



THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL SCIENCES TEACHER CREATIVITY IN IMPROVING STUDENT MOTIVATION AND LEARNING OUTCOMES AT MTSN 1 LAMONGAN

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ABSTRACT

Student learning outcomes in Social Studies are influenced by both teacher-related and student-related factors. However, studies examining the dual role of learning motivation in the relationship between teacher creativity and student learning outcomes remain limited, particularly at the Islamic junior secondary school (MTs) level. This study aims to analyze the effects of Social Studies teacher creativity and learning motivation on student learning outcomes and to examine the moderating role of learning motivation. Using an explanatory sequential mixed-methods design, quantitative data were collected from questionnaire response from 158 students in MTsN 1 Lamongan and analyzed using PLS-SEM. Qualitative data were obtained through interviews with students and the teacher. The findings revealed that teacher creativity positively and significantly affected student learning outcomes. Learning motivation also had a positive and significant direct effect on student learning outcomes and significantly moderated the relationship between teacher creativity and student learning outcomes. These results indicate that learning motivation functions as a quasi-moderator, serving both as an independent predictor of learning outcomes and as a strengthening factor that enhances the effectiveness of teacher creativity. Qualitative findings supported these results by showing that creative teaching practices increased student engagement and participation. These findings provide a more comprehensive understanding of the interaction between pedagogical and psychological factors in shaping student learning outcomes and offer practical implications for developing more effective Social Studies instruction.

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INTRODUCTION

Social Studies education plays a strategic role in developing students' critical thinking skills, social awareness, and ability to understand various societal phenomena (Asriva et al., 2024). However, Social Studies instruction is frequently perceived as less engaging and highly content-oriented, resulting in students' limited participation and motivation during the learning process (Dianto, 2022). This condition may contribute to suboptimal academic achievement, particularly when instructional practices emphasize content acquisition rather than meaningful learning experiences (Hanifah, 2024). Therefore, the implementation of innovative and student-centered instructional strategies is essential to enhance students' engagement and learning outcomes (Segundo-marcos, 2023).

One of the key factors influencing instructional effectiveness is teacher creativity (Fajarini, 2021). Teacher creativity is reflected not only in the ability to develop innovative teaching methods and learning media but also in the capacity to create an interactive, engaging, and student-centered learning environment (Ambya et al., 2024). Creative teachers are more likely to integrate technology, contextual learning experiences, and diverse pedagogical strategies into classroom instruction, thereby facilitating students' understanding of learning materials and encouraging active participation (Febriandari et al., 2018). Consequently, teacher creativity has been widely recognized as a critical determinant of students' academic success (Ilham et al., 2024).

In addition to teacher-related factors, learning motivation constitutes an important psychological construct that significantly influences students' academic achievement (Widyaningsih, 2022). Learning motivation serves as a driving force that promotes students' active involvement in learning activities, demonstrate persistence in completing academic tasks, and maintain their commitment to learning despite encountering challenges (Afifah, 2023). Students with higher levels of learning motivation tend to exhibit greater engagement, stronger academic aspirations, and more effective learning behaviors (Agustang et al., 2021). Therefore, learning motivation is considered a fundamental factor contributing to students' learning outcomes (Taluhumala et al., 2024).

Preliminary observations conducted at MTsN 1 Lamongan revealed that Social Studies teachers have implemented various instructional strategies, including digital media integration, group discussions, classroom presentations, and contextual learning approaches. Nevertheless, students' levels of participation and learning motivation remain varied (Agha et al., 2022). While some students actively engage in classroom activities, others continue to demonstrate limited involvement and enthusiasm during the learning process (Marsh et al., 2022). This situation indicates that teacher creativity should be continuously optimized to foster students' learning motivation and improve academic achievement more effectively (Hidayat et al., 2026).

