

## THE ROLE OF THE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT IN THE ARABIC LANGUAGE MATRICULATION PROGRAM: ITS IMPACT ON MOTIVATION AND LEARNING OUTCOMES

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**Abstract:** This research investigates the role of the learning environment in Arabic matriculation programs and its impact on student motivation and learning outcomes. The method used is a mixed approach (qualitative and quantitative). Qualitative data was obtained through in-depth interviews with students and teachers to explore perceptions of the classroom atmosphere, teacher support, and learning facilities. Quantitative data were collected through questionnaires measuring motivation and perceptions of the learning environment, and analyzed alongside exam results. The sample consisted of 100 students from three institutions. Linear regression analysis revealed a significant relationship between students' perceptions of the learning environment—particularly teacher support and facility comfort—and motivation and academic achievement. Qualitative findings supported these results, highlighting the role of classroom atmosphere and interpersonal interactions in enhancing learning engagement. These findings provide important insights into the learning environment factors that support the success of Arabic language learning, emphasizing the importance of student-centered instructional design.

**Keywords:** Learning Environment, Arabic Matriculation, Motivation, Learning Outcome

### 1. INTRODUCTION

The Arabic language matriculation program is the initial stage of language skills development to equip new students at religious universities in Indonesia, particularly Islamic universities, with adequate linguistic foundations. In various Islamic religious universities, this program not only serves as a means to balance the competencies of students from diverse educational backgrounds but also as a crucial foundation to support the smooth progression of Arabic language learning at higher levels.

However, evaluations of various internal studies and academic reports show that learning outcomes in the matriculation program still very variable, with some students showing low results and weakened learning motivation. So, One factor that has not been studied in depth is the contribution of the learning environment to student motivation and academic outcomes in this context.

The learning environment encompasses classroom atmosphere, interaction with instructors, availability and comfort of facilities, as well as emotional and academic support. Previous studies have largely focused on pedagogical approaches or curricula, but have not comprehensively integrated learning environment variables as critical factors in the Arabic language learning process, particularly within the context of matriculation at Islamic religious universities.

This research is important given the urgency to improve the quality of matriculation programs as the foundation for Arabic language learning. By identifying which aspects of the learning environment most influence motivation and learning outcomes, educational institutions can redesign more effective and student-centered instructional strategies.

The focus of this research is to empirically explore and analyze how students' perceptions of the learning environment—particularly teacher support and facility comfort—contribute to motivation and academic achievement in Arabic matriculation programs.

**Gap Analysis:** Most previous studies have only examined the effectiveness of materials, teaching methods, and assessments in matriculation programs. And a little studies have directly linked students' perceptions of the learning environment to their learning outcomes and motivation. This is the gap that this study aims to fill.

**Novelty:** This article uses a mixed-methods approach to explore psychosocial (motivation) and academic (learning outcomes) in the context of Arabic language learning at the matriculation stage, taking into account learning environment factors in a holistic manner.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

According to Fraser (2012), the learning environment encompasses all physical and psychosocial conditions in which the learning process takes place. A conducive, supportive, and communicative environment can increase students' active participation in learning activities. The learning environment is divided into two categories: physical (classrooms, facilities, cleanliness) and psychosocial (relationships between students, interaction with teachers, emotional support).

**Arabic Language Matriculation** is a program designed to standardize the initial abilities of new students so that they can acquire basic language skills. According to Ma'arif (2019), this program aims to enable students to understand basic Arabic texts and communicate in a simple manner. The success of this program is largely determined by the teaching methods, classroom environment, and students' motivation to learn.

**Learning motivation** is the internal and external drive that encourages a person to actively engage in the learning process. According to Deci & Ryan (2000), intrinsic motivation arises from personal interest and satisfaction with the learning process, while extrinsic motivation is related to external goals such as grades and recognition.

**Learning Outcomes** are measured by the mastery of knowledge, skills, and attitudes acquired after participating in the educational process. Bloom (1956) classified learning outcomes into three domains: cognitive, affective, and psychomotor.

**Novelty and Gap Analysis:** Based on existing literature, there have been few studies that simultaneously integrate learning environment theory and motivation in the context of Arabic language matriculation programs. This research fills this gap with an integrative approach, using qualitative and quantitative data to explain the relationship more comprehensively.

## 3. METHOD AND DATA

This study uses a mixed methods approach with an explanatory sequential design, which combines quantitative and qualitative data (where quantitative data is collected and analyzed first, followed by qualitative data collection and analysis based on the quantitative results) to provide an in-depth understanding of the relationship between the learning environment, motivation, and learning outcomes.

### 3.1 Quantitative Design

Quantitative data was obtained through the distribution of questionnaires to 100 students enrolled in the Arabic language matriculation program at three different Islamic religious universities. The questionnaire instrument consisted of three sections: (1) perceptions of the learning environment, (2) learning motivation, and (3) final program exam scores. The scale used was a 5-point Likert scale.

The data were analyzed using multiple linear regression to examine the effect of the learning environment on motivation and learning outcomes. The independent variables consisted of

aspects of the learning environment: teacher support, facility comfort, and classroom atmosphere. The dependent variables were motivation levels and final exam results.

