

A correlational study on teacher-student relationships and students' engagement in EFL classes

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Abstract

This study aims to investigate the levels of teacher-student relationships (TSR) and student engagement (SE) within an English as a Foreign Language (EFL) context among general English (GE) level students enrolled in an English course at a private language school in Indonesia. This study also seeks to examine the correlation between TSR and SE in EFL classes. In finding the correlation between TSR and SE in EFL classes, this study attempts to fill a gap in the existing literature by employing a quantitative method, specifically a survey-based approach, to systematically collect and analyze data from a diverse pool of participants. The choice of quantitative method is grounded in the need for standardized data collection and analysis to determine the degree of relationship between TSR and SE among GE-level students. By administering surveys to GE-level students, this study seeks to gain insights into their perceptions of TSR and its impact on their engagement in EFL classes. This study found that the TSR and the SE levels were high. Moreover, this study found a statistically significant positive correlation between TSR and SE. The findings of this research endeavor to provide valuable insights into how TSR can catalyze SE and subsequently enhance language proficiency among EFL learners in Indonesia, with implications for both theory and practice in EFL education.

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1. Introduction

1.1. Background information

In the field of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) education, the significance of teacher-student relationships (TSR) and student engagement (SE) has garnered increasing attention. A crucial aspect of an excellent education is generally acknowledged to be good teacher-student relationships (Jederlund et al., 2023). TSR, characterized by mutual trust, guidance, and support between educators and learners, is pivotal in shaping the teaching and learning experience (Syahabuddin et al., 2020). A positive TSR impacts student learning, including motivation, academic performance, and self-efficacy (Wanders et al., 2020). Students who formed a deep emotional connection with their teachers showed higher motivation, academic engagement, and better academic performance (Mahfud., 2023). On the other hand, in instances

of a negative relationship, classroom procedures may serve as a moderating factor in addressing students' behavioral issues. Put differently, kids who engage in inappropriate relationships with teachers and have problems in the classroom face challenges like dropping out, experiencing rejection, feeling unaccepted by their peers, and exhibiting more unsuitable behaviors (Gan, 2021).

Student engagement is among the finest indicators of academic achievement and personal development (Abubakar et al., 2017). In general, student engagement refers to a dedication to meeting learning objectives and active involvement in various academic activities (Ginting, 2021). Kourieos et al. (2013) found that an effective language teacher now considers their students' peculiarities, language anxiety, talents, and interests while creating learning environments rather than using a dictatorial and authoritarian approach to teaching. Engaged students demonstrate effective collaboration and innovative application of knowledge, leading to enhanced language proficiency (Saeed et al., 2012). On the other hand, disengagement occurs when students need to recognize the importance of learning, education is not given priority, and studying is seen merely as a means to attain a degree (Li, 2022). According to Xue (2023), disengaged students act passively, simply following instructions without actively participating in discussions, interacting with English language materials, or responding to attempts to customize lessons to their interests, goals, and preferences. In conclusion, researching student engagement is crucial to enhancing awareness among both students and teachers regarding their level of involvement in the classroom.

1.2. Research gap

Recognizing the vital role of TSR in promoting SE, this study aims to investigate the correlation between TSR and SE among General English (GE) level students enrolling in an English course in a private language school in Indonesia. The importance of this study lies in addressing a gap in the existing literature, particularly within the Indonesian context. While studies abroad have explored the relationship between TSR and SE (Li et al., 2024; Mallik, 2023; Martin et al., 2019; Pérez-Salas et al., 2021; Zhang, 2023), these kinds of studies are still limited in Indonesia that focus on senior high school students as the participants (Mahfud & Ode Riniati, 2023b; Suryani, 2018; Yusriyah et al., 2021). By delving into this topic, the researcher aims to provide valuable insights into how TSR can catalyze SE and subsequently enhance language proficiency among EFL learners in Indonesia. However, the specific dynamics of TSR within the Indonesian EFL context warrant further investigation. By focusing on GE-level students in an English course, the researcher aims to shed light on the TSR in a setting where students interact with multiple teachers, potentially influencing their engagement levels differently (Martin et al., 2019). Research on TSR and SE primarily occurs in school settings. However, studies conducted within English courses involving students with diverse abilities remained inadequate.

Furthermore, the choice of quantitative method, precisely a survey-based approach, is grounded in the need for systematic data collection and analysis. A quantitative approach is employed to ascertain the presence and extent of a relationship among two or more variables among a specific group of people (Apuke, 2017). This aligns with the objectives of our study, which seeks to establish a correlation between TSR and SE among GE-level students in an English course. The rationale for selecting the survey method stems from its efficiency in gathering large-scale data from a diverse pool of participants. With those considerations, using questionnaires is considered appropriate because it is by the principle of the quantitative method that a structured format facilitates standardized data collection, organization, and

analysis (Kuphanga, 2024). By administering surveys to GE-level students, the researcher can understand their perceptions of TSR and its impact on their engagement in EFL classes.