Previous studies have consistently reported that teacher creativity contributes to students' learning motivation and academic achievement, while learning motivation has also been identified as an important predictor of learning outcomes. Nevertheless, Despite extensive research on this topic, several gaps remain to be addressed. Eventually, almost all earlier studies are concerned with the direct effect of teacher creativity and the learning motivation, and the learning motivation as a moderating mechanism that may enhance the effect of teacher creativity on learning outcome (theoretical gap). Second, previous studies have generally been based on biased methods (an overreliance on either quantitative or qualitative methods), giving the interaction between these variables limited consideration (methodological gap). Third, to date, there have not been many empirical investigations into these relationships in the context of Islamic junior secondary schools (Madrasah Tsanawiyah) (contextual gap). So that this research was conducted to analyze the influence and interaction of teacher creativity in Social Studies and learning motivation toward the learning outcomes as well as to know the ability of learning motivation as a moderator variable. The novelty of the present study is in adopting a mixed-method (quantitative and qualitative) by analyzing the relationships between teacher creativity, learning motivation and students' learning outcomes in the context of English as a Foreign Language (EFL).

Beyond addressing the identified research gaps, this study is important because improving student learning outcomes remains one of the major challenges in Social Studies education, particularly in Islamic junior secondary schools. In the context of rapid digital transformation, teachers are expected to employ innovative and student-centered

pedagogical strategies that not only improve students' academic performance but also strengthen their learning motivation and active engagement throughout the educational process. Understanding how teacher creativity and learning motivation interact is therefore essential for developing more effective instructional practices. Furthermore, empirical evidence regarding the moderating role of learning motivation may provide valuable guidance for teachers, schools, and educational policymakers in designing learning environments that support both cognitive and motivational aspects of student development.

This research is to find out the effect of Social Studies teacher creativity on Student learning result and the effect of learning motivation on student learning result as well as to find out whether learning motivation will moderate the relationship between teacher creativity and student learning result. The results are to contribute theoretically the literature of teacher creativity, learning motivation and student achievement by broadening the comprehension of learning motivation as a moderating mechanism. From the perspective of practice, the results will serve add potential in assisting teachers and schools with development of more engaging, effective, and student-centered Social Studies learning environments.

METHOD

This research employed a mixed-methods approach with an Explanatory Sequential Design model. This is a step-by-step research approach, beginning with quantitative data collection and analysis, followed by qualitative data collection and analysis to explain and deepen the quantitative research findings. Annisa & Eva (2025) state that the combination of quantitative correlational surveys and descriptive qualitative in-depth research is ideal for accurately measuring students' perceptions of teacher teaching. The Explanatory Sequential Design model was chosen because it allows researchers to prioritize empirical evidence through qualitative data as a means of explaining the results obtained (Annisa & Eva, 2025).

This research involved three main interrelated variables within the analytical framework: independent, moderating, and dependent variables. These variables were chosen on the basis of theory and prior research indicating associations between teacher creativity and student achievement, and motivation as an enhancer or reducer. The Independent Variable (X) is the creativity of social studies (IPS) teachers. The Moderating Variable (Z) in this study is student learning motivation, the internal condition that encourages students to participate actively, diligently, and enthusiastically during the learning process. The dependent variable (Y) in this study is student learning outcomes, which are the final output to be measured.

In the context of educational research, instruments function as tools to measure the variables being studied, such as teacher creativity, learning motivation, and student learning outcomes. In this study, instruments are an essential component because they determine the extent to which the collected data can accurately represent the actual conditions in the field (Adil et al., 2023). The study population comprised 496 eighth students enrolled in MTsN 1 Lamongan. The sample was determined using Cluster Random Sampling, with five classes randomly selected from a total of 15 classes using Proportional Random Sampling. All students in the five classes were selected to serve as respondents, totaling 158 students. The data collection techniques and data analysis flow in this mixed methods study are summarized in the table below.

