

Effectiveness of Reverse Psychology Mechanisms on Motivation among Music Education Students at a Public University in Selangor

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ABSTRACT

Building on Shulman L. S. (1987) view that effective teaching requires strong core knowledge, particularly pedagogical content knowledge, this study recognises the importance of instructional strategies that can enhance student engagement and motivation. In Music Education, teaching approaches that are creative and psychologically informed are especially significant, as students' motivation plays a key role in sustaining their participation and commitment to learning musical skills.

This research focuses on examining the effectiveness of reverse psychology mechanisms in influencing motivation among Music Education students at public universities in Selangor. Specifically, the study seeks to explore how the application of reverse psychology strategies impacts students' motivation towards learning and participation in music-related academic activities. By analysing students' responses and motivational levels, the research aims to determine whether reverse psychology can serve as an effective pedagogical approach in higher music education contexts.

It is hoped that the findings of this study will provide valuable insights for lecturers, curriculum designers, and higher education institutions, particularly public universities in Selangor, in adopting more innovative and student-centred teaching strategies. Furthermore, this research is expected to contribute to the broader understanding of motivational mechanisms in Music Education and encourage further studies on the use of psychological approaches, such as reverse psychology, in enhancing student motivation at the tertiary level.

Keywords: Reverse psychology, student motivation, music education, higher education

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

Historically, research on student motivation in music education has primarily emphasized intrinsic and extrinsic factors, particularly those grounded in self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985). Intrinsic motivation, driven by interest and enjoyment, is considered essential for sustained engagement. However, it may diminish over time due to academic pressure, performance fatigue, and rigid curricular structures (Hallam, 2002). While extrinsic motivators such as grades and praise can stimulate short-term effort, they often fail to ensure long-term commitment.

Although reverse psychology has been explored in domains such as consumer behaviour and parenting (Brehm & Brehm, 1981), its application within academic contexts, particularly in music education, remains limited. In the Malaysian higher education context, student motivation has been linked to teaching strategies, student-teacher relationships, and learning environments (Rashid & Halim, 2020). Music students, in particular, require sustained motivational support and innovative approaches to remain engaged amid intensive practice and performance demands. Prior research indicates that learning autonomy, instructor support, and emotional well-being significantly influence motivation among Malaysian university music students (Norshidah & Rohana, 2016).

Furthermore, Malaysian music education continues to rely heavily on traditional pedagogical approaches, often overlooking alternative strategies such as student-centred learning and psychologically informed techniques (Yusof & Ismail, 2019). Exploring reverse psychology, a method that challenges conventional instructional approaches, may therefore provide new insights and pedagogical possibilities. Given the demanding nature of music education in Selangor, the adoption of innovative motivational strategies such as reverse psychology may prove beneficial in enhancing students' academic consistency and engagement.

Problem Statement

Motivation plays a critical role in academic success, particularly in music education, where students must maintain consistent practice while managing both technical and emotional challenges. However, undergraduate music students in Malaysian public universities often experience difficulties in sustaining long-term motivation. Conventional strategies, including praise, rewards, and structured routines, may gradually lose effectiveness, resulting in disengagement and diminished performance.

Reverse psychology, a technique that promotes desired behaviour by suggesting the opposite, has demonstrated effectiveness in fields such as parenting and marketing. Despite its potential, it remains underexplored within academic contexts, particularly in Malaysian music education. Students who exhibit resistance to direct instruction may respond more positively to such indirect motivational strategies; however, empirical evidence supporting its effectiveness in educational settings is limited.

Additionally, many Malaysian music educators rely predominantly on traditional motivational approaches and possess limited exposure to psychological strategies such as reverse psychology. This lack of familiarity may hinder the adoption of more adaptive and student-centred teaching practices that account for psychological resistance and learner autonomy. Without sufficient empirical validation, the application of reverse psychology in educational contexts may also raise ethical and practical concerns. Therefore, this study aims to evaluate both the effectiveness and ethical implications of employing reverse psychology as a motivational tool among undergraduate students enrolled in music education program at Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM).

Research Objectives

1. To investigate how reverse psychology strategies influence motivation among music education students in public university of Malaysia.
2. To assess the effectiveness of reverse psychology in improving engagement and performance.
3. To recommend evidence based approaches for incorporating reverse psychology into Malaysian music educational practices.

