

# Malay Language Teaching Strategies and their Impact on Students' Psychological Development

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## ABSTRACT

This study explores various teaching strategies for the Malay language and their impact on students' psychological development. In modern education, effective teaching methods play a crucial role in enhancing students' interest, motivation, and overall emotional and social well-being. Therefore, this study examines key approaches such as student-centered learning, interactive methods, online learning, and the integration of digital technology in teaching. Findings indicate that strategies such as student-centered learning and interactive methods, including collaborative learning and language games, enhance students' confidence and comprehension. These approaches create a more dynamic and engaging learning experience. Additionally, online learning, which incorporates digital materials and interactive applications, helps boost students' intrinsic motivation while allowing for more flexible self-paced learning. The study also reveals that teaching strategies affect not only academic performance but also students' psychological well-being. Methods that consider psychological factors can reduce academic stress, enhance self-confidence, and foster a positive attitude toward learning. Therefore, educators should adopt teaching strategies that align with technological advancements and students' psychological needs. A balanced approach will ensure that Malay language learning becomes more effective, engaging, and of high quality.

**Keywords:** Teaching strategies, Malay language, psychological development, student motivation, online learning.

## INTRODUCTION

Malay is the national language of Malaysia and plays a crucial role in the country's education system. It is not only used as a medium of communication in daily life but also serves as the primary language of instruction in schools and higher education institutions (Abdullah & Ismail, 2020). Therefore, the teaching and learning of the Malay language must be given serious attention to ensure that students acquire high language proficiency while enhancing their critical and creative thinking skills. To strengthen the teaching of the Malay language, educators have introduced various strategies to ensure the effectiveness of the learning process. These teaching strategies not only aim to improve students' understanding of grammar and vocabulary but also influence their psychological development, including motivation, self-confidence, and emotional and social well-being (Ahmad & Zainal, 2021). Previous research has shown that interactive learning strategies, such as cooperative methods and technology-assisted learning, can enhance students' interest and motivation in mastering the Malay language (Hassan & Rahman, 2022).

With the advancement of technology in education, digital-based learning strategies have become increasingly popular in Malay language instruction. A study by Ismail and Yusof (2023) found that the use of multimedia materials and interactive learning applications helps students grasp language concepts more easily and improves their communication skills. Additionally, online learning strategies implemented during the Movement Control Order (MCO) due to the COVID-19 pandemic have demonstrated that virtual learning can serve as an effective alternative in Malay language teaching (Kamaruddin & Aziz, 2024). However, the teaching of the Malay language still faces several challenges, particularly among students who lack interest in the subject. Mahmud

and Salleh (2020) stated that one of the factors contributing to students' disinterest in learning Malay is the teacher-centered and less interactive teaching methods. Students who are not actively engaged in learning tend to experience boredom and lose motivation to study. Therefore, innovative teaching strategies must be introduced to enhance student engagement in the classroom.

Beyond pedagogical aspects, students' psychological factors must also be considered in Malay language teaching. Othman and Hamzah (2021) emphasized that developmental psychology plays a significant role in determining a student's learning success. Their study found that students with high self-confidence are more likely to speak Malay fluently and communicate more effectively. In contrast, students who experience language anxiety or lack confidence often struggle to express themselves in the language. Furthermore, Rahim (2022) found that enjoyable teaching strategies, such as game-based learning and communicative approaches, help students overcome anxiety and boost their confidence in using Malay in daily life. Thus, teachers need to consider students' psychological aspects when planning teaching strategies to ensure they can learn in a more conducive environment that supports their mental development.

For international students learning Malay as a second language, mastering the language presents even greater challenges. Salleh and Ibrahim (2023) noted that experience-based teaching strategies, such as simulations and task-based learning, can help international students improve their language proficiency. Additionally, research by Yusof and Ahmad (2024) found a positive correlation between the use of appropriate learning strategies and students' motivation levels in learning Malay. Given this background, this study aims to analyze effective teaching strategies for the Malay language and their impact on students' psychological development. By understanding the relationship between teaching strategies and students' psychological factors, this study is expected to provide educators with guidance in designing more innovative and effective teaching methods.