Table 1. Methods of Data Collection and Analysis

Data Types	Methods of Data Collection	Data Analysis Techniques	Data Analysis Stages
Quantitative	Distributing Questionnaires and Documenting Learning Outcome Scores	Partial Least Square-Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) via SmartPLS 4	1. Evaluation of the measurement model (Outer Model): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Convergent Validity Test • Discriminant Validity Test • Construct Reliability Test



			2. Structural Model Evaluation (Inner Model):
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coefficient of Determination (R-Square) • Hypothesis Testing (Path Coefficient)
Qualitative	Interviews, Observations, and Documentation	Descriptive	Data reduction, data presentation, triangulation and drawing conclusions

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

Quantitative analysis results

Quantitative data analysis was conducted using the SmartPLS 4 application to determine the effect of social studies teacher creativity on student learning outcomes, with learning motivation as a moderating variable. Model evaluation was conducted through outer and inner model testing.

Evaluation of measurement model (outer model)

Construct Validity and Reliability

To determine the convergent validity, we examined the outer loading values of the indicators. Indicators with outer loading values greater than 0.70 were considered to be valid. The test results showed that all indicators in the social studies teacher creativity and learning motivation variables had outer loading values above 0.70, thus all indicators were deemed valid and adequately represented the research constructs.

Table 2. Outer Loading Results

Variable	Indicator	Outer Loading	Description
Social Studies Teacher Creativity (X)	P02	0,733	Valid
	P03	0,846	Valid
	P06	0,859	Valid
Learning Motivation (Z)	P09	0,895	Valid
	P11	0,796	Valid
	P12	0,715	Valid

In addition to convergent validity testing, reliability testing was conducted using Composite Reliability and Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values. A construct is reliable when the CR is greater than 0.70 and the AVE is greater than 0.50.

Table 3. Composite Reliability and AVE Results

Variabel	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability	AVE
Social Studies Teacher Creativity (X)	0,751	0,855	0,664
Learning Motivation (Z)	0,753	0,892	0,648

Based on the test results, all variables had Composite Reliability values above 0.70, AVE values above 0.70, and AVE values above 0.50, thus declaring the research instrument reliable and meeting convergent validity requirements. Discriminant validity testing was conducted using the Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT). The model was declared to meet discriminant validity if the HTMT value was below 0.85.

Table 4. HTMT Test Results

Variabel	Hasil Belajar	Kreativitas Guru	Motivasi Belajar
Teacher Creativity	0,251		
Learning Motivation	0,248	0,577	

Learning Motivation x Teacher Creativity	0,133	0,471	0,295
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The results of the HTMT test indicate that all HTMT values are below 0.85, thus the research model meets the requirements for discriminant validity.

Structural Model Evaluation (Inner Model)

R-Square Value

The R-Square test was conducted to determine the ability of the independent variables to explain the dependent variable of the study.

Table 5. R-Square Test Results

Endogenous Variables	R-Square	R-Square Adjusted
Learning Outcomes	0,145	0,123

The creativity of Social Studies teachers, their learning motivation, and the interaction effect of learning motivation accounted for 14.5% of the variance in student learning outcomes with an R-square value of 0.145. This result indicates that the learning outcomes of students were affected by other factors which were not included in this study. The remaining 85.5% of the variance may be explained by other variables, such as prior academic ability, family background, learning strategies, peer support, classroom environment, and individual student characteristics. Consequently, the relatively low R-square value should be interpreted as evidence that learning outcomes represent a complex and multidimensional construct. Future studies are therefore encouraged to incorporate additional variables to develop a more comprehensive explanatory model.

F-Square

A f^2 effect size estimate was performed to assess the impact of each exogenous variable in explaining the endogenous variable. $f^2 = 0.02, 0.15$ and 0.35 represent small, medium and large effect sizes, respectively. The findings are presented in Table 7.