This research is expected to benefit several parties, such as students, teachers, researchers, and the institution. Students can benefit from understanding the correlation between their relationship with teachers and their engagement in the learning process. This knowledge can empower students to actively seek supportive relationships with their teachers, leading to increased motivation, participation, and, ultimately, better learning outcomes. As for the teachers, the research outcomes can offer valuable guidance to teachers on the significance of fostering positive relationships with their students in EFL classrooms. Teachers can better understand how their interactions with students influence students' engagement levels, allowing them to adopt strategies to enhance TSR and promote student engagement. The study results can contribute to the literature on teacher-student relationships and student engagement in EFL settings. Researchers can use these findings to explore the complex dynamics of TSR and its impact on student learning and well-being. Lastly, educational institutions can benefit from the research findings by incorporating insights into teacher-student relationships and student engagement into their professional development programs for teachers. By prioritizing the development of positive TSR and student engagement strategies, institutions can create supportive learning environments that facilitate student success.

1.3. Research objectives

This study examines the impact of TSR on SE in EFL. That is, this study intends:

1. To explore the TSR level in EFL classes.
2. To explore the SE level in EFL classes.
3. To explore the correlation between TSR and SE in EFL classes.

1.4. Research questions

By considering the rationale of the research stated above, the following research questions were addressed in the present study:

1. What is the TSR level in EFL classes?
2. What is the SE level in EFL classes?
3. What is the correlation between TSR and SE in EFL classes?

2. Literature review

2.1. Teacher-student relationships in ELT

The essence of educational communication lies in establishing strong relationships, serving as the bedrock for practical instruction, and facilitating students' learning journeys (Meng, 2021). According to Baker et al. (2008), numerous beneficial educational outcomes are linked to the affective quality of children's relationships with their teachers. Klem (2004) found that students who experience nurturing and encouraging interpersonal relationships at school report higher academic satisfaction and good attitudes and values. Bankole (2011) emphasized that the level of trust between students and teachers significantly influences students' attitudes toward learning and their overall well-being. Similarly, Thompson (2018) highlighted in an Indian setting that mutual respect between teachers and students correlates with improved behavior and learning outcomes. Marvi (2023) shed light on how teachers' attitudes toward diversity

profoundly impact the learning environment and students' experiences in ELT classrooms. Prioritizing diversity fosters inclusivity and empowers students from diverse backgrounds to actively participate in learning (Mahfud et al., 2023; Ork et al., 2024). Understanding the dynamics of diverse TSRs is pivotal for creating a supportive and inclusive learning environment (Serin, 2017).

Effective communication between students and teachers constitutes another critical aspect of TSR in ELT. When students feel at ease communicating with their teachers and trust that their concerns will be heard and addressed, it cultivates a robust bond of trust and rapport (Elsbree, 2019). This trust encourages students to seek assistance, enhancing their academic success and overall well-being (Pérez-Salas et al., 2021). Positive attitudes towards diversity among teachers significantly shape the learning environment and contribute to students' sense of belonging and empowerment (Abdullah, 2022). Additionally, a strong correlation exists between students' enthusiasm for learning English and the quality of their relationships with their teachers (Yusriyah et al., 2021). Marvi (2023) emphasized that teachers who value diversity create inclusive classrooms where all students feel respected and supported. Effective communication channels between students and teachers foster TSR and drive students' academic success (Asrar et al., 2018). When students feel safe and supported by their teachers, they are more likely to engage actively in learning (Maghfirah, 2019).

Studies on TSR have been conducted in diverse contexts, including Pakistan (Afzal et al., 2023), Indonesia (Kurniatillah et al., 2022; Mahfud et al., 2023), Sweden (Jederlund & von Rosen, 2023). Afzal et al. (2023) employed a quantitative method in eight public and private universities in Lahore, involving 800 students, and found a significant positive impact of teacher-student solid relationships on academic achievement. Conversely, Kurniatillah et al. (2022) conducted a qualitative study; the participants were English teachers who teach ninth-grade students at 176 Junior High Schools in Jakarta, Indonesia. This study indicates successful interactions between teachers and students, contributing to an engaging classroom environment. Mahfud et al. (2023) conducted a qualitative research study among elementary school students in West Java, Indonesia, demonstrating that an environment favorable to learning is fostered by educators who build friendly, sympathetic, and courteous relationships with their students. Jederlund et al. (2023) conducted a mixed-method study involving 198 middle-school students and 184 secondary-school students attending five public schools in a big city county, revealing the importance of students' self-efficacy beliefs in impacting their academic achievement across different domains.

2.2. Students' engagement in ELT

One of the better indicators of learning and personal growth is typically seen to be student engagement Carini et al., (2006). The literature on student engagement underscores its historical emphasis on enhancing academic performance, fostering positive behaviors, and nurturing a sense of belonging to improve student retention in educational institutions (Taylor & Parsons, 2011). Across diverse educational settings and levels, student engagement, comprising cognitive, emotional, and behavioral dimensions, is recognized as pivotal for achieving academic goals effectively (Trowler, 2010). Cognitive engagement is identified as strategies employed by students in doing and finishing the learning tasks. Emotional engagement refers to students' emotional responses to learning activities. These responses might be feelings of interest, boredom, or anxiety. Finally, behavioral engagement refers to the student's participation in academic and extracurricular activities. These types of engagement can be seen in research findings conducted in Indonesia. Research by Susanti (2020) reveals

that engaged students actively participate in class discussions, utilizing their senses and emotions to aid learning outcomes. Moreover, the involvement of teachers in selecting appropriate strategies and teaching methods is crucial for fostering classroom engagement and sustaining student interest in the learning process (Firdaus & Fatimah, 2021).