Research Questions

1. What are the theoretical foundations of reverse psychology in relation to motivation?
2. How can reverse psychology be effectively integrated into Malaysian music education students practice?
3. In what way does reverse psychology affect the motivation and performance of undergraduate music students?

Significance of the Study

This study contributes to cross field between music pedagogy and educational psychology and by examining a non-traditional motivational strategy within a demanding academic discipline. The findings may encourage local music educators to diversify their instructional approaches, particularly by addressing psychological resistance and fostering student autonomy. For students, the use of reverse psychology may enhance self-directed learning, resilience, and intrinsic engagement. Additionally, the study holds policy relevance, potentially informing curriculum development and instructional practices in Malaysian public universities.

Scope of the Study

The scope of this research is specifically delineated to investigate the pedagogical application and psychological impact of reverse psychology mechanisms within the unique environment of Malaysian higher music education. Temporally, the study was conducted over the duration of one full academic semester. This timeframe was selected to allow for the longitudinal observation of motivational fluctuations and to assess how student engagement responds to consistent psychological interventions over a sustained period of academic pressure.

The investigation focuses exclusively on undergraduate students enrolled in the Bachelor of Music Education (Hons.) program at the Faculty of Music, Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM), Shah Alam. This setting is particularly relevant as UiTM serves as a premier institution for performance-based music pedagogy in Malaysia, providing a representative environment for examining instructor-student dynamics. Specifically, the study targets practical and performance-based courses—such as principal instrument study and ensemble rehearsals where the intensity of direct instruction is most likely to trigger psychological reactance in learners.

Within this context, the research is limited to examining three primary qualitative dimensions: intrinsic and extrinsic student motivation, behavioural engagement in practice routines, and perceived performance outcomes. While the study utilizes a single-site case study design with five purposively selected participants to ensure the depth of lived experience, the findings are intended to serve as a foundational framework. This framework aims to inform broader music education policies and encourage the adoption of more adaptive, student-centred motivational strategies across other Malaysian public universities.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

This section reviews key literature related to motivation in music education, traditional motivational practices, and the potential role of reverse psychology within educational contexts. It also situates these discussions within the Malaysian higher education environment, highlighting existing gaps that justify the present study.

Motivation in Music Education

Motivation plays a fundamental role in shaping how music students engage with learning, sustain practice, and develop their skills over time. Edward L. Deci and Richard M. Ryan's Self-Determination Theory (SDT) provides a useful framework for understanding this process, distinguishing between intrinsic and extrinsic forms of motivation (Deci & Ryan, 1985). Intrinsic motivation refers to engaging in music for the inherent enjoyment and satisfaction it brings, such as the pleasure of performance or the fulfilment of mastering a challenging piece. In contrast, extrinsic motivation is driven by external outcomes, including grades, recognition, or expectations set by instructors.

While both forms of motivation contribute to learning, intrinsic motivation is often associated with deeper engagement and long-term commitment. However, sustaining this form of motivation can be challenging. Susan Hallam (2002) argues that motivation in music education is not fixed but evolves through a complex interplay of personal beliefs, social influences, and environmental conditions. Factors such as self-confidence, teacher support, peer interaction, and the learning atmosphere all influence students' willingness to persist. Importantly, students who feel competent and supported are more likely to remain engaged and develop a meaningful connection to music.

In higher education settings, maintaining motivation becomes even more critical due to the increasing demands placed on students. The emphasis on performance, technical mastery, and assessment can gradually diminish the enjoyment that initially draws students to music. This highlights the need for teaching approaches that nurture autonomy, competence, and relatedness, core components of SDT so that students can internalise their goals and sustain motivation beyond external pressures (Deci & Ryan, 1985). Despite this understanding, there remains a need to explore alternative motivational strategies that can complement existing approaches, particularly in demanding academic environments.

Traditional Motivational Strategies

In the Malaysian context, music education continues to be largely shaped by traditional, teacher-centred approaches. Yusof and Ismail (2019) observe that instructional practices often prioritise repetition, technical precision, and examination outcomes. These methods typically rely on extrinsic motivators such as grades, rankings, and teacher approval to encourage student effort. While such strategies can promote discipline and short-term performance, they may not effectively support long-term engagement or personal connection to music.

A key limitation of traditional approaches is their tendency to restrict student autonomy and creativity. When learning is heavily structured and outcome-driven, students may become passive participants, focusing primarily on meeting expectations rather than exploring their own musical interests. Over time, this can lead to reduced intrinsic motivation and a diminished sense of ownership over learning (Yusof & Ismail, 2019).

