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ENGLISH TEACHING STRATEGIES, MOTIVATION, AND LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY AT HAMALATUL QURAN BOARDING SCHOOL

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Abstract

This quantitative correlational study examined the relationships among students' perceptions of English teaching strategies (ETS), learning motivation (LM), and English language proficiency (LP) at Hamalatul Quran Boarding School Yogyakarta. The study involved 40 senior-high-school students who completed an English Teaching Strategies Questionnaire and a Learning Motivation Scale, followed by an English proficiency test. Descriptive results indicated high perceived teaching effectiveness ($M = 4.21$, $SD = 0.61$), strong learning motivation ($M = 4.35$, $SD = 0.54$), and an upper-intermediate level of English proficiency ($M = 78.47$, $SD = 8.12$). Pearson product-moment correlations showed strong positive associations between ETS and LP ($r = .812$, $p < .001$), LM and LP ($r = .864$, $p < .001$), and ETS and LM ($r = .798$, $p < .001$). These findings indicate that students who perceived classroom teaching strategies more positively also tended to report stronger motivation and higher proficiency scores. The results are consistent with recent EFL research emphasizing the roles of supportive instruction, engagement, motivational quality, and meaningful language use. However, because the study used a cross-sectional correlational design with a small purposive sample, the findings should be interpreted as associations rather than causal effects. The study recommends that EFL teachers in boarding-school contexts combine interactive and task-oriented instruction with supportive feedback and motivationally responsive classroom practices, while future studies should use larger samples, validated instruments, and longitudinal or mixed-method designs.

Keywords: English teaching strategies; learning motivation; language proficiency; EFL; Islamic boarding school

INTRODUCTION

English proficiency has become an important educational resource for learners who need access to academic information, intercultural communication, and future professional opportunities. In English as a Foreign Language (EFL) contexts, however, proficiency does not develop only through exposure to linguistic forms. It is shaped by the quality of classroom interaction, the opportunities learners have to use language meaningfully, and the motivational conditions that sustain participation. Contemporary language pedagogy increasingly emphasizes communicative and task-supported learning in which learners use language to accomplish meaningful purposes rather than only practice isolated grammatical structures. Ellis (2017) argues that task-based language teaching requires careful attention to task design, focus on form, sequencing, and teacher preparation, while Ellis et al. (2019) describe task-based instruction as a flexible pedagogical framework that can connect communicative purposes with explicit language learning. In parallel, research on language motivation has moved toward more dynamic understandings in which motivation changes through interactions among learners, learning environments, goals, and experiences (Al-Hoorie, 2017; Papi & Hiver, 2020). These perspectives suggest that English proficiency should be examined together with classroom strategies and learner motivation.

The issue is particularly relevant in Islamic boarding-school environments, where English learning occurs within a distinctive educational ecology that combines formal academic instruction, religious learning, residential routines, and community norms. Recent Indonesian research shows that English programs in Islamic boarding schools may involve classroom instruction, extracurricular language activities, contextualized materials, and institutional language policies. Muslim et al. (2020), for example, identified challenges related to motivation and investment among Indonesian senior-high-school learners, while Muaffaq and Napis (2021) documented the importance of students' foreign-language behavior within the boarding-school curriculum. More recent studies also indicate that boarding schools are developing context-sensitive English programs through role-play, games, needs-based materials, and textbook development (Sari et al., 2024; Munir et al., 2024). Such contexts make teaching strategy and motivation especially important because students may have limited opportunities to use English outside structured learning activities, while institutional routines can either support or constrain engagement. At Hamalatul Quran Boarding School Yogyakarta, English is taught as part of students' academic preparation and is also relevant to wider communication and access to Islamic and global knowledge. Understanding how students perceive instructional effectiveness and how those perceptions relate to motivation and proficiency is therefore important for improving classroom practice.

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Previous research provides substantial evidence that classroom support, engagement, motivation, and positive learning experiences are associated with language-learning outcomes, but the relationships are not necessarily uniform across settings. Oga-Baldwin et al. (2017) found that learning environments, motivation, and engagement develop dynamically over time, and Oga-Baldwin and Nakata (2017) showed that engagement can predict motivational outcomes among young language learners. In the affective domain, Dewaele et al. (2018) reported that foreign-language enjoyment was related to teacher- and classroom-specific variables, while Dewaele et al. (2019) found that teacher characteristics were important predictors of learners' enjoyment in the Spanish EFL context. Jin and Zhang (2021) further demonstrated that teacher and peer support can indirectly relate to foreign-language achievement through students' enjoyment of language learning. Motivation itself is also multidimensional: Al-Hoorie (2018) showed through meta-analysis that components of the L2 motivational self system are related to intended effort, although their relationships with objective achievement are weaker and heterogeneous. Papi and Khajavy (2021) likewise demonstrate that motivational mechanisms are connected to second-language achievement through regulatory processes. These findings indicate that teaching strategies and motivation should not be treated as isolated variables, but as interconnected aspects of the EFL learning experience. This broader motivational perspective is consistent with the literature's emphasis on changing learner goals, self-guides, and contextual influences (Dörnyei & Al-Hoorie, 2017; Lamb et al., 2019).