## Problem Statement

The current teaching of the Malay language faces several challenges:

- **Ineffective Teaching Methods:** Many educators rely on traditional, teacher-centered approaches, leading to low student engagement, boredom, and diminished motivation (Hassan & Rahman, 2022; Ismail & Yusof, 2023).
- **Psychological Barriers:** Students with low self-confidence or high language anxiety struggle with speaking and writing, impacting their overall learning outcomes (Othman & Hamzah, 2021; Rahim, 2022).
- **Diverse Learner Needs:** Non-native and international students often require adaptive teaching strategies, as conventional approaches fail to address their linguistic and emotional challenges (Salleh & Ibrahim, 2023; Yusof & Ahmad, 2024).
- **Digital Learning Challenges:** The widespread adoption of online learning exposes students to digital fatigue, isolation, and reduced motivation (Ismail & Yusof, 2023).

These issues underscore the need to explore innovative, psychologically informed teaching strategies that enhance both language proficiency and students' psychological well-being.

## Research Gap

Current literature reveals several research gaps:

- **Limited Empirical Studies:** Most studies are descriptive, correlational, or survey-based, with minimal experimental or longitudinal evidence on causal relationships between teaching strategies and psychological outcomes (Yusof & Ahmad, 2024; Rahim, 2022).
- **Overemphasis on Traditional Methods:** Innovative approaches such as gamification, adaptive learning, and problem-based learning (PBL) are underexplored.
- **Contextual Limitations:** The psychological impact of teaching strategies on diverse learner groups, including special needs and international students, remains under-researched.
- **Integration of Psychological Theories:** Few studies apply contemporary theories such as SDT and CLT to guide teaching strategies that consider motivation, resilience, and cognitive load.

- Digital Learning Implications: There is a lack of research examining psychological outcomes in online learning environments post-pandemic.

Addressing these gaps is critical to develop evidence-based, effective, and psychologically supportive teaching strategies.

