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Relationship Between Motivation and Students' Arabic Language Learning Outcomes in Malaysian Religious Secondary School

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ABSTRACT

Motivation is the driving force for a person to succeed or achieve something desired. Education scholars explain that motivation is a key element along with language ability in determining the success of language learning in the classroom. Positive and strong learning motivation among students is important to achieve language mastery. This study aims to examine the relationship between motivation and learning outcomes among religious secondary school students in Malaysia. For this purpose, a set of Likert scale-type questionnaires were distributed to 500 fourth-grade students who were selected using a random sampling technique from 20 religious secondary schools according to the zones in Malaysia. This quantitative study uses descriptive and inferential data analysis. The findings of the study show that the level of student motivation as a whole is at a mean value of 3.86 (SD = 0.49) which is at a moderately high level. The level of students' Arabic learning results as a whole is at a mean value of 3.52 (SD = 0.50) which is also at a moderately high level. The findings of the study also show that there is a significant relationship between motivation and students' Arabic learning outcomes (r=0.399, p>.05) at a significant level of 0.01. The findings of this relationship show that student motivation can affect their Arabic learning outcomes at school. Therefore, teachers need to always provide encouragement and motivation to students to continue learning and mastering Arabic.

Keywords: motivation, Arabic language, learning outcomes, religious secondary schools

INTRODUCTION

Motivation and learning outcomes are two important constructs in learning a foreign language, especially Arabic. Ames and Ames (1989) define motivation as the drive to create action and maintain the intention to achieve the desired goal. Gardner (1985) asserted that motivation is a key element along with language ability in determining the success of language learning in the classroom. Positive and strong learning motivation among students is important to achieve language learning goals. Students who have high motivation can help master a language (Nik Mohd Rahimi Nik Yusoff, Zamri Mahamod & Kamarulzaman Ab. Ghani, 2008). Kamsiah Abdullah (2010) stated that motivation is a concept of drive, which is a desire born from within oneself. Motivation is also a factor that gives energy and momentum to a student to act to make learning more active and effective (Kamarul Shukri Mat Teh & Mohamed Amin Embi, 2009).

Learning outcomes refer to a set of knowledge, skills, and competencies of a person that can be demonstrated after completing a learning process either formally or informally. The learning process is considered to be the acquisition of information and knowledge, the mastery of skills and habits, as well as the formation of attitudes and beliefs. This process takes place throughout life starting as soon as a human being is born. Thus, learning outcomes are defined as any relatively permanent behavioral changes that result from any form of experience and training that an individual undergoes (Seifert, 1983; Woolfolk, 1995). Ramsden (2003) also explained that learning outcomes are an expectation of what students have learned and can achieve at the end of a learning experience, whether in terms of knowledge, skills, and attitudes. Therefore, in the context of this study, the researchers aim to identify the relationship between motivation and the results of learning Arabic among secondary school students in Malaysia.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

The teaching and learning of Arabic in the education system in Malaysia has gone through a lot of development through many different dimensions. Malaysia has made strides by introducing Arabic language subjects at all levels of education starting from primary education to tertiary education. Although Arabic language education has been introduced in Malaysia for a long time, the level of skill and mastery of students at both school and higher education institutes is still a matter of discussion and questioning by various parties (Hairun Najuwah & Siti Nurhajariah, 2014). A study by Aishah Sjahrony, Maimun Aqsha Lubis, Harun Baharudin, and Mohd Sham Kamis (2017) found that students' Arabic proficiency at the university level is still at a moderate level. A study by Siti Salwa, Norasyikin Osman, Nur Azan Mohd Rouyan, Nor Hayati Che Hat, and Khoirun Nisak Mat Saad (2021) found that the level of Arabic speaking skills outside the classroom among non-native Arabic speakers is still at a

low level. A study by Zainur Rijal Abdul Razak, Rosni Samah, and Sulaiman Ismail (2020) found that the level of mastery of Arabic vocabulary among university students as a whole is still at a weak level. Another study conducted by Nur Afifah Fadzil, Nuraznan Jaafar, and Maryam Md Rofiee (2022) also found that the language proficiency level of form 5 students is at a moderate level. One of the factors that contribute to this issue is motivational problems in learning Arabic. A study conducted by Mohammad Haafiz Ahmid, Khairuddin Abdullah, and Khalid Johari (2018) found that aspects of teachers' teaching in Arabic need to be constantly improved because it has a positive and significant relationship with student motivation. Kamarul Shukri, Ab Aziz, and Nik Mohd Rahimi (2018) also explained that studies on Arabic language motivation involving integrative and instrumental orientations are still being carried out. Therefore, studies related to students' Arabic language motivation need to continue to identify the level of students' motivation because it affects the results of their Arabic language learning at school.