Despite this growing literature, fewer studies have examined the joint relationships among perceived teaching strategies, learning motivation, and language proficiency among senior-high-school students in an Indonesian Islamic boarding-school context. Recent Indonesian studies have addressed motivation, English learning activities, materials, and institutional programs, but they have not necessarily examined the three variables simultaneously through a correlational framework. The present study therefore focuses on three measurable constructs: students' perceptions of English teaching strategies, learning motivation, and English language proficiency. Teaching strategies are operationalized through students' perceptions of instructional clarity, feedback, interaction, and engagement; motivation is considered in terms of intrinsic and extrinsic motivational tendencies; and proficiency is represented by performance on an English test covering grammar, vocabulary, reading comprehension, and writing. The study asks three related questions: (1) Is students' perception of English teaching strategies significantly related to English proficiency? (2) Is learning motivation significantly related to English proficiency? and (3) Is students' perception of English teaching strategies significantly related to learning motivation? The objective is to identify the direction and strength of these relationships and their pedagogical implications. Because the design is correlational, the study does not claim that teaching strategies or motivation cause changes in proficiency; instead, it identifies statistically significant patterns that can inform future experimental, longitudinal, or mixed-method research.

METHOD

Research Design

This study employed a quantitative, non-experimental correlational design. The design was selected because the purpose was to estimate the strength and direction of associations among three variables without manipulating classroom instruction or assigning students to treatment groups. The independent/predictor variables were students' perceptions of English Teaching Strategies (ETS) and Learning Motivation (LM), while Language Proficiency (LP) was treated as the outcome variable. The design permits examination of naturally occurring relationships but does not establish temporal precedence or causality. Accordingly, this article uses "relationship," "association," and "correlation" rather than causal terms such as "effect" or "impact." The analytical framework was informed by contemporary EFL research emphasizing the interaction of classroom practices, learner engagement, and motivation (Ellis, 2017; Papi & Hiver, 2020). The study was conducted at Hamalatul Quran Boarding School Yogyakarta. The original manuscript did not report a specific data-collection month or semester; therefore, no additional timing information is inferred in this revision.

Participants and Sampling

The participants were 40 senior-high-school students aged 16–18 years at Hamalatul Quran Boarding School Yogyakarta. The participants were selected through purposive sampling. Eligibility required students to have attended English classes for at least one academic year, so that respondents had sufficient experience to evaluate the teaching strategies used in their learning environment. The setting is relevant because Indonesian Islamic boarding schools combine formal education with residential and religious routines, creating learning conditions that may differ from conventional day schools (Muslim et al., 2020; Muaffaq & Napis, 2021). Recent studies also show that English programs in boarding schools increasingly use contextualized activities, games, role-play, and locally relevant materials (Sari et al., 2024; Munir et al., 2024). The sample size of 40 provides a complete description of the participants included in the original study, but it also limits statistical generalizability. Because the sample was purposive and drawn from one institution, the findings should be interpreted as context-specific evidence rather than representative estimates for all Islamic boarding schools in Indonesia. Future research should include larger and more diverse samples across institutions and regions.

Instruments and Data Collection

Three instruments were used. First, the English Teaching Strategies Questionnaire (ETSQ) contained 20 items rated on a five-point Likert scale and addressed students' perceptions of instructional clarity, feedback, interaction, and engagement. Second, the Learning Motivation Scale (LMS) contained 15 Likert-scale items intended to capture intrinsic and extrinsic motivational tendencies. The conceptual treatment of motivation is consistent with contemporary work that views language motivation as multidimensional

and dynamically related to learning contexts (Al-Hoorie, 2017; Papi & Hiver, 2020). Third, an English Proficiency Test (EPT) developed by the researcher was based on the CEFR framework and assessed grammar, vocabulary, reading comprehension, and writing, with a maximum score of 100. The original manuscript stated that the ETSQ and LMS were adapted from established models, but it did not report item-level validation procedures, reliability coefficients such as Cronbach's alpha or omega, or expert-validation results. Likewise, it did not report a formal validation or reliability study for the researcher-developed EPT. These details should therefore be recognized as limitations rather than reconstructed. Data were collected in three sessions: the ETSQ and LMS were completed under classroom supervision, and the EPT was administered one week later. Responses were coded anonymously.

Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using SPSS version 25. Descriptive statistics were used to summarize the central tendency and dispersion of ETS, LM, and LP through means and standard deviations. Pearson's product-moment correlation coefficient was then used to estimate the strength and direction of the relationships between ETS and LP, LM and LP, and ETS and LM. Statistical significance was evaluated at the conventional threshold of $p < .05$. In the interpretation, correlation magnitude was described as a strong positive relationship when the coefficient was high and positive, while statistical significance was determined from the reported p-values. The analysis does not include regression, mediation, or causal modeling because those procedures were not part of the original study. This distinction is important because recent motivation research shows that language learning outcomes can be influenced through complex, indirect, and context-sensitive pathways (Al-Hoorie, 2018; Papi & Khajavy, 2021). The analysis therefore focuses strictly on the associations supported by the available data. The absence of reported reliability coefficients, assumption checks, confidence intervals, and effect-size interpretation beyond r constitutes a methodological reporting limitation and should be addressed in future replications.

Table 1. Research Variables and Operational Indicators

Variable	Role	Main indicators	Measurement
English Teaching Strategies (ETS)	Predictor	Clarity, feedback, interaction, engagement	20-item, 5-point Likert questionnaire
Learning Motivation (LM)	Predictor	Intrinsic and extrinsic motivation	15-item, 5-point Likert scale
Language Proficiency (LP)	Outcome	Grammar, vocabulary, reading comprehension, writing	100-point English proficiency test

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Descriptive Profile of Teaching Strategy Perceptions, Motivation, and Proficiency

The descriptive results show a generally favorable learning profile. Students reported a high perception of teaching effectiveness ($M = 4.21$, $SD = 0.61$) and strong learning motivation ($M = 4.35$, $SD = 0.54$). The mean English proficiency score was 78.47 ($SD = 8.12$), which the original manuscript classified as upper-intermediate. The relatively small standard deviations for the two questionnaire measures suggest that students' responses were clustered around the favorable end of the scales, whereas the wider dispersion in proficiency indicates more variation in demonstrated English performance. These descriptive patterns are important because they show that positive perceptions of teaching and motivation coexisted with measurable differences in proficiency among the 40 participants. The descriptive statistics are summarized in Table 1.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics of the Study Variables

Variable	N	Mean	SD	Interpretation
English Teaching Strategies (ETS)	40	4.21	0.61	High
Learning Motivation (LM)	40	4.35	0.54	Strong
Language Proficiency (LP)	40	78.47	8.12	Upper-intermediate

The pattern is compatible with recent research emphasizing that motivation and classroom experience are related but not identical constructs. Oga-Baldwin et al. (2017) showed that learning environment, motivation, and engagement can develop dynamically, while Papi and Hiver (2020) argue that motivation is shaped by interactions between learner values, goals, and contextual conditions. In EFL classrooms, positive emotional experiences can also be connected with teacher and classroom characteristics (Dewaele et al., 2018; Mierzwa, 2019). The present descriptive profile therefore suggests a supportive learning context, but it should not be interpreted as proof that the teaching strategies caused the relatively high motivation or proficiency. Because the study is cross-sectional and the measures were collected from the same participants, the descriptive results primarily provide a baseline for interpreting the correlation findings.

2. Relationship between English Teaching Strategies and Language Proficiency

The strongest finding concerning instructional practice is the positive correlation between students' perceptions of English teaching strategies and language proficiency ($r = .812$, $p < .001$). The coefficient indicates a strong positive association: students who evaluated the teaching strategies more favorably tended to obtain higher proficiency scores. The finding is consistent with the study's conceptualization of effective teaching strategies as practices involving clarity, interaction, feedback, contextual practice, and learner engagement. However, the result must be interpreted carefully. A correlation of .812 does not demonstrate that teaching strategies

directly increased proficiency. It is also possible that more proficient students perceived instruction more positively, that motivation contributed to both variables, or that other contextual factors influenced the association.