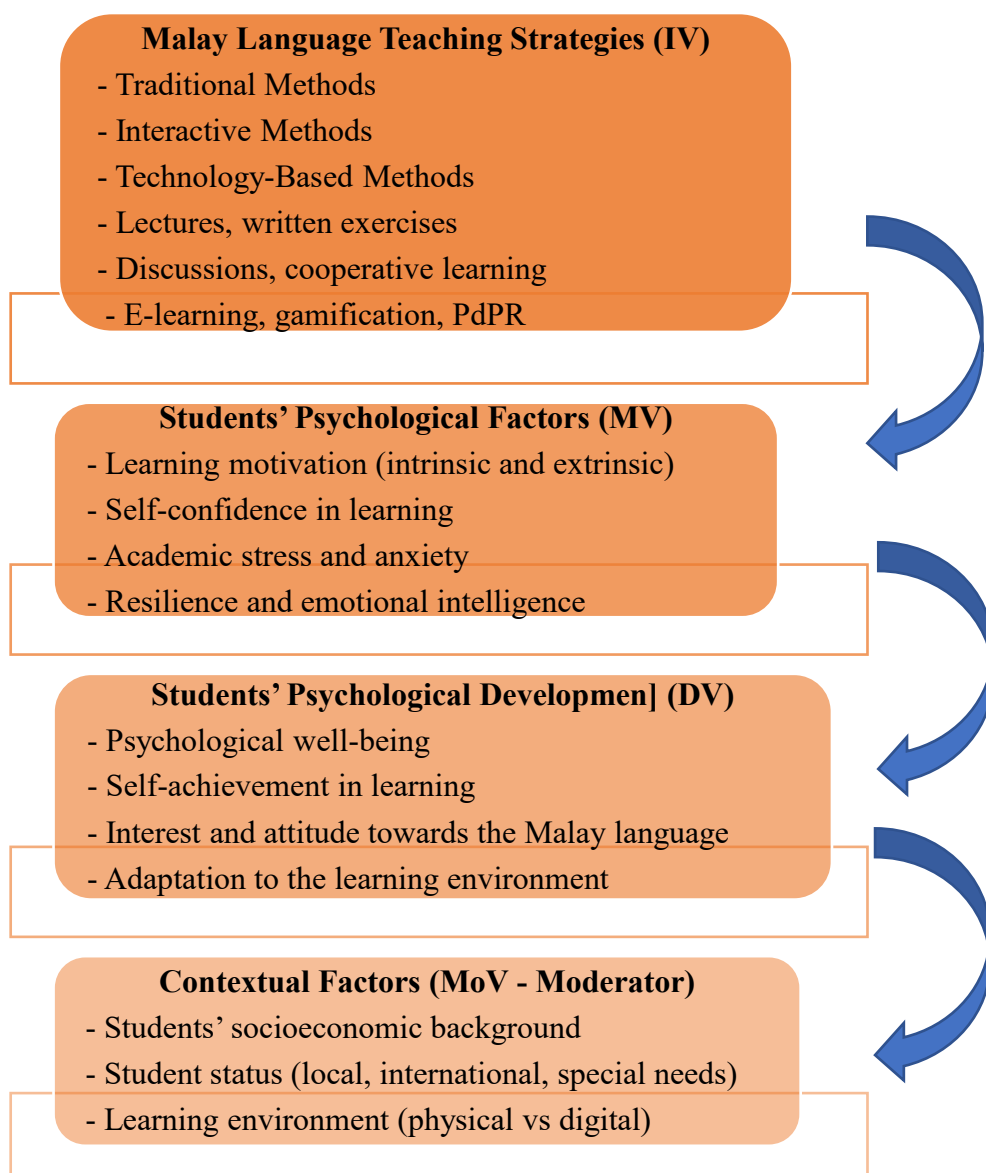
## Main Research Question

How do Malay language teaching strategies influence students' psychological development?

## Specific Research Questions

- Which Malay language teaching strategies most effectively enhance students' motivation and emotional well-being?
- How do these strategies affect resilience and emotional intelligence?
- Do innovative strategies (digital learning, gamification) have more positive psychological impacts than conventional methods?
- How do teaching strategies affect students from diverse backgrounds (rural, international, and special needs students)?
- How does PdPR influence academic stress, adaptability, and self-confidence?
- How do Malay language teaching strategies align with psychological theories such as SDT and CLT?

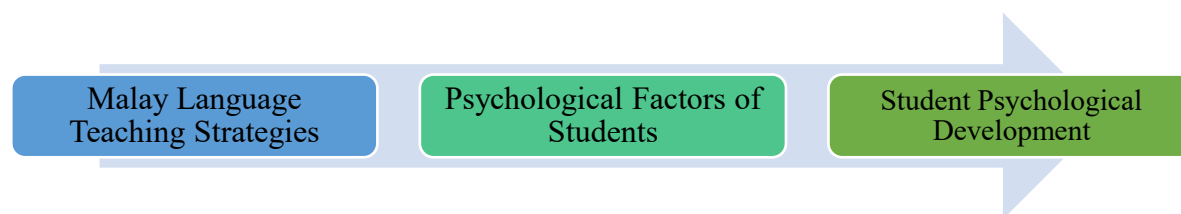
## Conceptual Framework Model



This model illustrates the relationship between teaching strategies (IV), students' psychological factors (MV), students' psychological development (DV), and contextual factors (MoV), which may influence these relationships.

