

TEACHER ATTITUDE AND STUDENT-TEACHER RELATIONSHIP AS PREDICTORS OF ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE (EFL) STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

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ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini mengkaji hubungan prediktif antara sikap guru yang dipersepsikan siswa, hubungan Guru-Siswa, dan keterlibatan siswa dalam kelas bahasa Inggris sebagai bahasa asing (EFL) di SMKN 01 Bombana, Indonesia. Keterlibatan siswa dipandang sebagai faktor penting dalam keberhasilan pembelajaran bahasa, terutama dalam konteks sekolah kejuruan yang sering menunjukkan motivasi rendah dan persepsi relevansi bahasa Inggris yang terbatas bagi karier siswa. Penelitian ini bertujuan menguji sejauh mana faktor-faktor terkait guru memengaruhi keterlibatan siswa, baik secara individual maupun secara bersama-sama. Desain penelitian yang digunakan adalah kuantitatif eksplanatori dengan analisis *Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM)* melalui perangkat lunak SmartPLS. Sampel penelitian berjumlah 193 siswa kelas 10 hingga 12 yang dipilih melalui teknik *total population sampling*. Data dikumpulkan menggunakan kuesioner terstruktur dengan skala Likert lima poin. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa kedua variabel prediktor berpengaruh positif dan signifikan terhadap keterlibatan siswa. Sikap guru yang dipersepsikan siswa berpengaruh positif dan signifikan ($\beta = 0,377$, $t = 4,962$, $p < 0,001$), demikian pula hubungan Guru-Siswa ($\beta = 0,386$, $t = 5,697$, $p < 0,001$). Model penelitian menjelaskan 50,5% varians Keterlibatan Siswa ($R^2 = 0,505$), yang menunjukkan kekuatan penjelas model yang moderat. Di antara kedua prediktor, hubungan Guru-Siswa menunjukkan pengaruh yang sedikit lebih kuat. Penelitian ini menyimpulkan bahwa keterlibatan siswa dalam kelas EFL sangat dipengaruhi oleh sikap guru maupun kualitas hubungan guru-siswa, sehingga menegaskan pentingnya dimensi interpersonal dan afektif dalam pembelajaran bahasa, khususnya pada konteks pendidikan kejuruan.

Kata Kunci: Keterlibatan Siswa, Sikap Guru, Hubungan Guru-Siswa

ABSTRACT

This study investigates the predictive relationships between Students' Perceived Teacher Attitude, Student-Teacher Relationship, and Student Engagement in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classes at SMKN 01 Bombana, Indonesia. Student engagement is considered a critical factor in language learning success, particularly in vocational school contexts where learners often show low motivation and limited perceived relevance of English for future careers. The study aims to examine how teacher-related factors contribute to student engagement both individually and jointly. A quantitative explanatory design was employed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) with the assistance of SmartPLS software. The sample consisted of 193 students from Grades 10 to 12, selected through total population sampling. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire with a five-point Likert scale. The results show that both predictor variables significantly influence student engagement. Students' Perceived Teacher Attitude has a positive and significant effect

on Student Engagement ($\beta = 0.377$, $t = 4.962$, $p < 0.001$), and Student-Teacher Relationship also has a positive and significant effect ($\beta = 0.386$, $t = 5.697$, $p < 0.001$). The model explains 50.5% of the variance in Student Engagement ($R^2 = 0.505$), indicating moderate explanatory power. Among the two predictors, Student-Teacher Relationship demonstrates a slightly stronger influence. The study concludes that student engagement in EFL classes is strongly shaped by both teacher attitude and relationship quality, highlighting the importance of interpersonal and affective dimensions in language learning, particularly in vocational education settings.

Keywords: *Student Engagement, Teacher Attitude, Student-Teacher Relationship*

INTRODUCTION

Student engagement in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms is a crucial issue in education, as it has a considerable influence on academic success and language learning. Engagement consists of three main dimensions: behavior (active participation), emotion (interest and enjoyment), and cognition (mental effort in learning tasks) (Fredricks et al., 2004). Numerous studies have demonstrated that student engagement influences learning outcomes, motivation, and sustained academic achievement. However, there is still limited understanding of the factors that influence students' engagement at school, particularly students' perceptions of teacher attitude and the quality of teacher-student relationships, especially in EFL classrooms.