MOTIVATION

Saedah Sirah, Zainun Ishak & Tunku Mohani Tunku Mokhtar (1996) define motivation as the driving force for a person to succeed or achieve something desired. Issues and studies related to motivation in language learning began to be intensely debated among scholars in the 1990s. Many discussions and debates occur among scholars about motivation in mastering a second or foreign language (e.g., Dornyei, 1994; Oxford & Shearin, 1994; Dornyei, 1998, Lightbown & Spada, 1999). Despite differing opinions in various aspects, scholars admit that motivation plays a very important role in ensuring the success of students in learning and mastering a second language.

Various interpretations are presented by scholars in the field of education related to motivation. According to Oxford and Shearin (1996), motivation shows the activeness and personal involvement of students in learning a foreign or second language. They explained that students who are not given sufficient motivational support will not be able to develop their language skills to their full potential. Chastain (1988) also defines motivation as an initiative that is carried out consistently by an individual in a matter to achieve a set goal. Brown (2007) reviewed the definition of motivation based on three trends, namely according to behaviorism where motivation is seen as an expectation of reward. Humans are motivated to obtain reinforcement rewards based on actions and efforts that have been implemented. On the other hand, according to the cognitivism trend, they see motivation as a choice made by humans themselves while the constructivism trend thinks that everyone has different motivations and the emphasis is on the context of integration and individual personal choice. Brown (2007) also explained that students will be successful in language learning if they have high motivation.

Gardner (1985) is one of the pioneers who proposed a theory of motivation and saw motivation as a combination of effort and desire to achieve language learning goals. He also explained that motivation is related to an attitude that encourages

efforts towards achieving a language learning. He did a lot of research on language learning motivation and founded a socio-educational model (Gardner & Lambert, 1972; Gardner, 1985, 1988; Gardner & MacIntyre, 1991, 1993; Masgoret & Gardner, 2003). In this model, there are two main motivational orientations for language learning, namely integrative motivation and instrumental motivation. This means that students learn and master a second language for certain reasons.

Integrative motivation is related to students' positive attitude and interest in the society and language culture of the target group. The instrumental orientation emphasizes the desire to achieve practical goals in the field of education and economics such as wanting to continue studying at a higher level or get a job. The integrative and instrumental distinction has inspired much research on language learning motivation. They also found that students who have strong motivation will succeed in mastering language skills, give more voluntary feedback in classroom activities, and be more accurate in giving answers. On this basis, Gardner (1985) has founded an instrument known as the Attitude Motivation Test Battery (AMTB) quantitatively to measure the attitude and motivation of students in language learning and can predict the performance or results of language learning.

Motivation is an important factor in language learning. It is a drive that can influ-ence the behavior and attitude of individuals toward an interest. In the context of learning Arabic, highly motivated students will always try to learn Arabic until they achieve the best performance. Nur Afifah Fadzil et al., (2022) explained that motivation plays an important role in learning Arabic and can have a positive effect on students' Arabic language proficiency. Motivation can be increased either through self-cultivation or influenced by the surrounding environment. Linda Urfatullaila, Ima Rahmawati, Hana Lestari, and Zulfikar Is-mail (2022) stated that motivation has a very important influence on learning to produce quality education. Students who have good and high learning motivation will help improve their understanding of learning Arabic more easily. Nurhayati and Julita Sari Nasution (2022) also explained that motivation can be a driving force and encourage a person to make use of the potential that exists in oneself to obtain better performance in learning Arabic.