Similarly, Marcus et al. (2021) in Malaysia identify the significant roles of instructors, peers, course design, and personal values in fostering positive emotional engagement among students. Meanwhile, studies in Bhutan by Tshering et al. (2024) underscore the efficacy of active learning strategies in enhancing behavioral engagement, mainly through increased student participation and expression of thoughts. In Indonesia, Sesmiyanti (2016) emphasizes the importance of cognitive engagement, focusing on students' active involvement in learning tasks that stimulate their thinking and knowledge acquisition. Additionally, Latipah (2020) conducted a qualitative study; the participants were five students in a private school in Indonesia. This study provides insights into behavioral and emotional engagement among students, demonstrating their enthusiasm and commitment to learning tasks, particularly in English language acquisition. Silvola et al. (2021) emphasize the holistic improvement of academic performance achieved through a well-rounded combination of behavioral, cognitive, and emotional engagement factors, underlining their interconnectedness with educational standards. Meanwhile, Torto (2020) conducted a quantitative study involving 61 English language teachers in the Cape Coast metropolis in Ghana, revealing that while all three dimensions of student engagement were present, the emotional dimension emerged as the predominant factor.

Further afield, Jabulisile and Sphelele (2023), in the African context, advocates for collaborative activities to foster positive interdependence, interaction, and the development of self-confidence and interpersonal skills among learners. Meanwhile, Aliabadi and Weisi (2023) conducted a qualitative study to examine the strategies employed by 10 Iranian EFL teachers to enhance learners' engagement, highlighting the significance of various motivational techniques, self-assessment practices, and the promotion of learner autonomy to foster behavioral emotional, and cognitive engagement effectively. This broad perspective recognizes the diverse nature of student engagement and its broader impact on students' overall educational experiences and outcomes. Therefore, identifying the interplay between various dimensions of student engagement is essential for designing effective educational interventions that promote holistic development and academic success.

2.3. The impact of TSR on SE in EFL

The impact of TSR on SE in EFL classrooms is a critical area of research, often yielding significant insights into effective teaching practices and student learning outcomes. Many studies have demonstrated the pivotal role of TSR in influencing students' enthusiasm, academic achievement, and overall engagement in the learning process (AlMunawwarah, 2018; Rost, 2006; Sirait, 2016). In the Indonesian context, AlMunawwarah (2018) and Sirait (2016) found that Positive TSR characterized by warmth, encouragement, and effective communication fosters an environment conducive to active student participation and collaboration. When teachers establish supportive relationships with their students, it cultivates trust and rapport, laying the foundation for meaningful learning experiences (Koca, 2016). Li (2022)), in the Chinese context, found that teachers who demonstrate interest and passion for teaching, provide more academic and emotional support, and actively work to develop warm, compassionate relationships with their students can all help students become more engaged in the classroom.

Furthermore, such relationships empower students to take risks, express their ideas, and actively participate in classroom activities (Putri et al., 2021). Conversely, a strained or hostile TSR can impede students' engagement and diminish their learning motivation (Rost, 2006). When students feel disrespected or undervalued by their teachers, it can lead to disengagement and apathy towards learning (Nayir, 2017). In the Indonesian context, Yusriyah et al. (2021) found that a lack of enthusiasm from students can render the classroom environment dull and uninspiring, hindering effective teaching and learning processes. Therefore, nurturing positive TSR is essential for creating an engaging and conducive learning environment where students feel motivated and empowered to participate actively in their education (Williams, 2011).

The correlation between TSR and SE in EFL classrooms has been a subject of considerable scholarly inquiry. Kurthen (2014) conducted a mixed-method study examining the factors impacting classroom interaction by analyzing 320 class observations at a major undergraduate college in the U.S. Midwest. This study found a strong positive relationship between TSR and SE, indicating that the quality of TSR significantly influences students' levels of engagement. When teachers establish supportive and encouraging relationships with their students, it fosters a sense of belonging and investment in learning. Students who feel valued and respected by their teachers are more likely to actively participate in classroom activities, ask questions, and collaborate with their peers (Kansil et al., 2022). This active participation signifies a deeper level of engagement and promotes a more dynamic and interactive learning environment (Abdullah et al., 2012).

Moreover, Katiandagho et al. (2022) conducted a study in grades 10, 11, and 12 of a private high school in North Sulawesi, Indonesia. This study found that students' self-confidence is crucial in shaping their engagement levels in EFL classrooms. Students with high self-confidence exhibit greater ease in communicating and sharing their opinions, contributing to the overall effectiveness of classroom learning (Saidah, 2024).