The strength of the relationship between students and teachers is a major factor shaping how engaged students are. Quin (2017) found that students with positive relationships with teachers had better grades, better attendance, and lower dropout rates. Teacher attitude plays an equally important role: Massri (2020) found that a positive attitude from teachers makes students more excited, more confident, and more willing to take part in the learning process, whereas negative attitudes may cause fear and disengagement. These findings are consistent with Dörnyei (2001), who emphasized that teacher enthusiasm and encouragement are needed to motivate students in second language acquisition. Recent evidence in EFL contexts further indicates that positive teacher-student relatedness and teacher engagement are associated with stronger student engagement, suggesting that the quality of interpersonal interaction between teachers and learners is an important component of engagement in language classrooms (Gan, 2021).

Students of SMKN 01 Bombana, a vocational high school in Southeast Sulawesi, Indonesia, face unique challenges in learning English. Informal classroom observations show that only a small number of students are genuinely interested in learning English; many students are shy, afraid, or even silent when given speaking tasks. The vocational character of the school further complicates the issue: students in certain programs, such as Automotive, tend to view English as less relevant to their technical specialization, while students in programs with a higher proportion of female students, such as Multimedia and Agriculture, show slightly more interest. Even so, the relationship between teachers and students at this school remains fairly warm, which could serve as a starting point for re-engagement strategies.

Previous studies have generally examined teacher attitude and teacher-student relationship separately. In the EFL classroom context, positive teacher-student relationships have been found to encourage students' behavioral, emotional, and cognitive engagement, indicating that interpersonal relationships are closely connected with students' involvement in learning activities (Maulidiyah, 2021). However, studies that test teacher attitude and teacher-student relationship simultaneously in a vocational school context remain scarce, even though

the two factors are likely interrelated in jointly shaping student engagement. This study therefore aims to address that gap by examining the predictive influence of Students' Perceived Teacher Attitude and Student-Teacher Relationship, both individually and jointly, on Student Engagement in EFL classes at SMKN 01 Bombana.

Beyond the relational factors described above, teacher-related influences on engagement have also been examined from a professional-development perspective. Grove (2019) investigated teachers' impact on student engagement through students' perceptions of teacher expectations, attitudes, and teaching practices, and concluded that continuous professional development helps teachers stay up to date and create more interactive classroom environments. Teachers who establish clear routines, understand their students' needs, and hold high expectations of them tend to promote stronger engagement and motivation. This means that EFL teachers need to be skilled not only in pedagogy but also in interpersonal interaction in order to increase students' engagement.

The effect of teacher-student relationships on the learning process has also been shown to vary across contexts. This relationship in different educational settings and found that stronger teacher-student relationships were associated with better learning experiences, although the magnitude of this effect differed according to school location, whether suburban or remote. This suggests that the impact of teacher-student relationships on engagement may not be uniform across cultural and environmental contexts, which further justifies examining this relationship specifically within the vocational school context of SMKN 01 Bombana.

Engagement is also closely tied to academic achievement. Mariska (2022) found that students with higher levels of engagement generally achieved better academic performance in English, and Finn and Zimmer (2012) similarly noted that engaged students tend to work harder, stay focused, and obtain better grades. These findings underscore the importance of initiatives that strengthen student engagement as a means of improving language learning outcomes, particularly in a vocational setting where students' attention is often divided between academic subjects and technical or vocational training.

From a theoretical perspective, this study draws on several complementary frameworks. Fredricks et al. (2004) conceptualize student engagement as a multidimensional construct comprising behavioral engagement (participation, attention, and persistence), emotional engagement (interest, enjoyment, and sense of belonging), and cognitive engagement (mental investment, strategy use, and self-regulation). Teacher attitude is understood, following Richards and Lockhart (1994), as encompassing teachers' emotional connection to English, their enjoyment and motivation in teaching, and their ongoing professional development, as perceived by students through classroom interaction. Meanwhile, the student-teacher relationship is conceptualized through the dimensions of closeness, conflict, and support/dependence (Pianta, 1999; Pianta, 2001), reflecting the interpersonal bond that develops between students and their teacher over time. In addition, Deci and Ryan's (1985) Self-Determination Theory, which highlights learners' psychological needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness, and Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural theory, which emphasizes that learning develops through social interaction, together provide a theoretical basis for expecting that both teacher attitude and relationship quality would meaningfully predict student engagement in EFL classrooms.

