 indicate high reliability, supporting the instruments' suitability for the main data collection.

Data Gathering Procedure

Data collection began with securing permission from the school head and coordinating with the concerned subject teachers. Before administering the questionnaires, the researcher obtained informed consent from the respondents' parents or legal guardians and assent from the participating students. A pilot test was conducted to assess the clarity, relevance, and consistency of the modified instruments. Following the pilot test, questionnaires were administered to the selected Grade 7 to Grade 10 students during their regular class hours. The researcher explained the purpose of the data collection, provided instructions, and addressed questions concerning the instrument. Respondents were given 60 minutes to complete the

questionnaires. After administration, the accomplished instruments were collected, checked, organized, and tabulated for statistical analysis. The processed data were subsequently used to formulate findings, conclusions, recommendations, and a proposed strategic intervention plan.

Data Analysis

The collected data were organized and analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. The weighted mean was employed to determine the levels of teachers' attitudes and students' academic motivation, while the standard deviation was used to examine the variability of responses. Mean scores were interpreted using the following ranges: 4.21–5.00 as Very High, 3.41–4.20 as High, 2.61–3.40 as Moderate, 1.81–2.60 as Low, and 1.00–1.80 as Very Low. Spearman's rho correlation coefficient was used to determine the direction, strength, and statistical significance of the relationship between teachers' attitudes and students' academic motivation in learning English. This nonparametric statistical technique was selected because the questionnaire generated ordinal responses that were reported as not normally distributed. The absolute correlation coefficients were interpreted as Very Weak (0.00–0.19), Weak (0.20–0.39), Moderate (0.40–0.59), Strong (0.60–0.79), and Very Strong (0.80–1.00). Hypothesis testing was conducted at the 0.05 level of significance to determine whether a statistically significant relationship existed between the variables. The results provided the empirical basis for the proposed strategic intervention plan.

Ethical Consideration

Ethical considerations were observed throughout the study to protect the rights, privacy, and welfare of the respondents. Permission was secured from the school head and concerned subject teachers before data collection. Since the participants were minors, parental or guardian informed consent and student assent were obtained before questionnaire administration. Participation was voluntary, and only students who provided assent and whose parents or guardians had granted consent were included in the study. Respondents were informed of the data-gathering procedures and were allowed to seek clarification regarding the questionnaire. Confidentiality and anonymity were maintained, and the information collected was used exclusively for research purposes. These measures were intended to protect participants' identities and ensure the ethical conduct of the investigation.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Teachers' Attitudes in Teaching English

3.1.1 Positive Interpersonal and Instructional Attitudes

The findings revealed that English teachers demonstrated highly positive attitudes, with an overall weighted mean of 4.46, verbally interpreted as Always. Fair and respectful treatment of students received the highest rating (4.60), followed by enjoyment of interactions with students (4.54), application of creative teaching activities (4.52), classroom preparedness (4.50), and patience toward students' mistakes (4.49). Encouraging students to think in new ways (4.48), demonstrating enthusiasm (4.47), and accepting different ideas (4.46) also received favorable evaluations. These findings indicate that students consistently perceived their English teachers as respectful, approachable, enthusiastic, creative, and supportive. The findings emphasize the importance of positive interpersonal and instructional attitudes in establishing a supportive English learning environment. Liu and Li (2023), who examined perceived teacher support among 1,401 high school English language learners, identified academic, instrumental, and emotional support as important dimensions of teachers' classroom support. Similarly, Lansangan et al. (2024) reported positive teacher attitudes and a significant relationship between teachers'

attitudes and students' motivation in a Philippine senior high school. These studies provide relevant support for the favorable teacher attitudes reported by the respondents.

3.1.2 Classroom Engagement, Feedback, and Emotional Regulation

Although teachers received positive ratings across all indicators, relatively lower weighted means were recorded for providing constructive feedback (4.35), maintaining composure in noisy classrooms (4.35), conducting active and enjoyable classroom discussions (4.38), and managing classroom problems without losing composure (4.40). Listening to students' concerns (4.43) and maintaining a positive attitude despite classroom difficulties (4.45) also received favorable ratings. These results indicate that teachers were generally perceived positively, although classroom engagement, feedback practices, and emotional regulation received comparatively lower evaluations. These findings suggest opportunities to further strengthen interactive instruction, constructive feedback, and classroom management. Liu et al. (2023) found that academic and emotional teacher support were positively associated with English language learners' engagement, with self-efficacy and achievement goals explaining some of these relationships. Their findings reinforce the relevance of supportive instructional practices in encouraging student participation and sustained engagement in English learning.

3.2 Students' Academic Motivation in Learning English

3.2.1 Perceived Value of English and Academic Aspirations

The results revealed a high level of academic motivation among Junior High School students, with an overall weighted mean of 4.48, verbally interpreted as Always. Recognizing the importance of English for future careers and studies received the highest weighted mean (4.63), followed by the belief that English provides better opportunities (4.62). Students also expressed a strong willingness to improve their English proficiency (4.57), satisfaction when using English correctly (4.56), positive attitudes toward studying English (4.50), and motivation to obtain high grades (4.50). These findings indicate that students recognized the practical and academic value of English language proficiency.The findings highlight the importance of students' perceived learning value, personal aspirations, and academic goals in sustaining motivation. Wang et al. (2022) demonstrated that autonomous motivation and positive academic emotions were important motivational processes associated with English language achievement. Although their study involved university students in an online learning environment, it provides relevant evidence concerning the importance of motivation and positive learning experiences in English education. The present findings similarly reflect students' positive perceptions of English and their willingness to pursue language learning goals.