Conversely, students who need more confidence in their abilities may hesitate to participate actively in class discussions or activities, limiting their engagement and learning opportunities. Students' sense of responsibility and ownership over their learning contributes significantly to their engagement levels in EFL classrooms (Dizaj et al., 2016). Responsible students demonstrate self-control, actively engage in classroom activities, and collaborate effectively with their peers (Sitorus et al., 2022). Solikhah et al. (2023) conducted a qualitative study; the participants were one teacher and three students at an Islamic senior secondary school in Pekalongan City in Central Java, Indonesia. Encouraging students to take ownership of their learning process through active participation in class discussions, seeking out knowledge, and reflecting on their experiences fosters a culture of accountability and engagement, as demonstrated by this study. The relationship between TSR and SE in EFL classrooms is multifaceted and complex, encompassing teacher-student rapport, student self-confidence, and a sense of responsibility. Therefore, fostering positive TSR and empowering students to take ownership of their learning are essential strategies for enhancing engagement and promoting academic success in EFL classrooms.

3. Methodology

3.1. Research design

This study employs a survey-based research design to analyze the phenomenon through numeric opinions, trends, and attitudes within the sample population (Creswell, 2014).

Utilizing this method enables the establishment of correlations and the identification of patterns and trends within the data. Specifically, the quantitative method is applied to investigate the correlation of TSR on SE. This approach aims to give researchers a fresh understanding of the dynamics among Indonesian GE-level students. Previous studies exploring TSR and SE have utilized various methodologies, including quantitative (Afzal et al., 2023; Kwabena et al.; Li et al., 2024), qualitative methods (Culver, 2020; Mahfud., 2023), mixed-methods (Estes et al., 2021; Mallik, 2023; Syahabuddin et al., 2020). Given the nature of investigating the correlation between TSR and SE, a survey emerges as the most suitable method, especially considering the time constraints of this research. Moreover, selecting a quantitative approach aligns with the researcher's positivist paradigm, which assumes that a single tangible reality exists—one that can be understood, identified, and measured (Park et al., 2020).

3.2. Samples and sampling techniques

Table 1. Participants' Demographic Information

Demographic category	Subcategory	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	29	35.80%
	Female	52	64.20%
Age	10-15	39	48.10%
	16-20	42	51.85%

The study's participants are English course students in Yogyakarta, Indonesia, targeting those enrolled in the GE level. The GE level is one of the levels in a private English language school in Yogyakarta, at the GE level attended by students consisting of GE classes, Elementary GE, Pre-Intermediate GE, Intermediate GE, and Post-Intermediate Level GE. Students who enroll in GE lessons come from 33 different high schools in Yogyakarta. The selection criteria for participants were based on several factors. Firstly, participants were chosen because they had been relatively underrepresented in previous research, particularly within the Indonesian context. Second, consideration was given to the age demographic of the students. Most of the participants were high school-aged students, as this demographic often experiences unique dynamics in teacher-student relationships and engagement within the classroom setting (Gouda et al., 2019). A purposive sampling technique was used in this study to select the participants based on some criteria. This sampling technique allowed the researchers to select participants who were relevant to the focus of the study. Eighty-one participants participated in this study. There were 29 males (35.8%) and 52 females (64.2%). The minimum age of the participants was 12, and the maximum was 20.

3.3. Instruments

The data collection method employed in this study utilized questionnaires as the primary instrument. These questionnaires were adapted from two existing studies (Mallik, 2023; Susanti, 2020). The questionnaire comprised two sub-components of TSR and students' engagement: the first section, encompassing seven statements (numbered 1-7), aimed at gauging TSR levels in EFL classes, adapted from Mallik (2023); meanwhile, the second section, comprising ten statements (numbered 8-17), focused on evaluating SE levels in EFL

classes, adapted from Susanti (2020). Given the target demographic and ensuring understanding clarity, the questionnaires were prepared in Indonesian. This approach aimed to facilitate respondents' comprehension and enable them to provide responses that accurately reflected their experiences without encountering ambiguity. Each question in the questionnaire utilized a Likert scale, ranging from 1 to 4. Participants were instructed to assign a score corresponding to their level of agreement, with 4 indicating "strongly agree," 3 for "agree," 2 for "disagree," and 1 for "strongly disagree." Notably, a neutral option was intentionally omitted to prevent respondents from selecting it when uncertain about their stance, thereby promoting more decisive responses.

3.4. Data collection procedures

The methodology employed in this study involved the distribution of questionnaires as the primary means of data collection. Initially, the researcher sought permission from the gatekeeper. After obtaining permission from the gatekeeper, the researcher contacted the teachers who teach students at the GE level and asked their permission to distribute the questionnaires to their classes. Subsequently, questionnaires were distributed to participants, facilitated by English teachers who shared Google Form links via WhatsApp groups and direct messages. In certain instances, to ensure questionnaire completion, the researcher personally attended English classes to administer the online surveys.

3.5. Data analysis

Table 2. The interpretation of the correlation

The value	Correlation level
0.00 to 0.24	Weak or no correlation
0.25 to 0.49	Moderate
0.50 to 0.74	Moderately strong
0.75 to 0.99	Strong
-1 or 1	Perfect

After the questionnaires were distributed, the data were downloaded into Microsoft Excel and subjected to analysis using SPSS. The data analysis followed the procedure done by Bon et al. (2022) in analyzing the relationships between variables. Descriptive analysis addressed RQ1 and RQ2, while correlation data analysis was employed to answer RQ3. In addition, the researchers used Pearson Product Moment Correlation to investigate the strength of the relationship between TSR and SE, and the interpretation can be seen in Table 2.