Specifically, this study aims to (1) examine the predictive relationship between Student Engagement and Students' Perceived Teacher Attitude; (2) analyze the predictive relationship between Student Engagement and Student-Teacher Relationship; and (3) investigate the

combined influence of both variables on Student Engagement. The novelty of this study lies in its use of Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) to test both predictor variables simultaneously within a single structural model, in a vocational secondary school context that has rarely been examined in prior studies of EFL student engagement.

METHODS

This study used a quantitative explanatory design to examine the predictive relationships among Students' Perceived Teacher Attitude (X1), Student-Teacher Relationship (X2), and Student Engagement (Y) in EFL classes. Data were analyzed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) with the assistance of SmartPLS software, since all three variables were latent constructs measured through several questionnaire indicators. The PLS-SEM analysis was conducted in two stages: evaluation of the measurement model (outer model) and evaluation of the structural model (inner model).

The population of this study consisted of all students in Grades 10, 11, and 12 taking EFL classes at SMKN 01 Bombana, totaling 193 students. This study employed total population sampling, so all 193 students were involved as respondents. The study did not undergo formal ethical clearance. Before data collection, permission was obtained from SMKN 01 Bombana, and informed consent was obtained from the participating students and/or their parents or legal guardians, as applicable.

The research instrument was a structured questionnaire consisting of 49 items measured on a five-point Likert scale ranging from Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree, scored as shown in Table 1. Negatively worded items were reverse-coded prior to analysis so that all items shared the same direction of interpretation.

Table 1. Likert Scale Scoring System

Response Option	Score
Strongly Agree	5
Agree	4
Neutral	3
Disagree	2
Strongly Disagree	1

The Student Engagement Questionnaire (15 items) was adapted from the framework of Fredricks et al. (2004) and is divided into three dimensions, as presented in Table 2: behavioral engagement, reflecting students' participation, attention, effort, and rule-following; emotional engagement, covering enjoyment, comfort, sense of belonging, and connection with the teacher and peers; and cognitive engagement, covering the use of learning strategies, persistence, reflection, and self-regulation.

Table 2. Blueprint of the Student Engagement Questionnaire

Dimension	Indicator	Item Numbers	Total Items
Behavioral Engagement	Participation, attention, effort, following class rules	1–5	5
Emotional Engagement	Enjoyment, comfort, sense of belonging, teacher and peer connection	6–10	5

Cognitive Engagement	Use of learning strategies, persistence, reflection, self-regulation	11–15	5
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The Students' Perceived Teacher Attitude Questionnaire (19 items) was adapted from Richards and Lockhart (1994) and covers three dimensions, as presented in Table 3: Personal Experience with English, reflecting students' perceptions of their teacher's emotional connection to English and inspirational attitude; Teaching English, covering students' perceptions of the teacher's enjoyment, motivation, and emotional responses in teaching; and Teaching Development, covering students' perceptions of the teacher's professional growth and commitment to continuous improvement.

Table 3. Blueprint of the Students' Perceived Teacher Attitude Questionnaire

Dimension	Indicator	Item Numbers	Total Items
Personal Experience with English	Emotional connection with English, learning history, influence of past teachers	1–6	6
Teaching English	Enjoyment in teaching, motivation, emotional responses, and reflection	7–14	8
Teaching Development	Professional growth, continuous improvement, and teaching commitment	15–19	5

The Student-Teacher Relationship Questionnaire (15 items) was adapted from the Student-Teacher Relationship Scale (STRS) developed by Pianta (1999) and Pianta (2001), and covers three dimensions, as presented in Table 4: Closeness, reflecting warmth, open communication, and mutual respect; Conflict, indicating the degree of misunderstanding, tension, or discomfort; and Support and Dependence, capturing trust, encouragement, and perceived fairness.

Table 4. Blueprint of the Student-Teacher Relationship Scale (STRS)

Dimension	Indicator	Item Numbers	Total Items
Closeness	Warmth, open communication, mutual respect	1–5	5
Conflict	Misunderstanding, tension, discomfort	6–10	5
Support and Dependence	Teacher support, fairness, dependability, encouragement	11–15	5

Since all three instruments were adapted from established theoretical frameworks and previous instruments rather than developed from scratch, a separate pilot study was not conducted. Instead, the questionnaire items were reviewed for relevance to the research objectives and suitability for the EFL classroom context at SMKN 01 Bombana, and their empirical validity and reliability were subsequently examined through the measurement model evaluation in SmartPLS, including outer loadings, convergent validity, discriminant validity, Cronbach's Alpha, and Composite Reliability.