Table 6. F-Square Test Result

Structural Relationship	F-Square	Effect Size
Social Studies Teacher Creativity → Learning Outcomes	0,051	Small
Learning Motivation → Learning Outcomes	0,039	Small
Learning Motivation × Social Studies Teacher Creativity → Learning Outcomes	0,079	Small

The effect sizes (f^2) were calculated to examine the relative contribution of each exogenous variable in explaining the endogenous variable. The results revealed that Social Studies teacher creativity had an f^2 value of 0.051, learning motivation had an f^2 value of 0.039, and the interaction effect between learning motivation and teacher creativity had an f^2 value of 0.079 on student learning outcomes. According to Cohen's (1988) criteria, an f^2 value of 0.02 indicates a small effect, 0.15 a medium effect, and 0.35 a large effect. Therefore, all relationships in this study can be categorized as having a small effect size. Although the effect sizes are relatively small, the findings indicate that teacher creativity, learning motivation, and their interaction contribute meaningfully to student learning outcomes and remain statistically significant within the proposed structural model.

Q-Square

The predictive relevance of the structural model was evaluated using the Q-square (Q^2) value obtained from the blindfolding procedure. A Q^2 value greater than zero indicates that the model has satisfactory predictive relevance. The results are presented in Table 8.

Table 7. Q-Square Test Result

Endogenous Variable	SSO	SSE	Q ²	Interpretation
Learning Outcomes	119,000	106,998	0,101	The model has predictive relevance

Blindfolding was used to evaluate predictive relevance by means of the Q-square (Q²) value. The endogenous student learning outcomes variable obtained a Q² value of 0.101. A positive value of Q² indicates that the model has predictive relevance. Hence, the calculated Q² value implies that the suggested model has sufficient predictive power. The resulted Q² value indicates that the proposed model has sufficient predictive power for the explanation and prediction of student outcomes. This means that not only is the model statistically valid, it also has predictive relevance, albeit that its predictive power can be considered relatively weak.

Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis testing was conducted to determine the direct and moderating effects between the research variables.

Table 8. Path Coefficient Test Results

Relationship between variables	Path Coefficient	T-Statistic	P-Value	Declaration
Teacher Creativity – Learning Outcomes	0,249	2,547	0,011	significant
Learning Motivation – Learning Outcomes	0,206	2,351	0,019	significant
Teacher Creativity x Learning Motivation – Learning Outcomes	0,177	2,199	0,028	significant

The test results indicate that Social Studies (IPS) Teacher creativity has been shown to contribute positively and significantly to students' learning achievement. In addition, learning motivation also has a positive and significant effect on students' learning outcomes. The moderation test results reveal that learning motivation strengthens the relationship between Social Studies teacher creativity and students' learning outcomes.

To support the quantitative findings, this study also incorporates qualitative data obtained through interviews, observations, and documentation. Interviews were conducted with three Social Studies teachers, two students, and one vice principal for curriculum affairs at MTsN 1 Lamongan to gain a deeper understanding of teacher creativity, students' learning motivation, and their impact on learning outcomes. The qualitative data were used to clarify the statistical findings and provide a more comprehensive picture of students' experiences, teachers' instructional strategies, and school support in the learning process.

The triangulation results indicate that Social Studies teacher creativity is capable of creating a more active, interactive, and enjoyable learning environment, which contributes to increased student motivation and improved learning outcomes at MTsN 1 Lamongan. Furthermore, the interview findings show that all informants shared complementary perspectives regarding the role of teacher creativity in the learning process. Although differences in experiences were found among students and teachers, all informants generally agreed that teacher creativity has a positive impact on students' motivation and learning outcomes. These differences were primarily reflected in how students perceived the benefits of learning media, discussion methods, and educational games implemented by teachers during Social Studies lessons.

To provide a clearer understanding of students' experiences regarding creative Social Studies instruction, representative interview excerpts are presented below.

“The teacher uses multimedia presentations, making the lessons more interesting and less boring.”
 (Student 1)

The statement indicates that the use of multimedia-based learning media contributes to increasing students' interest and engagement during the learning process. Creative instructional practices help create a more enjoyable classroom atmosphere and encourage students to participate actively in classroom activities.