The detailed sequence of data collection and analysis will be illustrated in the following figure.

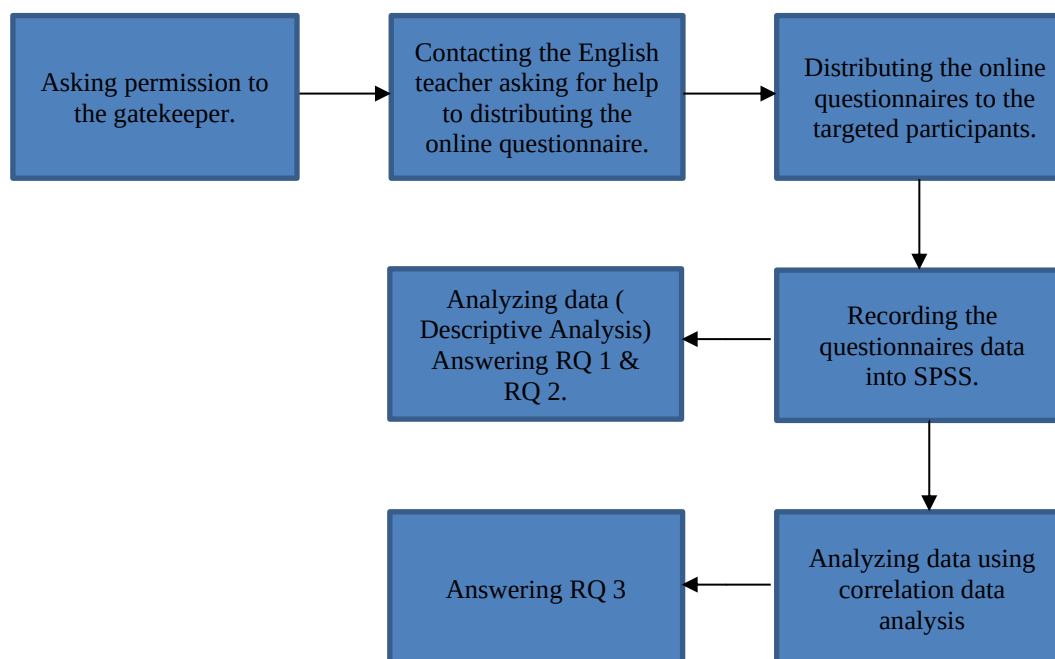


Figure 1. Sequence of data collection and analysis

3.6. Ethical consideration

When investigating the impact of TSR on SE in EFL classes, the researcher prioritizes several ethical considerations. These considerations adhere to four fundamental principles of research ethics: autonomy, anonymity, beneficence, and justice (María et al., 2012). Firstly, all participants were asked for their informed consent before participating in the study. They were provided with clear information regarding the study's objectives and procedures. Participants' names were omitted to ensure confidentiality and anonymity, and all data were kept private. The study began with an informed consent form presented on the initial page of the online survey, outlining participants' voluntary involvement.

Furthermore, questionnaire items have been translated into Bahasa Indonesia to accommodate participants and enhance their understanding of the survey. Respecting participants' autonomy and privacy is paramount throughout this study. The informed consent form explicitly states that participant confidentiality was upheld and that their information was not to be disclosed or published. As a token of appreciation, participants received a small gift. Moreover, the study's findings will implicitly benefit students, teachers, and other researchers, contributing valuable insights into TSR and SE levels and their correlation. This study is conducted with adherence to ethical standards, ensuring participants' rights and privacy are safeguarded while yielding meaningful contributions to the field.

4. Findings

4.1. What is the TSR level in EFL classes?

Table 3. Descriptive data of TSR

No	Items	Mean	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
			F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
1.	The teachers in my English class show a strong interest in helping us learn.	3.42	46	56.8	25	30.9	8	9.9	2	2.5
2.	I feel comfortable communicating with my English teacher outside of class time.	3.2	29	35.8	42	51.9	7	8.6	3	3.7
3.	My English teachers treat students fairly and respect our opinions.	3.6	53	65.4	26	32.1	0	0	2	2.5
4.	I feel more enthusiastic about learning English because of the good relationship with my teachers.	3.46	45	55.6	30	37	4	4.9	2	2.5
5.	My English teachers provide the necessary encouragement and support in learning English.	3.44	40	49.4	38	46.9	2	2.5	1	1.2
6.	My English teachers listen well when we have questions or problems.	3.56	49	60.5	29	35.8	2	2.5	1	1.2
7.	My English teachers value diversity in the classroom.	3.68	58	71.6	21	25.9	1	1.2	1	1.2

From the indication in the sequence of data collection, descriptive analysis was used to answer RQ1. The students' data were analyzed using descriptive analysis in SPSS. Table 3 shows the extent of students' level of TSR in EFL classes.

The sub-components of TSR were used to categorize and analyze the findings of TSR. The sub-components comprise teacher support and responsiveness, teacher interest and enthusiasm, and communication between students and teachers. Teacher support and responsiveness can be seen in questionnaire items 3 and 7. Teacher interest and enthusiasm can be seen in questionnaire items 1, 4, and 5. Finally, communication between students and teachers can be seen in questionnaire items 2 and 6. Each sub-component is explained in the following paragraphs.