Recognising these challenges, Yusof and Ismail (2019) advocate for a gradual shift towards more student-centred and autonomy-supportive practices. Approaches that encourage collaboration, self-directed learning, and creative exploration can help students reconnect with the intrinsic value of music. Although such strategies align with established motivational theories (Deci & Ryan, 1985), their implementation in Malaysian music education remains limited, indicating a gap between theory and practice.

Reverse Psychology: Concept and Application

Reverse psychology is rooted in Jack W. Brehm and Sharon S. Brehm's Psychological Reactance Theory, which suggests that individuals are motivated to preserve their sense of freedom (Brehm & Brehm, 1981). When people perceive that their autonomy is being restricted, they may respond with resistance, often by doing the opposite of what is expected. This reaction, known as psychological reactance, reflects an inherent desire to maintain control over one's decisions.

In educational contexts, this concept has important implications. Students who feel pressured or overly controlled may disengage or resist instruction, even when the intended outcomes are beneficial. Reverse psychology offers a different approach by indirectly encouraging desired behaviours. Instead of giving direct instructions, educators may present an opposing suggestion, prompting students to act in ways that reaffirm their independence.

Within music education, this strategy can be particularly relevant. For instance, suggesting that a task may be too difficult could motivate students to prove otherwise, thereby increasing effort and persistence. Unlike traditional approaches that rely on direct reinforcement, reverse psychology engages students' internal drive to act autonomously (Brehm & Brehm, 1981). However, despite its theoretical potential, its application in academic settings, especially in music education remains underexplored.

Reverse Psychology in Educational Contexts

Research in Malaysian higher education suggests that student motivation is closely tied to perceptions of autonomy and control. Rashid and Halim (2020) found that students are more likely to disengage when they feel overly directed or constrained by instructional methods. In contrast, strategies that promote self-regulation and independent thinking tend to foster more meaningful engagement.

Within this context, reverse psychology may offer a useful alternative to conventional teaching strategies. By subtly encouraging students to challenge expectations, it can transform resistance into motivation. This aligns with the principles of Psychological Reactance Theory (Brehm & Brehm, 1981), where perceived restrictions can stimulate a desire to reassert autonomy.

However, the effectiveness of reverse psychology depends on how it is applied. If used inappropriately, it may lead to confusion or undermine trust between educators and students. Moreover, its success may vary depending on individual differences, such as personality, learning style, and cultural context. Despite these considerations,

existing literature suggests that incorporating indirect motivational strategies could enhance student engagement, particularly in environments where traditional approaches dominate (Rashid & Halim, 2020).

Motivation and Student Autonomy in the Malaysian Context

The relationship between motivation and autonomy is particularly significant in Malaysian music education. Norshidah and Rohana (2016) highlight that students' emotional intelligence plays a crucial role in shaping their motivation. Students who are able to regulate their emotions, manage stress, and respond positively to feedback tend to deem Psychological Reactance Theory as well as demonstrate higher levels of intrinsic motivation and persistence.

Their findings also suggest that autonomy is a key factor in sustaining engagement. When students feel in control of their learning and are given opportunities to make meaningful choices, they are more likely to develop a deeper connection to their studies (Norshidah & Rohana, 2016). However, the structure of many music programmes in Malaysia, which often emphasise examinations and standardised outcomes, may limit opportunities for autonomy.

This creates a tension between institutional expectations and students' motivational needs. While traditional systems prioritise measurable achievement, they may overlook the importance of personal growth and self-directed learning. Addressing this issue requires teaching approaches that foster emotional awareness, independence, and creativity, aligning with the principles of Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985).

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study employs a qualitative case study design to explore the complex psychological interplay between reverse psychology mechanisms and student motivation. A qualitative approach is uniquely suited for this inquiry, as it facilitates an in-depth examination of the lived experiences, nuanced emotional responses, and subjective perceptions of music students. By utilizing a case study framework, the research captures the specific pedagogical dynamics of the music classroom, providing a detailed description of how indirect motivational strategies function in a high-pressure academic setting.

Participants and Purposive Sampling

The study involved five undergraduate music students (n=5) from the Bachelor of Music Education (Hons.) program at Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM). To enhance research validity and ensure the data's relevance to the research objectives, a purposive sampling strategy was implemented. Participants were selected based on three rigorous inclusion criteria:

1. Current enrolment in performance-heavy or practical music courses where instructor-student interaction is frequent;
2. Self-identified experience with varied motivational pedagogical styles;
3. A minimum of two years of study within the faculty to ensure a well-developed perspective on academic pressure and motivational attrition.