Table 3. Pearson Correlations among the Study Variables

Pair	r	p	Relationship
ETS ↔ LP	.812	< .001	Strong positive
LM ↔ LP	.864	< .001	Strong positive
ETS ↔ LM	.798	< .001	Strong positive

The result is theoretically plausible because communicative and task-oriented instruction provides opportunities for learners to process and use language for meaningful purposes. Ellis (2017) emphasizes that task-based teaching depends on purposeful task design, appropriate focus on form, sequencing, and teacher preparation, while Ellis et al. (2019) describe task-based language teaching as a framework that can connect communicative activity with language development. The result also corresponds with recent Indonesian evidence that context-sensitive English activities and materials can support learners' communicative development in Islamic boarding schools (Sari et al., 2024; Munir et al., 2024). The present study extends this discussion by showing that students' perceptions of instructional strategies were strongly associated with an independently scored proficiency measure. Nevertheless, because the ETS measure is perception-based, future research should combine student reports with classroom observations, teacher reports, and validated proficiency tests to reduce common-method concerns.

3. Relationship between Learning Motivation and Language Proficiency

The correlation between learning motivation and language proficiency was the strongest among the three relationships reported in the study ($r = .864$, $p < .001$). This result indicates that students with stronger reported motivation also tended to achieve higher English proficiency scores. The finding is consistent with the general proposition that sustained effort, engagement, and goal-directed learning are important for language development. It is also consistent with the original study's distinction between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. However, motivation should not be treated as a single, static psychological quantity. Contemporary L2 motivation research emphasizes that motivation changes with goals, learning experiences, social contexts, and learners' interpretations of progress (Al-Hoorie, 2017; Papi & Hiver, 2020). The large correlation in the present sample therefore indicates a strong association in this setting rather than a universal causal effect.

Several recent studies provide additional support for this interpretation. Al-Hoorie (2018), in a meta-analysis of the L2 motivational self system, found that motivational components were consistently related to intended effort, although associations with objective achievement were smaller and heterogeneous. Papi and Khajavy (2021) further demonstrate that motivational mechanisms can contribute to second-language achievement through regulatory processes. Oga-Baldwin and Nakata (2017) found that engagement and motivation are closely connected, while Teimouri (2025) reported that L2 grit and aptitude jointly predicted English proficiency, with perseverance showing incremental value. The current result is therefore consistent with a broader literature in which motivational resources support sustained participation and language learning. At the same time, the very high coefficient should be interpreted cautiously because the sample is small and the motivation scale's reliability was not reported in the original manuscript.

4. Relationship between Teaching Strategies and Learning Motivation

The correlation between students' perceptions of English teaching strategies and learning motivation was also strong and positive ($r = .798$, $p < .001$). This finding suggests that students who viewed instructional practices more favorably tended to report stronger motivation. The relationship provides an important link between the two predictor variables: classroom practices may be experienced not only as ways of delivering content but also as contextual signals that shape students' willingness to participate, persist, and invest effort. Interactive activities, clear explanations, supportive feedback, and opportunities to use English can make classroom participation more meaningful. Nevertheless, the correlational result does not establish the direction of influence. It is equally possible that highly motivated students evaluate their teachers more positively, or that reciprocal processes operate over time.

Recent motivation research supports the possibility of such reciprocal and contextual relationships. Oga-Baldwin et al. (2017) found dynamic connections among the learning environment, motivation, and engagement, and Papi and Hiver (2020) conceptualized language motivation as a complex dynamic system rather than a fixed learner trait. Dewaele et al. (2019) found that teacher characteristics predicted a meaningful proportion of variation in foreign-language enjoyment, and Jin and Zhang (2021) showed that enjoyment of teacher support and peer support can be connected with language achievement through enjoyment of language learning. The present result is also compatible with Indonesian boarding-school research showing that interactive, contextualized, and institutionally supported English activities can shape learners' engagement with English (Muaffaq & Napis, 2021; Sari et al., 2024). The practical implication is that teachers should design instruction that simultaneously supports comprehension and learner agency rather than treating motivation as something students must supply independently.

5. Integrated Interpretation and Contextual Implications

Taken together, the three coefficients form a coherent pattern: ETS–LP ($r = .812$), LM–LP ($r = .864$), and ETS–LM ($r = .798$) are all strong and statistically significant. The pattern suggests that instructional experience and learner motivation are closely

connected to proficiency within this sample. It also indicates that teaching strategy and motivation may reinforce one another: supportive instruction can create conditions for engagement, while motivated learners may respond more positively to instruction and use available learning opportunities more intensively. This interpretation is particularly relevant in a boarding-school setting because the institution provides a structured environment in which academic instruction, peer interaction, and daily routines may influence opportunities for English use. Recent studies of Indonesian Islamic boarding schools similarly emphasize the importance of context-sensitive programs, learning materials, and institutional arrangements in supporting English development (Muslim et al., 2020; Muaffaq & Napis, 2021; Eliawati et al., 2024; Fatimah et al., 2025).