Items number 3 and 7 had the highest mean score among participants. Item number 3, with a mean score of 3.6, stated, ‘My English teachers value diversity in the classroom’ and obtained the agreement of 79 (97,5%) participants. Another statement from item number 7, ‘My English teachers treat students fairly and respect our opinions.’ obtained a mean score of 3.68, with 79 (97,5%) participants. Based on statements 3 and 7, students highly perceived a positive impact of teachers' attitudes on the learning process.

Items 1, 4, and 5 discuss their interest and enthusiasm for learning English. In statement number 1, ‘The teachers in my English class show a strong interest in helping us learn,’ with a mean score of 3.42 and agreement from 71 (87,7%) participants. Item number 4 stated, ‘I feel more enthusiastic about learning English because of the good relationship with my teachers’ obtained agreement from 75 (92,6%) participants. Item number 5, with the statement ‘My English teachers provide the necessary encouragement and support in learning English.’ obtained a mean score of 3,44 and agreement from 78 (96,3%) participants.

Items number 2 and 6 discuss the communication between students and their teachers. Item number 2, with the statement ‘I feel comfortable communicating with my English teacher outside of class time,’ obtained agreement from 71 (87,7%) participants. Then, the statement of item number 6 was, ‘My English teachers listen well when we have questions or problems.’ It obtained agreement from the 78 (96,3%) participants. Such findings underscore the significance of effective communication channels in fostering TSR within EFL classes. When students feel comfortable communicating with their teachers during and outside of class time and have confidence that their questions will be listened to and addressed with attention, it indicates a strong bond of trust and rapport between students and teachers.

4.2. What is the SE level in EFL classes?

Table 4. Descriptive data of SE

No	Items	Mean	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
			F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
8.	I have the opportunity to participate in class.	3.57	49	60.5	30	37.5	1	1.2	1	1.2
9.	I actively answer questions from the teacher in class.	2.94	20	24.7	39	48.1	19	23.5	3	3.7
10.	I enjoy working together with my friends in class.	3.48	46	56.8	30	37	3	3.7	2	2.5
11.	I ask questions when I don't understand the material presented by the teacher.	3.16	29	35.8	38	46.9	12	14.8	2	2.5

12. I am eager to do the tasks in class.	3.05	26	32.1	35	43.2	18	22.2	2	2.5
13. I am eager to attend class regularly.	3.22	33	40.7	35	43.2	11	13.6	2	2.5
14. I am confident expressing my ideas in class.	3.04	26	32.1	36	44.4	15	18.5	4	4.9
15. I help each other in class.	3.49	48	59.3	27	33.3	4	4.9	2	2.5
16. I enthusiastically carry out instructions given by the teacher.	3.33	35	43.2	39	48.1	6	7.4	1	1.2
17. I am responsible for the tasks in class.	3.37	41	50.6	31	38.3	7	8.6	2	2.5

As can be seen in Table 4, the data reveals that the overall mean is 3.26, suggesting a high level of SE within EFL classes (Upura et al., 2023). The results shown are similar to the research of Dincer et al. (2019), whose study explored Self-Determination and Classroom Engagement of EFL Learners through a mixed-method study; the participants were freshmen EFL students in Turkey. Their research revealed that most students have positive motivational experiences in their EFL classes. It showed that positive experience reports were regularly accompanied by lower absenteeism rates, involvement, satisfaction with the classroom environment, and fundamental needs met.

The sub-components of SE were used to categorize and analyze the findings of SE. The sub-components align with the types of SE, i.e. cognitive, emotional, and behavioral engagements. Cognitive engagement can be seen in questionnaire items 11, 12, 13, 15, 16, and 17. Emotional engagement can be seen in questionnaire items 10 and 14. Finally, behavioral engagement can be seen in questionnaire items 8, 9, and 14. Each sub-component is explained in the following paragraphs.

Item number 11, with the statement ‘I ask questions when I do not understand the material presented by the teacher,’ obtained agreement from 67 (82,7%) participants and a mean score of 3.16. Item number 12, with the statement ‘I am eager to do the tasks in class,’ obtained agreement from 61 (76,5%) participants and a mean score of 3.05. Additionally, item number 13, with the statement ‘I am eager to attend class regularly,’ obtained agreement from 68 (83,9%) participants; the mean score for this statement was 3.22. Items 15, 16, and 17, with the statements ‘I help each other in class’ in number 15, obtained a mean score of 3.59, and 75 (92,6%) participants agreed. Item number 16, with the statement ‘I enthusiastically carry out the instructions given by the teacher,’ obtained a mean score of 3.33, and 74 (91,3%) participants agreed. Then, item 17, with the statement ‘I am responsible for tasks in class,’ obtained a mean score of 3.37, and 72 (88,9%) participants agreed.

Item number 10, with the statement ‘I enjoy working with my friends in class,’ obtained agreement from 76 (93,8%) participants and a mean score of 3.48. Moreover, item number 14,

with the statement ‘I am confident expressing my ideas in class,’ obtained agreement from 62 (76,5%) participants and a mean score of 3.04.