“The teacher uses videos, quizzes, and group discussions, so we can understand the lessons more easily.”
 (Student 2)

This finding suggests that varied instructional strategies facilitate students' understanding of learning materials and encourage greater participation in classroom learning. Interactive learning activities provide opportunities for students to become more involved in the learning process and improve their comprehension of Social Studies concepts.

Based on the interviews conducted with students, Social Studies teachers, and the vice principal for curriculum affairs, it can be concluded that teacher creativity has a positive impact on students' motivation and learning outcomes. The use of digital media, instructional videos, group discussions, interactive quizzes, and contextual learning approaches creates a more active, enjoyable, and less monotonous learning environment. Furthermore, teacher creativity helps students understand the material more easily, increases student participation during classroom activities, and contributes to improved learning outcomes in both cognitive and affective domains.

These qualitative findings support the quantitative results, which demonstrated that teacher creativity positively influences student learning outcomes ($p = 0.011$). The interview data further indicate that the effectiveness of creative teaching practices becomes stronger when students possess higher learning motivation, supporting the moderating effect identified in the structural model ($p = 0.028$). Therefore, the integration of quantitative and qualitative findings confirms that teacher creativity and learning motivation work synergistically in improving student learning outcomes.

To facilitate data presentation, a summary of the interview findings and source triangulation results is presented in the following table.

Table 9. Summary of Source Triangulation Results

Informant	Reduction and Triangulation
Student	Based on interviews, students found social studies learning more enjoyable, less monotonous, and easier to understand when teachers used digital media, instructional videos, group discussions, and educational games. Students also demonstrated increased questioning skills, increased discussion participation, and increased enthusiasm for learning during the lessons.
Social Studies Teacher	The social studies teacher explained that creative learning is implemented through the use of PowerPoint presentations, instructional videos, quizzes, group discussions, and contextual approaches. The teacher also adapts learning strategies to classroom conditions to keep students engaged and prevent boredom during the lesson.
Curriculum Deputy	Based on interviews, the school supports teacher creativity by providing digital learning resources, technology-based learning training, MGMP activities, and regular learning evaluations. The school believes that teacher creativity has a positive impact on increasing student motivation and learning outcomes.

Discussion

Social Studies teacher creativity plays an important role in improving student learning outcomes by creating learning experiences that are interactive, contextual, and meaningful. The use of digital media, instructional videos, group discussions, and interactive quizzes provides students with opportunities to actively participate in the learning process and construct understanding based on their learning experiences. Such active engagement helps students connect Social Studies concepts with real-life situations, making the learning materials easier to understand and retain. Interview data revealed that students were more interested in learning when teachers employed varied instructional methods rather than relying solely on conventional teaching approaches. The integration of quantitative and qualitative

findings indicates that teacher creativity not only contributes statistically to learning outcomes but is also directly experienced by students through improved learning experiences in the classroom.

The findings are consistent with (Saptono et al., 2021), who reported that teacher creativity enhances student engagement and subsequently improves learning outcomes. Similar conclusions were reached by (Nuha & Fathoni, 2022), who found that teacher creativity contributes positively to student academic achievement. The consistency of these findings suggests that teacher creativity serves as a facilitating factor for active learning across different educational levels. Nevertheless, the present study offers an additional contribution by focusing on the context of Islamic junior secondary schools and employing a mixed methods approach, thereby explaining not only the statistical relationship between variables but also the mechanisms underlying that relationship. From a theoretical perspective, these results reinforce constructivist learning theory, which views students as active participants in constructing knowledge through meaningful learning experiences.