The research procedure began with obtaining a research permit, preparing and reviewing the instruments, distributing the questionnaires to all respondents, and coding the

collected data. Data analysis was then conducted in SmartPLS, beginning with evaluation of the measurement model (outer loadings, convergent validity, discriminant validity, and reliability), followed by evaluation of the structural model through path coefficients and bootstrapping, the coefficient of determination (R^2), effect size (f^2), and Inner VIF values to check for multicollinearity among the predictor variables.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Findings

The demographic characteristics of the respondents were examined based on gender and grade level. As the study involved students from Grades 10 to 12, the distribution of respondents was identified to determine the categories with the largest representation. The summary of the majority of respondents by gender and grade level is presented in Table 5.

Table 5. Demographic Profile of Respondents

Demographic Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	110	56.99%
	Female	83	43.01%
	Total	193	100.00%
Grade Level	Grade 10	78	40.41%
	Grade 11	62	32.12%
	Grade 12	53	27.46%
	Total	193	100.00%

As shown in Table 5, the majority of respondents were male, with 110 students (56.99%). In terms of grade level, Grade 10 students represented the largest group, consisting of 78 students (40.41%). Thus, the largest proportion of respondents in this study came from male students and Grade 10.

Evaluation of the measurement model (outer model) showed that after six indicators with low outer loading values were removed (X1.7, Y2, Y7, Y8, Y11, and Y12), the final model showed good measurement quality, with outer loading values ranging from 0.567 to 0.881. All three constructs also met the requirements for convergent validity, with Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values above 0.50, discriminant validity based on the HTMT criterion, and good reliability, as presented in Table 6.

Table 6. Construct Reliability and Convergent Validity

Construct	Cronbach's Alpha	CR (rho_a)	CR (rho_c)	AVE
Students' Perceived Teacher Attitude	0.940	0.948	0.947	0.506
Student-Teacher Relationship	0.942	0.947	0.949	0.559
Student Engagement	0.890	0.905	0.911	0.510

All Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability values were above the 0.70 threshold, and all AVE values were above 0.50, indicating that the three constructs were reliable and convergently valid, and therefore suitable for further structural model analysis.

Discriminant validity was further examined using the Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT), with a cut-off value of 0.90, to confirm that Students' Perceived Teacher Attitude, Student-Teacher Relationship, and Student Engagement were empirically distinguishable from one another rather than overlapping constructs. The results are presented in Table 7.

Table 7. Discriminant Validity Based on HTMT

Construct Pair	HTMT Value	Threshold	Interpretation
Teacher Attitude – Student Engagement	0.705	< 0.90	Accepted
Student-Teacher Relationship – Student Engagement	0.709	< 0.90	Accepted
Teacher Attitude – Student-Teacher Relationship	0.781	< 0.90	Accepted

All HTMT values were below the 0.90 threshold. The highest value, 0.781, was found between Teacher Attitude and Student-Teacher Relationship, which is understandable given that both constructs relate to teacher-related classroom experience; even so, it remained well below the cut-off. The two values involving Student Engagement were lower still, confirming that all three constructs were adequately distinct and could be interpreted as separate variables in the structural model that followed.

Structural model (inner model) analysis showed that both predictor variables had a positive and significant effect on Student Engagement. The path coefficient and bootstrapping results are presented in Table 8.

Table 8. Path Coefficients toward Student Engagement

Path	Original Sample (O)	T Statistics	P Values
Student-Teacher Relationship → Student Engagement	0.386	5.697	0.000
Students' Perceived Teacher Attitude → Student Engagement	0.377	4.962	0.000

Both path coefficients were positive and significant ($p < .001$). This means that the more positively students perceived their teacher's attitude, and the better the quality of the student-teacher relationship, the higher students' engagement in EFL classes tended to be. Student-Teacher Relationship showed a slightly larger coefficient than Students' Perceived Teacher Attitude.

When both variables were analyzed together, the model explained 50.5% of the variance in Student Engagement ($R^2 = 0.505$; R^2 Adjusted = 0.500). The effect size (f^2) values indicate that both predictors made a small-to-medium individual contribution, with Student-Teacher Relationship slightly higher ($f^2 = 0.139$) than Students' Perceived Teacher Attitude ($f^2 = 0.132$),

as presented in Table 9. An Inner VIF value of 2.177 for both paths indicates no serious multicollinearity ($VIF < 5.00$), so both predictors could be analyzed together without meaningful estimation bias.