### Proposed Conceptual Framework Model

Based on the elements outlined above, the proposed conceptual framework is as follows:



### Proposed Conceptual Framework Model

This model suggests that the teaching strategies employed by educators influence students' psychological factors, which in turn affect their psychological development. However, this relationship is moderated by contextual factors, such as students' backgrounds and learning environments.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Malay Language Teaching Strategies

- Traditional Methods: Lectures and exercises enhance basic proficiency but do not address motivation or psychological well-being (Abdullah & Ismail, 2020).
- Interactive Approaches: Cooperative learning and group discussions improve engagement and confidence, yet their effects on anxiety are underexplored (Ahmad & Zainal, 2021).
- Digital Integration: Online learning offers flexibility but can increase stress and reduce social interaction if not carefully implemented (Ismail & Yusof, 2023).
- Psychology-Based Approaches: Approaches inspired by Al-Ghazali emphasize balance and inner peace, but modern applications of SDT and CLT are limited in current literature (Hassan & Rahman, 2022).

### Psychological Development

- Motivation & Self-Confidence: Flexible, engaging strategies improve willingness to participate and build self-efficacy (Yusof & Ahmad, 2024).
- Academic Stress & Anxiety: Psychologically supportive strategies can mitigate stress, particularly in digital contexts (Mahmud & Salleh, 2020; Ismail & Yusof, 2023).
- Resilience & Adaptability: Student-centered, reflective approaches foster resilience, yet special needs students remain under-researched (Kamaruddin & Aziz, 2024; Othman & Hamzah, 2021).

### Proposed Research Design

#### Mixed-Methods Approach

- Quantitative: Experimental or correlational study with 300–500 students, using Likert-scale questionnaires on motivation, stress, self-confidence, and academic achievement tests.
- Qualitative: Semi-structured interviews with 30–50 teachers and students, analyzed thematically using NVivo.

### Recommendations and Practical Applications

- Adopt integrated teaching strategies combining traditional, interactive, and digital methods.
- Train teachers in educational psychology and digital literacy.
- Develop inclusive strategies for special needs and international students.

- Reduce excessive academic pressure to improve motivation and resilience.

## Implications for Future Research

- Longitudinal and experimental studies to establish causal relationships.
- Investigate gamification, PBL, and AI-assisted learning for personalized psychological support.
- Cross-country studies to compare Malay language teaching effectiveness.

## CONCLUSION

This study has examined the impact of Malay language teaching strategies on students' psychological development, highlighting how different approaches influence motivation, academic stress, and self-confidence. The findings reveal that the selection of appropriate teaching strategies is crucial in fostering a positive learning environment that supports students' emotional and mental well-being. One of the most significant findings is that interactive and technology-driven teaching methods such as gamification, problem-based learning (PBL), and digital learning enhance students' engagement and promote a more dynamic and enjoyable learning experience. These strategies have been found to reduce academic stress, increase motivation, and improve students' self-efficacy in mastering the Malay language. On the other hand, traditional teaching methods, which rely heavily on rote memorization and repetitive exercises, may contribute to higher levels of academic pressure, leading to disengagement and decreased confidence among students. Another key insight from this study is that psychological factors play a crucial role in determining the success of teaching strategies. Motivation, cognitive load, and academic resilience are interconnected elements that influence students' ability to learn effectively. If teaching methods fail to consider these factors, students may experience learning fatigue, anxiety, and a decline in academic performance. Therefore, it is essential for educators to adopt a student-centered approach that prioritizes both academic achievement and mental well-being. Furthermore, this study underscores the importance of a more flexible and inclusive curriculum for Malay language education. Policymakers and educators must work towards designing a curriculum that accommodates students' diverse learning needs, including those with special educational requirements, such as students with dyslexia or autism. Future research should explore longitudinal studies to assess the long-term effects of different teaching strategies on students' psychological development. Additionally, the integration of artificial intelligence (AI) and adaptive learning technologies should be explored further to enhance personalized learning experiences. In conclusion, a balanced approach to education is essential one that not only focuses on academic success but also nurtures students' psychological well-being. By incorporating innovative teaching strategies and fostering a supportive learning environment, Malay language education can empower students to develop self-confidence, resilience, and a lifelong passion for learning.

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