3.2.2 Learning Engagement, Persistence, and Teacher-Related Motivation

Students reported strong motivation when their English teachers were motivated, with a weighted mean of 4.61. Attentiveness to English teachers (4.55), enjoyment of English learning (4.44), eagerness to participate in English activities (4.43), and interest in English lessons (4.40) also received positive evaluations. However, relatively lower ratings were observed for time spent completing English assignments (4.21), willingness to share personal experiences with teachers in English (4.28), motivation to face learning challenges (4.35), and persistence despite making mistakes (4.38). These findings indicate that students were generally motivated to learn English, although certain aspects of learning effort, communication, and persistence received comparatively lower scores. The findings emphasize the relevance of teacher-related motivation

and supportive classroom experiences to students' learning engagement. Wang et al. (2022) found that teacher engagement was positively associated with English achievement through autonomous motivation and positive academic emotions. Similarly, Zhang and Hu (2025), in a study involving 314 senior high school students, established positive relationships among perceived teacher support, learning motivation, and engagement in English classrooms. These findings support the importance of maintaining positive teacher–student interactions and providing opportunities for students to participate confidently in English learning activities.

3.3 Relationship Between Teachers' Attitudes and Students' Academic Motivation

The correlation analysis revealed a strong positive and statistically significant relationship between teachers' attitudes and students' academic motivation in learning English, with a Spearman's rho coefficient of 0.78 and a reported p-value of 0.000 ($p < 0.001$). Since the probability value was below the 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis stating that no significant relationship existed between the variables was rejected. The findings indicate that more favorable student perceptions of teachers' attitudes were associated with higher levels of academic motivation in English language learning. This finding is consistent with recent research establishing positive associations between teachers' supportive behaviors and students' motivation and engagement. Zhang and Hu (2025) identified a positive relationship between teacher support and English learning motivation among senior high school students. Likewise, Lansangan et al. (2024) established a significant relationship between teachers' attitudes and students' motivation in a Philippine secondary school context. Liu et al. (2023) further emphasized the importance of academic and emotional teacher support in facilitating English learning engagement. Collectively, these studies support the observed relationship between teachers' attitudes and students' academic motivation. However, because the present study employed a descriptive-correlational, ex-post facto design, the findings establish an association rather than a causal effect. The results provide an empirical basis for a strategic intervention plan emphasizing positive teacher–student interactions, engaging instructional practices, constructive feedback, and continued support for English language learning motivation.

4. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study established a significant positive relationship between teachers' attitudes and Junior High School students' academic motivation in learning English at Tubod National High School during School Year 2025–2026. The findings revealed that students consistently perceived their English teachers as fair, respectful, patient, enthusiastic, creative, and supportive. Students also demonstrated high academic motivation, particularly in recognizing the importance of English for future educational and career opportunities. Although both variables received favorable evaluations, relatively lower ratings in classroom engagement, constructive feedback, emotional regulation, and students' commitment to completing assignments indicated areas requiring further attention. The strong positive correlation between teachers' attitudes and students' academic motivation suggests that favorable classroom interactions are closely associated with students' willingness to learn English. Overall, the study contributes school-based empirical evidence supporting the importance of positive teacher–student relationships and provides a foundation for developing a strategic intervention plan to strengthen English language learning motivation.

English teachers should maintain positive instructional attitudes characterized by fairness, respect, patience, enthusiasm, and encouragement while strengthening areas that received

comparatively lower evaluations. Priority should be given to interactive classroom discussions, timely constructive feedback, effective classroom management, and activities that encourage students to complete assignments, overcome learning difficulties, and communicate confidently in English. Teachers should also integrate practical learning activities that demonstrate the relevance of English to students' academic aspirations and future careers. School administrators should support these initiatives through professional development programs, Learning Action Cell sessions, collaborative teaching activities, and regular monitoring of students' academic motivation. The proposed strategic intervention plan should prioritize teacher–student relationships, instructional engagement, motivational strategies, and systematic feedback mechanisms. Its implementation should be monitored and evaluated to determine its effectiveness. Future researchers may examine additional factors associated with academic motivation and explore similar relationships across different schools and grade levels.

The study was limited to 114 Junior High School students from Grades 7 to 10 at Tubod National High School during School Year 2025–2026, restricting the generalizability of its findings to other educational settings. Data were obtained through students' self-reported perceptions using structured questionnaires, which may not fully capture teachers' actual classroom behaviors or students' motivation. Furthermore, the descriptive-correlational, ex-post facto design established statistical associations but could not determine causality. The study focused on teachers' attitudes and academic motivation without examining other potentially related factors. Future investigations may involve multiple schools, additional variables, and qualitative or mixed-method approaches.

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