LEARNING OUTCOME

Cedefop (2016) defines learning outcomes as a statement about what students know and understand after completing a learning process whether from the aspects of knowledge, skills, and competence. Azizi Ahmad (2010) stated that learning outcomes are about the knowledge and abilities that students can demonstrate after something is assessed and measured based on the teaching objectives set. Benjamin Samuel Bloom is a psychologist in the field of education who has made contributions in conducting research and development on the ability to think in the learning process. In measuring learning outcomes, Bloom's Taxonomy (Bloom, 1956) has been used because it is comprehensive in helping one get an expectation about the aspects of emphasis that should be given to certain behaviors in a set of educational plans. Bloom

(1956) has established that this taxonomy includes three domains, namely cognitive, affective, and psychomotor which are the yardsticks for evaluating a learning outcome. This taxonomy was reorganized by a group of educational psychologists led by Benjamin Bloom in 1956 which was later known as Bloom's Taxonomy in 1965 (Azizi Ahmad, 2010). Anderson and Krathwohl et al. (2001) have made a renewal and improvement to this concept of taxonomy in line with the development and progress of the twenty-first century. They have taken steps by reviewing and changing the hierarchy of learning in the cognitive domain by placing the verbs of applying, analyzing, synthesizing, and evaluating in the hierarchical categories.

In principle, the education system in Malaysia is no exception in aspiring to the concept of Bloom's Taxonomy (1956) including in the learning of the Arabic language. Starting from primary school up to university level, the exam assessment format is based on the six levels of thinking skills of Bloom's Taxonomy, namely remembering level, understanding level, applying level, analyzing level, evaluating level, and creating level. This study will apply Bloom's Taxonomy (1956) as a tool to measure student learning outcomes because this taxonomy is easy to understand, and clear and has been adopted as a tool to measure learning outcomes until today (Azizi Ahmad, 2010). The hierarchy of learning behavior is categorized into three learning domains that are interrelated with each other, namely cognitive (knowledge), affective (attitude), and psychomotor (skills).

The cognitive domain involves knowledge and the development of intellectual skills (Bloom, 1956). Bloom (1989) explains that the cognitive domain is related to learning outcomes in intellectual aspects such as remembering, reasoning, solving problems, forming concepts, and creative thinking. This cognitive domain includes a person's ability to remember, understand, analyze, evaluate, synthesize, and create. According to Beard & Wilson (2006) and Kamaruzaman Moidunny (2012), the objective of the cognitive domain is an objective that changes from reviewing what has been learned to synthesizing new material creatively and innovatively. All these skills involve a high cognitive process because a person with a high mental ability will be able to translate something well and will cause the result of his behavior to be good or otherwise.

Bloom (1956) thinks the affective domain is a taxonomy that involves changes in terms of interests, attitudes, values and appreciation, and appropriate adaptation. Anderson (1980) also explains that the affective domain is a dimension within the student that can be categorized as values, self-esteem, concerns, interests, self-control, attitudes, and preferences. He also outlined the affective characteristics that involve feelings and emotions, thoughts and behaviors, the intensity of the strength of feelings, a positive or negative direction of the orientation of feelings, and a target towards which feelings to be directed. In all these conceptualizations, it is clear that the affective domain is a reflection of students' beliefs, values, interests, and behaviors (Krathwohl, Bloom & Masia, 1964).

While the psychomotor domain refers to the use of basic motor skills, coordination, and physical movement. The development of these skills requires

practice and is measured in terms of speed, accuracy, distance, procedure, or technique in an execution. The psycho-motor domain has five levels of difficulty, which are familiarization, basic skills, develop-ment, adjustment, and adaptation (Simpson, 1972). An effort to implement this domain in-volves the development of different skills according to a person's expertise in addition to requiring sufficient training to master a certain skill.

The findings of previous studies proved that motivation contributes to the learning outcomes and academic achievement of students. Nik Mohd Rahimi et al. (2009) explained that there is a significant relationship between motivation and student achievement in Arabic oral learning where the higher the student's motivation, the better the student's achievement in Arabic oral learning. The study of Siti Sukainah et al. (2014) showed that a positive attitude, motivation, and efforts to master the target language are important elements that determine the success of language learners. Misnan Jemali's study (1999) found a significant relationship between motivation and student achievement in learning Arabic communication.