Item number 8 had the highest mean score (3.57), with the statement ‘I have the opportunity to participate in class’ obtained the agreement of 49 (60.5%) participants. From the result, most students at the GE level feel that they all have the same opportunity to participate in class activities. Active participation in class activities, such as asking questions, sharing opinions, and collaborating with peers, signifies engagement in the learning process (Abdullah et al., 2012). This statement resonates with the responses to other items in Table 2, collectively reflecting students' perceived involvement in classroom activities. Items 9, 10, and 14 are about their participation. Item number 9, with the statement ‘I actively answer questions from the teacher in class,’ obtained agreement from 59 (72,8%) participants. Then, the mean score was 2.94.

4.3. What is the correlation between TSR and SE in EFL classes?

Table 5. Correlation between TSR and SE

	tot_tsr	tot_se
tot_tsr	Pearson correlation	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	
	N	81
tot_se	Pearson correlation	.679***
	Sig. (2-tailed)	< .001
	N	81

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

Table 5 above shows that the correlation between TSR and SE in EFL classes was significantly positive, $r(79) = .67$, $p < .01$. This correlation suggests that as TSR increases, so does students' engagement in EFL classes.

5. Discussion

The data reveals an overall mean of 3.48, suggesting a high level of TSR as it closely approaches the score of 4.00 (Upara et al., 2023). These findings bear resemblance to previous research conducted by Afzal et al. (2023), Koenen et al. (2019), Sun et al. (2022), and Thornberg et al. (2022), which delved into TSR within an English classroom setting through various methods. Sun et al. (2022) conducted a study about the role of TSR on 497 Chinese EFL students. In their research, the positive impact of teacher-student rapport and teacher support on the affective learning of Chinese students was evident. Consequently, EFL students who foster positive relationships with their teachers and receive consistent support and guidance will likely achieve favorable learning outcomes.

The findings indicate that recognition of diversity is crucial, as classrooms are dynamic spaces where students bring a rich tapestry of backgrounds, characters, personalities, and behaviors (Abdullah, 2022). This finding was aligned with the study conducted by Marvi (2023), who emphasizes the importance of teachers' impressions and attitudes toward culturally diverse students in inspiring and improving their education. Prioritizing diversity fosters an inclusive environment where all students feel valued and empowered, thus enhancing their educational experiences. The prevalence of fair attitudes towards diversity among teachers significantly shapes the learning environment, fostering an atmosphere where students feel valued and respected regardless of their backgrounds. Understanding the dynamics of these relationships is paramount, given the complex interplay of cultural norms, diverse student backgrounds, and individual learning needs in Indonesia (Mahfud et al., 2023). Most students express satisfaction with their relationships with teachers, possibly due to the teachers' supportive stance towards diversity. While instructing a diverse student body presents challenges, classroom activities engaging students from varied cultural backgrounds could foster cohesion (Serin, 2017). This highlights the importance of educators treating children fairly and valuing their individuality.

The findings suggest a strong correlation between students' enthusiasm for learning English and the quality of their relationships with their teachers. This correlation underscores the crucial role of fostering supportive and nurturing teacher-student relationships in cultivating students' intrinsic motivation and eagerness to engage with the subject matter. As discussed by Yusriyah et al. (2021), enthusiasm for learning is manifested through various indicators such as facial expressions, excitement, and overall happiness during the learning process. It reflects students' positive attitudes towards learning English, indicating active involvement and genuine interest. Furthermore, Maghfirah (2019) found that students universally seek a sense of safety and security, both physically and emotionally, within the classroom environment. This sense of security is bolstered when students can rely on and trust their teachers. The impact of trusting student-teacher relationships can extend to various aspects, such as students' perception of the significance of school as a place they value and belong to, as well as their readiness to seek and embrace the assistance and support necessary for thriving in a demanding academic setting with high expectations (Bankole, 2011). Moreover, Pérez-Salas et al. (2021) mention that teachers who value students' ideas and prioritize their well-being can establish a strong bond with their students. Thus, nurturing these relationships might be essential for academic success and student well-being.

The findings indicate a strong bond of trust and rapport between students and teachers. This trust encourages students to seek assistance when facing challenges actively. This statement was supported by the findings of Elsbree (2019), which suggests that the quality of the student-teacher relationship significantly impacts students' inclination to seek help. Effective communication from teachers, whether verbal or non-verbal, is a crucial element that students need for success in their educational endeavors, driving them to improve their skills and abilities (Asrar et al., 2018). Based on the result and the similarity between the previous and present studies, students may perceive assistance from their teachers due to the positive communication dynamic they share.

The findings showing students' engagement and active class participation might be attributed to various factors, including self-confidence (Abdullah et al., 2012; Kurthen, 2014). Student self-confidence, defined as belief in one's abilities, strengths, and judgment, is significant in fostering classroom participation (Kansil et al., 2022). According to Katiandagho et al. (2022), highly self-confident students easily communicate and share opinions with peers and instructors without fear of making mistakes. Students who demonstrate confidence in their

abilities contribute to effective classroom learning and are more likely to attain maximum learning objectives. Conversely, students who lack self-confidence are prone to underperforming in class due to their lack of belief in their capabilities (Saidah, 2024). Therefore, the students' average level of engagement in the classroom might be because they were pretty confident with their English competence.