While the sample size is intentionally small to prioritize depth over breadth, this information-rich group allows for the detailed exploration of psychological reactance that larger quantitative surveys might overlook.

Data Collection: Focus Group Semi-Structured Interview

The primary data collection tool was the focus group semi-structured interview, a method chosen for its ability to generate rich, synergistic data through participant interaction. This format allowed for a prepared yet flexible

inquiry, ensuring that while core research questions were addressed, participants had the freedom to explore unexpected emotional themes.

Interviews focused specifically on students' cognitive and affective responses to challenge-based feedback (reverse psychology) and its perceived impact on their practice routines. All sessions were audio-recorded with explicit consent and transcribed verbatim to maintain data integrity. The use of focus groups also facilitated data triangulation, as recurring patterns and divergent views could be analysed across multiple perspectives simultaneously, bolstering the credibility of the findings.

Data Analysis: Rigorous Thematic Analysis

The qualitative data were processed using a systematic six-phase thematic analysis approach to ensure interpretive rigor. The process began with data immersion through multiple readings of the transcripts, followed by inductive coding to identify significant concepts without the bias of pre-existing frameworks.

These initial codes were subsequently categorized into broader, cohesive themes that directly aligned with the study's objectives, specifically focusing on autonomy, resistance, and behavioural shifts in motivation. To ensure transparency and dependability, the researchers maintained a reflexive journal and a detailed audit trail of all coding decisions, allowing for an objective review of how raw data were transformed into final thematic conclusions.

Trustworthiness of the Study

To ensure the credibility and reliability of the findings, several strategies are employed. First, data triangulation is achieved through the integration of interview data and reflective notes, allowing for a more comprehensive understanding of the research context.

Member checking is also conducted by sharing interview summaries with participants to verify the accuracy of interpretations. This process helps to ensure that the findings genuinely reflect participants' perspectives.

In addition, the researchers maintain an audit trail and reflexive journal throughout the study. These records document the research process, methodological decisions, and personal reflections, thereby enhancing transparency and dependability.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations are carefully addressed throughout the study. Approval is obtained from the research ethics committee (REC) of Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM) prior to data collection. All participants provide informed consent and are fully briefed on the purpose and procedures of the study.

To protect participants' confidentiality, pseudonyms are used, and all identifying information is kept secure. Participants are also informed of their right to withdraw from the study at any time without any negative consequences.

Importantly, the use of reverse psychology within the classroom is applied in an ethical and non-coercive manner. All strategies are carefully designed to avoid manipulation or harm and are implemented with prior approval to ensure they align with ethical research standards.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Introduction

This chapter presents the qualitative findings derived from the thematic analysis of focus group interviews. The analysis explores the intersection between pedagogical intervention and psychological reactance, specifically focusing on how students perceive and respond to reverse psychology mechanisms within the music education curriculum at Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM).

Participants' Background

The study involved five undergraduate music students from different years of study in Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM), all of whom had experienced a range of teaching approaches, including reverse psychology (RP exposure). To ensure confidentiality, pseudonyms (Participant code) were used throughout the study.

Table 1: Profile of Research Participants (n=5)

Participant Code	Academic Level	Specialization	RP Exposure
P01	Year 3	Strings	Moderate
P02	Year 4	Voice	High
P03	Year 2	Wind	Low
P04	Year 4	Piano	Moderate
P05	Year 3	Percussion	High

Table 2: Thematic Analysis of Reserve Psychology and Student Motivation

Theme	Sub-theme	Description	Sample Quote	Participant
Understanding of Reverse Psychology	Challenge framing	Students perceive RP as indirect challenge	"It made me want to prove that I actually could do it."	P2
	Motivational trigger	RP stimulates effort and persistence	"It pushes me to practice more."	P4
Lecturer Application	Performance context	Used during rehearsals and assessments	"This piece might be too difficult for you."	P1
	Delivery tone	Effect depends on supportive vs harsh tone	"If it sounds harsh, it can feel discouraging."	P3
Motivational Impact	Self-regulation	Increased independent practice	"I practice longer than usual."	P5
	Internal drive	Shift from external to intrinsic motivation	"I set higher standards for myself."	P2
Engagement	Active participation	Increased focus in class	"I become more focused."	P4
Ethical Consideration	Overuse risk	Excessive use reduces effectiveness	"It becomes stressful."	P1
	Trust dependency	Requires strong lecturer-student relationship	"It only works when you trust the lecturer."	P3

Understanding and Experience of Reverse Psychology

All participants demonstrated a basic understanding of reverse psychology and recalled experiencing it in their music classes. Two key themes emerged: how students understood the concept and how lecturers applied it.