METHODOLOGY

This study is a descriptive study that uses a survey design and uses quantitative data analysis methods. This survey method was chosen because it can describe motivation and its relationship with student learning outcomes. The study respondents consisted of 500 fourth-grade students in religious secondary schools in Malaysia. They are made up of Arabic language students in 20 religious secondary schools throughout Malaysia. The chosen religious schools are religious schools under the control of the Malaysian Ministry of Education, namely Sekolah Menengah Kebangsaan Agama (SMKA) and Sekolah Agama Bantuan Kera-jaan (SABK). The sampling method in this study uses a stratified random sampling method because it is based on five zones in Malaysia. In this study, the researcher has grouped all the populations into five designated zones, which are the northern zone, the southern zone, the central zone, and the eastern zone and the East Malaysia zone. A total of 100 sample people were set to represent each zone. In the second stage, the researcher again used the cluster random technique where at this stage the student sample for each zone was divided into SMKA and SABK categories. The sample for each school category is then selected ran-domly with a balanced ratio. So a total of 50 people were sampled among SMKA students and another 50 people were sampled among SABK students.

In the context of this study, a set of questionnaires has been constructed by the researcher in adaptation and modification from previous research questionnaire items to measure in detail related to the research constructs that cover the motivation and results of learning Arabic. Modifications have been made to selected items based on expert opinions and pilot study findings. Expert review is necessary to ensure construct validity as well as clarity of content (Kline, 2005). The research instrument that was built was given to experts who have skills in the relevant field to be reviewed to ensure that the content is appropriate and meets the goals of the study. All of these adapted items

were retested for validity and reliability through Cronbach Alpha and Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA). The questionnaire in this study is based on a five-point Likert scale. The researcher used descriptive statistics to evaluate the mean, standard deviation, and frequency and used descriptive correlation to identify the relationship between the study constructs.

OBJECTIVES

The objectives outlined in this study are as follows:-
1) To identify the level of motivation among religious secondary school students in Malaysia.
2) To identify the level of Arabic language learning outcomes among religious secondary school students in Malaysia.
3) To identify the relationship between motivation and Arabic language learning outcomes among religious secondary school students in Malaysia.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1 . Descriptive Analysis of Motivation

Construct	Subconstructs	Mean	SD	Interpretation
Motivation	Integrative	3.88	0.63	Moderately high
	Instrumental	3.84	0.51	Moderately high
Overall		3.86	0.49	Moderately high

Table 1 shows the mean, standard deviation, minimum, and maximum values for the motivation subconstruct. The highest mean for the integrative motivation subconstruct is 3.88 (SD = 0.63) which is at a moderately high level. Next, the mean value for the instrumental motivation subconstruct is 3.84 (SD = 0.51) which is also at a moderately high level. Next, the mean value for overall motivation is 3.86 (SD = 0.49) which is at a moderately high level. Next, the table 2 shows a descriptive analysis of the construct of learning outcomes.

Table 2. Descriptive Analysis of Learning Outcomes

Construct	Subconstructs	Mean	SD	Interpretation
Learning Outcomes	Kognitif	3.55	0.54	Moderately high
	Afektif	3.87	0.59	Moderately high
	Psikomotor	3.15	0.70	Moderately high
	Overall	**3.52**	**0.50**	**Moderately high**

Table 2 shows the mean value, standard deviation, and interpretation for the learning outcomes subconstruct. The highest mean for the learning outcome sub-

construct is effective which is 3.87 (SP = 0.59) which is at a moderately high level, while the lowest mean is psychomotor which is 3.15 (SP = 0.70) which is at a moderately high level. Next, the mean value for cognitive is 3.55 (SP = 0.54) which is at a moderately high level. Next, the mean value of the learning outcomes as a whole is 3.52 (SP = 0.50) which is at a moderately high level.

Motivation and results of learning Arabic are two basic constructs that are important in this study to identify the relationship between the two. This study has shown the existence of a relationship, the form of the relationship, and the degree of strength of the relationship between motivation and the results of learning Arabic among religious secondary school students in Malaysia. To answer this question, the interpretation of the r value given by Guilford (1956) and Alias Baba (1999) was referred to. The analysis of the relationship between the two variables is shown in Table 3.