The pedagogical implication is not that one teaching method should replace all others, but that teachers should combine purposeful language use, interaction, clear scaffolding, and motivational support. Task-based teaching can provide meaningful communicative purposes (Ellis, 2017; Ellis et al., 2019), while feedback can help learners understand how their current performance relates to desired performance. Contemporary feedback evidence shows that the effectiveness of feedback depends on the information it conveys and the way it is delivered (Wisniewski et al., 2020), and research on corrective feedback indicates that learner proficiency and feedback type can moderate outcomes (Chen & Renandya, 2020). Teacher coaching and sustained professional development can also strengthen instructional practice when implemented with sufficient intensity and support (Kraft et al., 2018; Darling-Hammond et al., 2017). For the present study, these implications remain pedagogically informed rather than experimentally tested, and the small purposive sample and unreported psychometric evidence limit generalization.

The integrated pattern should also be interpreted in relation to learner support and communication opportunities. Recent evidence shows that perceived teacher support can foster engagement through motivational and affective mechanisms, including grit and foreign-language enjoyment (Huang, 2026), while teacher support can also be connected with willingness to communicate through emotional and affective pathways (Wang et al., 2026). In addition, feedback-seeking has motivational antecedents that influence how learners actively seek information about their performance (Papi et al., 2019). These perspectives help explain why the three correlations may be mutually connected. In a residential EFL environment, students experience instruction, peer interaction, institutional routines, and personal goals simultaneously, so the observed relationships are embedded in a broader learning ecology.

CONCLUSION

This study examined the relationships among students' perceptions of English teaching strategies, learning motivation, and English language proficiency at Hamalatul Quran Boarding School Yogyakarta. The results showed strong positive associations between ETS and LP ($r = .812$, $p < .001$), LM and LP ($r = .864$, $p < .001$), and ETS and LM ($r = .798$, $p < .001$). The findings indicate that favorable perceptions of instructional strategies and stronger motivation coexist with higher proficiency scores in this sample. The strongest association was between learning motivation and proficiency, suggesting that motivational conditions deserve sustained attention alongside instructional quality. Pedagogically, EFL teachers in boarding-school settings should provide interactive and purposeful language activities, clear scaffolding, supportive feedback, and opportunities for meaningful participation. However, the findings should not be interpreted causally because the study used a cross-sectional correlational design, a purposive sample of 40 students, and instruments whose full validity and reliability evidence was not reported. The study therefore provides context-specific correlational evidence rather than a causal estimate of teaching or motivation effects. Future research should replicate the study with larger samples, validated instruments, standardized or externally benchmarked proficiency measures, and longitudinal or mixed-method designs to examine causal pathways and the potential mediating role of motivation.

RECOMMENDATION

Future studies should replicate this model across several Islamic boarding schools and include larger samples representing different regions and school profiles. Researchers should report instrument-development procedures, reliability coefficients, construct-validity evidence, assumption checks, confidence intervals, and complete scoring procedures for proficiency tests. Longitudinal designs would be especially useful for determining whether changes in teaching strategy perceptions precede changes in motivation and proficiency. Mixed-method studies could combine questionnaires and proficiency tests with classroom observations, teacher interviews, and student focus groups to explain why particular teaching practices are perceived as motivating or effective. Researchers may also examine whether learning motivation mediates the relationship between instructional practices and proficiency using regression or structural equation modeling. Such work would strengthen the evidence base for EFL pedagogy in Indonesian Islamic boarding schools while preserving sensitivity to their academic, religious, and residential contexts.

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support during manuscript revision. The authors remain responsible for the accuracy, interpretation, originality, and final content of the manuscript.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS STATEMENT

Muhammad Wildan Al Faqih: Conceptualization, Methodology, Investigation, Data Curation, Formal Analysis, Writing – Original Draft, Writing – Review & Editing. Sujito: Methodology, Supervision, Validation, Writing – Review & Editing, and Project Administration. Both authors approved the final version of the manuscript.

INFORMED CONSENT

Informed consent was obtained from the participating students in accordance with the study procedures. No personally identifying information is reported in this article.

ETHICAL APPROVAL

The study involved student participants. The original manuscript did not report an institutional ethical approval number or committee name; therefore, no approval identifier is inferred in this revision. The authors should add the relevant institutional approval information before submission if such approval was obtained or required.

DATA AVAILABILITY

The data that support the findings of this study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request, subject to appropriate privacy and institutional restrictions.

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