Students' Understanding

Participants consistently described reverse psychology as a form of strategic doubt or challenge that stimulated self-motivation. Rather than perceiving it negatively, students interpreted such statements as an opportunity to demonstrate competence.

For instance, one participant noted:

"When my lecturer said I might not be ready for the performance, it made me want to prove that I actually could do it." (P2)

Similarly, another student explained:

“It feels like they are challenging us indirectly. It pushes me to practice more because I don’t want to fail their expectations.” (P4)

These responses indicate that reverse psychology operates as a motivational trigger, activating students’ internal drive to counter perceived doubt.

Lecturers’ Application

Participants reported that reverse psychology was commonly applied in performance-based settings, particularly during rehearsals and individual practice evaluations.

One participant shared:

“Sometimes when I requested for a piece and the lecturer says, ‘This piece might be too difficult for you.’ After that, I spend more time practicing just to show that I can handle it.” (P1)

However, students emphasized that effectiveness depends heavily on tone and relational trust:

“If the lecturer says it in a supportive way, it motivates me. But if it sounds harsh, it can feel discouraging.” (P3)

This suggests that reverse psychology is not inherently effective but is context-dependent, requiring careful pedagogical delivery.

Impact on Motivational Orientation and Behavioural Engagement

The analysis indicates that reverse psychology mechanisms serve as a catalyst for both cognitive and behavioural shifts. These are categorized into two primary dimensions: practice-based self-regulation and classroom-level engagement.

Catalyzing Self-Regulated Practice

The analysis revealed that all five participants (n=5) experienced a significant increase in their motivation to practice following the introduction of indirect pedagogical challenges. This phenomenon is grounded in Self-Determination Theory, which posits that when lecturers express strategic doubt regarding a student’s technical readiness, it triggers a desire within the learner to reassert their autonomy and demonstrate competence. Empirical evidence from the focus groups suggests that such challenges encourage students to establish higher personal benchmarks and proactively overcome self-doubt, particularly when facing high-stakes assessments. In contrast to traditional direct praise—which participants suggested could occasionally lead to complacency, these indirect cues stimulate strategic self-anti-conformity. Consequently, the transition from responding to external pressure to an internal “drive to prove” directly aligns with the internalization process described in Self-Determination Theory, fostering a more resilient and self-directed musical identity.

Pedagogical Engagement and Ethical Safeguard

Beyond individual practice habits, the implementation of reverse psychology significantly altered broader classroom dynamics. Participants described a heightened state of attentiveness and active involvement during rehearsals where these indirect strategies were employed. This behavioural shift was characterized by a transition from a passive to a proactive learning stance, driven by a collective desire to exceed perceived lecturer expectations and demonstrate artistic competence.

However, the findings highlight critical pedagogical safeguards necessary for the responsible application of these techniques. Participants emphasized that reverse psychology is not a one-size-fits-all solution; rather, its efficacy is strictly contingent upon the lecturer’s delivery tone and the pre-existing student-teacher relationship. Crucially, the data suggests that overuse or an aggressive instructional tone could trigger genuine disengagement

or psychological harm, undermining the very motivation it seeks to foster. This finding directly addresses the ethical risks inherent in psychological interventions: for reverse psychology to remain a student-centred and adaptive tool, it must be balanced within a supportive environment where mutual trust is firmly established.

Perceived Effectiveness and Pedagogical Utility

The cumulative findings of this study indicate that participants perceive reverse psychology as a potent and sophisticated motivational catalyst within the music education curriculum. Its effectiveness is rooted in its ability to transform potential psychological resistance into a constructive drive for academic and artistic growth. Specifically, the analysis suggests that navigating the aspirational barriers set by lecturers bolsters students' affective resilience and self-efficacy, providing them with the emotional fortitude required to master complex technical repertoires.