Table 9. Coefficient of Determination and Effect Size

Construct / Path	R ²	R ² Adjusted	f ²
Student Engagement (overall model)	0.505	0.500	-
Student-Teacher Relationship → Student Engagement	-	-	0.139
Students' Perceived Teacher Attitude → Student Engagement	-	-	0.132

In summary, the PLS-SEM results answer the three research questions of this study, as presented in Table 10.

Table 10. Summary of Answers to the Research Questions

Research Question	Answer
Predictive relationship between Teacher Attitude and Student Engagement	Positive and significant effect ($\beta = 0.377$, $t = 4.962$, $p < .001$)
Predictive relationship between Student-Teacher Relationship and Student Engagement	Positive and significant effect ($\beta = 0.386$, $t = 5.697$, $p < .001$)
Combined influence of both variables on Student Engagement	Explains 50.5% of the variance in Student Engagement ($R^2 = 0.505$)

Discussion

The findings of this study show a clear pattern: both Students' Perceived Teacher Attitude and Student-Teacher Relationship had a positive and significant effect on Student Engagement. This means that student engagement in this study was shaped not only by lesson content or students' personal willingness to learn, but also by teacher-related factors experienced directly by students in the classroom.

The first finding shows that when students perceived their teacher as enthusiastic, fair, patient, supportive, and committed, they tended to participate more, feel more encouraged, and become more engaged in English learning activities (Mainhard et al., 2022; Zhang, 2022). This finding is consistent with research showing that perceived teacher support is positively associated with student engagement in EFL learning, with students' motivational processes helping explain this relationship (Liang et al., 2026; Zhang & Hu, 2025). This finding is also consistent with the student engagement framework of Fredricks et al. (2004), which covers behavioral, emotional, and cognitive dimensions, and is supported by Prananto et al. (2025), who found that teacher support can influence all three dimensions simultaneously. The result further reinforces Massri (2020) and Dörnyei (2001), who emphasized the role of teacher enthusiasm and encouragement in motivating students to learn a language.

The second finding shows that Student-Teacher Relationship had a slightly stronger effect than Teacher Attitude. This can be explained through Pianta et al. (2012), who describe

the teacher-student relationship as an emotional and interpersonal bond that shapes students' classroom behavior and learning experience. When students feel safe and supported, they tend to be more willing to ask questions, express ideas, and stay involved in class activities, particularly in EFL learning, where students often feel uncertain or afraid of making mistakes (Alazeer & Ahmed, 2023). This interpretation is supported by research indicating that positive teacher-student relationships are associated with greater student engagement in EFL classrooms (Gan, 2021; Maulidiyah, 2021). This finding reinforces Quin (2017) regarding the importance of relationship quality for student engagement and learning outcomes.

When both variables were examined together, they jointly explained 50.5% of the variance in Student Engagement, showing that the two factors complement rather than compete with one another in shaping engagement. This pattern can also be understood through Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985), particularly the psychological need for relatedness, which is closely tied to the quality of the student-teacher relationship. When students feel that their teacher knows, respects, and supports them, they are more likely to remain engaged even when the material feels difficult (Kahveci, 2023).

This finding becomes even more meaningful in the specific context of SMKN 01 Bombana, a vocational school where many students may not immediately see English as connected to their future jobs. In this setting, a warm student-teacher relationship may serve as an early bridge that draws students into the lesson before they fully recognize the practical value of English for their careers. At the same time, a positive teacher attitude remains important for sustaining students' enthusiasm and comfort in learning.

An interesting aspect of these findings is that Student-Teacher Relationship showed a slightly stronger effect on Student Engagement than Students' Perceived Teacher Attitude, even though the difference between the two path coefficients was small. This pattern is not entirely surprising given the background of this study, which already noted that teacher-student interaction at SMKN 01 Bombana tends to be warm and friendly. Nevertheless, the finding remains meaningful because it shows, at the structural level, that relationship quality was slightly more influential than attitude alone. In a vocational EFL setting where students may not immediately see English as central to their vocational identity, students may first need to feel accepted, respected, and supported by their teacher before they become more academically engaged. Visible teacher attitude and deeper relationship quality appear to work together, but the student's experience of relational safety may serve as a particularly important bridge to engagement in this context.