Additionally, the findings indicate that students generally concur with the importance of collaborative learning, active participation, and accountability in the classroom. This finding was in line with Yusriyah et al. (2021) on interest and enthusiasm in learning English among high school students in Indonesia, emphasizing these factors' significance in students' academic achievement. The students' agreement with these statements in this study suggests that students recognize the value of cooperation and mutual support among peers and the significance of following instructions diligently and taking ownership of their assigned tasks. This positive attitude towards collaborative learning and responsibility contributes to a conducive learning environment where students actively engage with the material and participate in their learning process.

Students need to be aware of their responsibilities in class to perform tasks the teacher assigns, for example, when the teacher gives instructions to work in groups or be responsible for their assignments. This statement aligned with the finding of Dizaj et al. (2016) that responsible students demonstrate self-control over both their internal and external environments; they actively engage in classroom activities, collaborate effectively with peers, complete assignments diligently, and possess accurate perceptions of their academic environment. These characteristics contribute significantly to their academic progress and overall success. Sitorus et al. (2022) state that students' low sense of responsibility is evident in their lack of awareness regarding personal task completion, preparation before studying, and engagement in group discussions. Students who want to become active learners must actively participate in class sessions, seek knowledge, participate in discussions, and reflect on their experiences (Solikhah., 2023). Along with improving language skills, this method fosters a sense of ownership and accountability for the learning process, which may be consistent with modern educational paradigms that strongly emphasize learner-centered and participatory methods.

This finding shows a strong positive correlation between TSR and SE in EFL classes, which aligns with previous research by Pérez-Salas et al. (2021). Their study involved 9th-grade students recruited from 38 public mainstream schools in the Biobio Region in Chile. They demonstrated a positive correlation between positive TSR and various dimensions of student engagement, further underlining the significance of fostering supportive teacher-student relationships in EFL settings. The study's results indicate that a high TSR correlates with increased levels of engagement. Moreover, Sánchez et al. (2013), Mahfud et al. (2023), Suryani (2018), and Yusuf et al. (2023) collectively emphasize the pivotal role of TSR in shaping students' attitudes toward learning and their academic success in the EFL context. These collective findings highlight the multifaceted impact of TSR on student engagement and academic outcomes, emphasizing the need for educators to prioritize cultivating positive relationships with their students to create an environment conducive to learning and success. Investing in TSR perhaps enhances student engagement and fosters a supportive and enriching educational experience for all students.

6. Conclusion and recommendation

This study investigated the three research questions: The TSR level in EFL classes, the SE level in EFL classes, and the correlation between TSR and SE in EFL classes. First, related to TSR level, this study found that the GE students' TSR level was high, with 3.48 as the mean score. This study also found that the level of SE was high, with 3.26 as the mean score. Moreover, this study found a high correlation between TSR and SE, suggesting a strong positive relationship between TSR and SE. This implies that students are likelier to engage in their learning activities when the TSR is positive and supportive. Further analysis revealed that specific aspects of TSR, such as teacher supportiveness, communication, and rapport, were particularly influential in fostering student engagement. These findings emphasize the importance of fostering positive teacher-student relationships to enhance SE and ultimately improve learning outcomes in EFL classrooms.

There are some implications based on the findings of this study. First, EFL teachers must know the significant role of teacher support and student engagement in language learning. Understanding that a supportive classroom environment and actively engaged students contribute positively to learning outcomes can guide instructors in designing more effective instructional strategies. Recognizing the correlation between teacher support and student engagement underscores the importance of fostering positive teacher-student relationships. Teachers should strive to create an environment where students feel valued, respected, and supported, as this can enhance both their engagement and overall learning experience.

Furthermore, the findings suggest that educational policymakers and curriculum developers can use the insights from this study to inform decisions related to EFL curriculum design and implementation. Emphasizing the importance of incorporating elements that promote TSR and SE can lead to more engaging and effective language learning experiences for students. In terms of contribution, this study adds to the existing literature on TSR and SE in the context of EFL classes. By investigating the relationship between these two variables, this research provides valuable insights into factors that influence language learning outcomes. The findings contribute to a deeper understanding of the dynamics within the EFL classroom and can inform practices aimed at enhancing teaching and learning in this context.

7. Limitations and future studies

While this study provides valuable insights, it has limitations. One limitation is the use of self-report measures to assess TSR and SE, which may be subject to bias. Future research could employ a combination of self-report measures and observational methods to provide a more comprehensive understanding of these constructs. This study focused on involving specific groups of EFL students in a particular context and population, which may limit the generalizability of the findings. Future studies could explore TSR and SE across different EFL settings and student populations to determine the extent to which the results hold in diverse contexts.

Furthermore, this study examined the correlation between teacher support and student engagement but did not explore potential mediating or moderating variables that may influence this relationship. Future research could investigate factors such as student motivation, classroom environment, and teaching strategies to better understand the mechanisms underlying the link between TSR and SE. In conclusion, while this study sheds light on the relationship between TSR and SE in EFL classes, further research is needed to address the

limitations and explore additional factors that may impact language learning outcomes. By continuing to investigate these critical variables, researchers can contribute to the ongoing effort to enhance teaching and learning in the field of EFL education.

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