Learning motivation serves as an internal psychological force that encourages students to maintain active engagement and consistent effort throughout the learning process. Students with high learning motivation tend to demonstrate greater perseverance in completing academic assignments, overcoming difficulties, and achieving learning objectives. They participate more actively in classroom discussions, and exert stronger efforts to understand learning materials. These conditions explain why motivated students achieve better academic outcomes than those with lower levels of motivation. Interview data further revealed that highly motivated students were less likely to give up when encountering learning difficulties and actively sought alternative ways to improve their understanding. The integration of quantitative and qualitative evidence demonstrates that learning motivation is not merely a psychological construct but is also reflected in students' actual learning behaviors.

The role of learning motivation in enhancing learning outcomes has also been reported by (Fitriah et al., 2025), despite differences in research contexts and participant characteristics. The consistency of these findings indicates that learning motivation is a psychological factor that consistently contributes to academic success. Students with strong learning motivation are more likely to invest substantial effort in their studies, maintain persistence when encountering difficulties, and demonstrate greater readiness to address academic challenges. From a theoretical standpoint, these results reinforce motivation theory, which explains that learning behavior is influenced by internal drives directed toward achieving specific goals. Consequently, learning outcomes are determined not only by the quality of instructional strategies implemented by teachers but also by students' ability to maintain motivation throughout the learning process.

The moderating role of learning motivation indicates that the effectiveness of teacher creativity depends not only on the quality of instructional strategies but also on students' psychological readiness to respond to learning experiences. Students with high levels of motivation tend to be more enthusiastic about creative learning activities, pay closer attention to instructional materials, and take greater advantage of innovative teaching practices. In contrast, students with lower levels of motivation are generally less responsive to instructional stimuli, limiting the benefits they gain from teacher creativity. This pattern explains why the influence of teacher creativity on learning outcomes becomes stronger when accompanied by high learning motivation (Sumilat et al., 2026). The present study extends previous research that primarily focused on the direct effects of teacher creativity or learning motivation on learning outcomes. Unlike earlier studies, this research demonstrates that learning motivation functions as a strengthening factor that determines the effectiveness of teacher creativity in improving student achievement. The primary contribution of this study lies in providing empirical evidence that pedagogical and psychological factors interact rather than operate independently. As a result, the research gap identified in the introduction regarding the limited number of studies examining learning motivation as a moderating variable in the relationship between teacher creativity and learning outcomes, particularly at the MTs level, has been addressed. From a theoretical perspective, these findings support the interactionist perspective in educational psychology, which emphasizes that learning outcomes are shaped through the dynamic interaction between students' personal characteristics and the learning environment fostered by teachers.

CONCLUSION

This study confirms that student learning outcomes can be influenced by both pedagogical factors, such as teacher creativity, and psychological factors, such as learning motivation. Creative instructional practices implemented through digital media, learning videos, group discussions, and contextual approaches create meaningful learning experiences that encourage students' active engagement and facilitate a better understanding of Social Studies content. Learning motivation was also found to have a positive and significant direct effect on student learning outcomes, indicating that motivated students tend to participate more actively and persistently in learning activities. More importantly, learning motivation significantly strengthened the relationship between teacher creativity and student learning outcomes. This finding demonstrates that learning motivation functions as a quasi-moderator, meaning that it not only directly contributes to student learning outcomes but also enhances the effectiveness of teacher creativity. In other words, creative teaching strategies generate stronger learning outcomes when students possess higher levels of learning motivation. Qualitative findings further supported this relationship by revealing that creative instructional practices fostered greater student engagement, enthusiasm, and participation during classroom learning.

The main contribution of this study lies in demonstrating the dual role of learning motivation as both a predictor and a moderator of student learning outcomes in the context of Islamic junior secondary education. Furthermore, the explanatory sequential mixed-methods design provided a more comprehensive understanding of how pedagogical and psychological factors interact in influencing learning outcomes. Practically, the findings suggest that efforts to improve student achievement should focus not only on enhancing teacher creativity but also on strengthening students' learning motivation. Future research may incorporate additional psychological, instructional, and contextual variables and involve broader educational settings to improve the generalizability of the findings.

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