It is also worth noting that the R^2 value of 0.505 indicates that 49.5% of the variance in Student Engagement remains unexplained by the two variables examined in this study. This should not be viewed only as a limitation; rather, it reflects the fact that student engagement is a complex, multidimensional phenomenon (Symonds et al., 2025). Teacher attitude and the teacher-student relationship are clearly important, but they are not the only factors that shape engagement. Other factors, such as students' intrinsic motivation, self-confidence, perceived relevance of English to future careers, peer influence, and classroom tasks, may also play a role. In this sense, the present model is meaningful without claiming to explain the entire phenomenon, leaving room for future studies to build a more complete understanding of engagement in vocational school settings.

Theoretically, this study supports the view that student engagement in EFL learning is relational and emotional, not merely cognitive or instructional. It strengthens the relevance of Fredricks et al. (2004), Pianta et al. (2012), and Deci and Ryan (1985) in explaining how



engagement develops through teacher-related experiences in the classroom, and adds to the literature by showing that teacher attitude and student-teacher relationship should be examined together, especially in vocational school contexts where the perceived relevance of English may already be a challenge. Practically, the results suggest that EFL teachers, especially in vocational schools, should not focus only on delivering material, but should also build a supportive attitude and a warm relationship with students, while connecting English learning to students' vocational context, such as workplace communication, job interviews, and technical vocabulary (Tharapos et al., 2023). At the school level, these findings suggest that student engagement in EFL learning should be treated as both a pedagogical and a relational concern; school-based policies should support teachers in creating a classroom climate where students feel respected, encouraged, and safe to participate, for instance through training or reflective discussion on supportive communication, fair classroom treatment, and relationship-building strategies.

This study has several limitations. First, it was conducted in only one vocational school, namely SMKN 01 Bombana, so the findings cannot be generalized to all vocational schools or all EFL classrooms in Indonesia, since different schools may have different student characteristics, teacher practices, and institutional cultures. Second, the study used a quantitative design based on students' questionnaire responses, which, while useful for testing relationships among variables, could not fully capture the deeper classroom experiences behind students' perceptions, such as specific teacher behaviors or emotional moments that shaped engagement. Third, the cross-sectional design used means that data were collected at a single point in time, so the results show statistical relationships but cannot fully explain long-term causal processes, as engagement may change across semesters depending on teacher consistency and classroom experience. Fourth, the study focused on only two teacher-related predictors; although these explained 50.5% of the variance in Student Engagement, other important factors, such as intrinsic motivation, English self-efficacy, language anxiety, and peer support, were not included in the model and should be examined in future research (Symonds et al., 2025).

Future research can build on this study by extending the model rather than repeating the same variables in the same context. Since Teacher Attitude and Student-Teacher Relationship explained 50.5% of Student Engagement, further studies could examine additional factors that may account for the remaining variance, such as English learning motivation, language anxiety, self-efficacy, peer support, classroom climate, teacher feedback, and students' perceived relevance of English to their vocational future. Future studies could also employ designs that provide deeper or broader evidence: a mixed-methods design combining survey data with interviews or classroom observation could explain how teacher attitude and relationship quality are experienced in daily classroom interaction, a longitudinal design could examine whether these influences remain stable across semesters, and comparative studies across different vocational programs, or between rural and urban or vocational and general secondary schools, could help clarify whether the pattern found at SMKN 01 Bombana reflects a local context or a broader pattern in vocational EFL education.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that Students' Perceived Teacher Attitude and Student-Teacher Relationship positively predict Student Engagement in EFL classes at SMKN 01 Bombana. Students tend to be more behaviorally, emotionally, and cognitively engaged when they perceive their teacher as enthusiastic, fair, patient, supportive, and committed, and when the

student-teacher relationship is characterized by warmth, respect, safety, and encouragement. Student-Teacher Relationship emerged as the slightly stronger predictor, while both variables together provided a meaningful explanation of student engagement.

In the vocational-school context, these findings indicate that improving student engagement requires attention to both teacher attitude and relationship quality. EFL teachers should therefore cultivate a supportive classroom presence, build trusting relationships, and connect English learning to students' vocational needs. Future research should examine additional personal, social, and contextual factors and use broader or longitudinal designs to clarify how student engagement develops across settings and over time.

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