Table 3. Correlation Coefficient Between Motivation and Arabic Language Learning Outcomes

Motivation	r	p
Arabic Language Learning Outcomes	.399**	0.00

Note **. Significant at the p<0.01 confidence level

Table 3 above shows that there is a significant relationship between motivation and students' Arabic learning outcomes (r= .399, p>.05) at a significant level of 0.01. The findings of this relationship show that motivation can influence and have a significant relationship with students' Arabic learning outcomes. Therefore, to ensure mastery of Arabic can be achieved, teachers need to constantly provide enthusiasm and motivation to students to learn Arabic. The presentation and motivation techniques used by the teacher can attract their interest to continue learning. Azizi and Jaafar Sidek (2006) explained that teachers should always give positive reinforcement to students in the language learning process. This statement is also supported by a study by Mardian and Marniyati (2011) who said that teachers play an important role in determining the language learning process in a conducive and effective environment.

Motivational factors need to be emphasized because they have an impact on student achievement. In the context of learning Arabic, Nik Mohd Rahimi et al. (2009) explained that there is a significant relationship between motivation and student achievement in the oral learning of Arabic where the higher the students' motivation, the better their achievement in the oral learning of Arabic. According to Oxford and Shearin (1996), motivation shows activity and personal involvement in learning a foreign or second language. They state that students who are not adequately motivated will not be able to develop their language skills to fulfill their potential. Chastain (1988) asserts that motivation is very important as an incentive that causes individuals to engage in activities toward a goal that a person wants to achieve.

Rosni Samah (2014) also stated that the level of motivation among students is one of the factors that can influence the level of student achievement. Motivation plays a role and has a huge influence on the success of learning a second language. This is because it is an important element that allows students to actively engage in addition to making the learning process happen in an effective and meaningful way. Without high motivation, the learning process will be faced with various learning problems such as not having a high spirit to succeed in the future, easily giving up on learning challenges, and learning just to get a degree without thinking about excellence. Many previous studies have proven that motivation is a predictor and an important factor in student achievement. A study conducted by Goodman et al. (2011) found that academic achievement had a positive impact as a result of intrinsic motivation and student effort. Overall, this study states that students' intrinsic motivation and effort are strong predictors of students' academic achievement.

The study of Muhammad Ikmal Rezal et al. (2020) on 375 UTHM students also showed that there is a significant relationship between intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation, and academic achievement. In addition, the literature review developed by Elvira Utami et al. (2022) on past studies related to the construct of motivation and learning outcomes also shows that there is a significant positive relationship between motivation and student learning outcomes. A study conducted by Turner, Chandler, and Heffer (2009) among university students in the field of psychology in the Southwestern United States also proved that the intrinsic motivation of students has a significant relationship with their academic achievement. This proves that motivation is an important factor in the success of academic achievement or student learning outcomes. Therefore, teachers need to play an important role in motivating students. Motivation from the teacher will be the driving force for the will and desire of the students to succeed in learning apart from the potential that exists in the students. This is supported by Gardner (1985) who asserts that strong motivation and language ability are key elements in determining the success of language learning in the classroom.

The findings of this study are also supported by the study of Siti Fatimah Radzi et al., (2019) who found that students who have a positive attitude towards learning Arabic will indirectly have a high motivation towards learning the language. Motivation and attitude also have a positive relationship with academic achievement. The study of Nurhayati et al., (2022) also found that motivation has a significant and strong relationship with the results of learning Arabic. A study by Linda Urfatullaila et al., (2022) also shows consistent findings where there is a positive and significant relationship between intrinsic motivation and student learning outcomes. Studies show that the higher the intrinsic motivation in students, the higher the student's learning outcomes in Arabic.

CONCLUSION

The findings of the study show that motivation is the main factor that affects the learning of Arabic for religious secondary school students in Malaysia. Motivation is very important in the teaching process and learning Arabic because it can determine its direction and effectiveness. Highly motivated students usually have a strong drive to continue to be interested in what is delivered as a result of strong stimuli from integrative motivation and instrumental motivation. Since students have different tendencies and interests, they should be helped to be interested in learning Arabic. For example, teachers play an important role in providing enthusiasm and motivation to students to learn and be able to choose teaching materials and resources as well as appropriate teaching methods and techniques in the classroom. The students should also realize that motivation in learning Arabic is a drive and energy that can stimulate students to get involved actively in the class. Motivation is also the main pillar in the effort to generate and nurture the ability to master Arabic. In addition, students are also encouraged to always motivate themselves and maintain inner strength to be able to learn Arabic continuously throughout life. Thus, motivation is one of the important mechanisms for raising the drive to achieve excellent academic results, including achievement in Arabic language subjects.

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