Furthermore, the implementation of these indirect strategies appears to facilitate a critical shift in the students' locus of control. Participants reported a transition from a passive, teacher-dependent state to a more self-directed learning identity, characterized by a heightened sense of personal responsibility for practice routines and performance outcomes. Ultimately, this drive to prove competence optimizes performance quality and classroom engagement, positioning reverse psychology as an effective, student-centred alternative to traditional, direct instructional methods. This synthesis provides the empirical grounding necessary to advocate for the integration of psychologically informed pedagogical tools in the Malaysian higher education landscape.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Re-conceptualizing Student Motivation

The findings of this research suggest that reverse psychology serves as a potent catalyst for enhancing motivational orientation among undergraduate music students. By employing indirect pedagogical challenges, such as the strategic expression of doubt regarding technical readiness, educators trigger a sense of psychological reactance. Rather than inducing a state of failure, this approach prompts students to reassert their autonomy and demonstrate competence. When delivered within a respectful and supportive framework, these interventions successfully shift the student's drive from extrinsic compliance to an internalized determination to prove their musical capabilities.

Behavioral Engagement and Instructional Boundaries

Beyond internal motivation, reverse psychology significantly optimizes behavioural engagement during high-stakes rehearsals and lessons. Participants reported heightened levels of focus and attentiveness, transitioning from passive recipients of instruction to proactive contributors to the musical process. However, the data underscores a critical instructional boundary. Participants emphasized that the strategy is not universally applicable. If deployed with excessive frequency or a harsh delivery tone, the mechanism risks backfiring, potentially leading to genuine disengagement. This highlights the necessity for educators to balance psychological challenges with established rapport to maintain a healthy learning environment.

Implications for Music Pedagogy

In conclusion, the study identifies reverse psychology as a sophisticated instructional tool that fosters essential qualities in performance-based disciplines, including affective resilience, self-confidence, and independent learning. By encouraging students to take greater responsibility for their artistic progress, this approach cultivates a proactive professional identity. As music education continues to evolve toward student-centred models, integrating such psychologically informed strategies, grounded in mutual trust and ethical responsibility and offers a viable pathway for developing autonomous and resilient musicians in the Malaysian higher education context.

Implications

The findings of this study underscore the significant potential of reverse psychology as a nuanced motivational instrument within music education. For educators, the strategic and thoughtful incorporation of indirect challenges, particularly in high-stakes performance and practical settings, offers a viable pathway to stimulate student autonomy. At the institutional level, these results suggest a need for specialized professional development. Training modules for music faculty should prioritize the decoding of students' emotional responses, ensuring that lecturers can deploy such psychologically informed strategies within an ethical, balanced, and student-centred framework.

Limitations

Despite the depth of the qualitative insights gained, this research is subject to specific limitations. The study was bounded by a purposive sample of five participants within a single institutional context at Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM), which naturally constrains the immediate generalizability of the findings to broader cultural or disciplinary settings. Furthermore, as the data is derived solely from student perceptions, the research does not account for the educators' instructional intent or the long-term longitudinal impact of these psychological interventions on musical proficiency.

Recommendations for Future Research

To advance the academic rigor and generalizability of this field, future research should transition toward a mixed-methods framework, specifically employing quasi-experimental designs to quantitatively correlate reverse psychology interventions with objective performance metrics such as technical accuracy and practice consistency. Furthermore, expanding the study's scope to include a multi-institutional cohort across both public and private music conservatories in Malaysia would allow for a more comprehensive understanding of how varying institutional cultures influence psychological reactance. Finally, adopting a dyadic research perspective incorporating the lived experiences of both lecturers and students is essential to evaluate the alignment between instructional intent and psychological reception, ensuring that these strategies are refined into an ethically sound and empirically validated pedagogical model.

Conclusion

This study reveals that reverse psychology, when applied with genuine care and professional intuition, serves as far more than a mere instructional trick. It acts as a meaningful catalyst for student transformation. By strategically leaning into the psychological tension of a challenge, educators can help music students bridging the gap between passive learning and artistic ownership. The findings suggest that these indirect methods when rooted in a foundation of mutual trust, do not just boost engagement in the short term, but actually help students to be resilience and independence required for a professional career in music. Ultimately, this research invites a shift in how we view the Malaysian music classroom, moving toward a more nuanced, psychologically aware approach that respects the student's need for autonomy while providing the high-stakes challenges they need to truly excel.

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Statement and Declarations

Ethical Considerations: The Research Ethics Committee (REC) of Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM)

Consent to Participate: All the participants provided informed consent in written form.

Consent for Publication: Not applicable.

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