### 3.2 Qualitative Design

Qualitative data were collected through semi-structured interviews with 10 students and 5 lecturers from different institutions. The interviews were conducted to deepen understanding of how students perceive the classroom atmosphere, the role of lecturers, and their influence on students' enthusiasm and learning achievements. The data were analyzed using thematic analysis techniques.

### 3.3 Validity and Reliability

The content validity of the questionnaire was tested through expert judgment by three Arabic language education experts. Reliability was tested using Cronbach's Alpha, which showed values  $>0.8$  for all subscales, indicating high internal consistency.

### 3.4 Research Ethics

This research complies with academic ethical principles, including informed consent from all participants and anonymity (confidentiality) of data. Researchers also obtained official permission from each institution.

**The strength of this methodology** lies in the integration of complementary quantitative and qualitative data. Quantitative data shows general patterns, while qualitative data provides deeper context for understanding those patterns.

## 4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### 4.1 Quantitative Research Results

Based on the results of questionnaires completed by 100 students enrolled in Arabic language matriculation programs at three Islamic universities, the following picture emerged regarding students' perceptions of their learning environment:

- a. A comfortable classroom is the dominant factor felt by students. Most stated that the classrooms they occupied supported the learning process due to adequate lighting, cleanliness, and appropriate room temperature. This is reflected in the statement item "The classroom I occupy is comfortable enough for learning," which received a high average score (4.3 on a scale of 5).
- b. Learning facilities, such as LCDs, whiteboards, air conditioning, and other audio-visual devices, are considered to function well. Respondents believe that the completeness and quality of these facilities help them understand the material, especially in visual and auditory presentations, which are very important in language learning. This is in line with the item "Learning support facilities function well," which received an average score of 4.1.
- c. In terms of classroom interaction and management, most students stated that their lecturers were able to create a conducive classroom atmosphere. This is not only demonstrated by classroom orderliness and time management but also through the personal approach taken by instructors, as reflected in the statements "My instructor is able to create a conducive classroom environment" and "I feel cared for by my instructor during the learning process," with average scores of 4.2 and 4.4, respectively.
- d. Interpersonal relationships among students are also an important aspect that cannot be overlooked. Respondents reported having good relationships with their classmates, which contributes to a positive and supportive learning environment. This is evident from the item "I have good relationships with my classmates," which received an average score of 4.3.
- e. Furthermore, a classroom atmosphere that supports active discussion is an important factor in increasing learning motivation. Students feel that they are encouraged to actively

ask questions and discuss without fear or embarrassment. This is emphasized in the statement “The classroom atmosphere encourages me to actively ask questions and discuss,” which received an average score of 4.0.

- f. Finally, students also assessed that the feedback provided by lecturers was clear and constructive, enabling them to identify their weaknesses and the direction for improving their learning. This was reinforced by the statement “Lecturers provide clear and constructive feedback,” which received a high score of 4.5.
- g. Learning Motivation: Students demonstrated a fairly high level of learning motivation, with an average score of 4.1/5. Intrinsic motivation (e.g., the desire to understand Arabic texts for religious studies) is more dominant than extrinsic motivation (e.g., for high grades).
- h. Learning Outcomes (Final Exam): The final exam results show an average score of 78, with scores ranging from 60 to 90.
- i. Linear Regression Analysis Results:
  - There is a positive and significant relationship between teacher support and learning motivation ( $\beta = 0.48$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ).
  - Facility comfort also shows a significant correlation with motivation ( $\beta = 0.34$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ).
  - Learning motivation has a significant influence on learning outcomes ( $\beta = 0.52$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ).
  - Perceptions of classroom atmosphere contribute indirectly to learning outcomes through increased motivation.

These results indicate that the more positive students' perceptions of the learning environment, the higher their motivation, which ultimately impacts academic achievement.

#### 4.2 Qualitative Research Results

From in-depth interviews, several main themes emerged:

- a. Teacher Support: Students feel more motivated when lecturers give personal attention, use a communicative approach, and provide constructive feedback.
- b. Learning Facilities: Access to comfortable classrooms, supporting technology (LCD, audio), and materials tailored to initial skill levels greatly helps improve learning focus.
- c. Classroom Atmosphere: Interactive and relaxed classrooms, with group discussions, role-playing, and creative activities such as games or conversation simulations, have a positive effect on student engagement.
- d. Social Interaction: Harmonious relationships among students and support from peers further strengthen the spirit of learning.

A student from an Islamic religious university in East Java stated: “When the teacher greets us by name and motivates us with religious teachings, I feel motivated and valued. The room is also air-conditioned, making it comfortable to study.” Meanwhile, a lecturer emphasized: “When the class feels lively and not one-sided, students become more active. A supportive environment is crucial.”

#### 4.3 Discussion

Integrating quantitative results with in-depth interviews strengthens the finding that a positive physical and psychological learning environment plays an important role in building learning motivation. Comfortable classrooms and adequate facilities not only support learning comfort but also signal that the institution values the students' educational process.

Furthermore, the role of the lecturer as a facilitator and motivator is crucial. When students feel personally attended to and given space for active participation, their engagement in learning increases. This aspect aligns with Deci & Ryan's (2000) Self-Determination Theory, which states that an environment that meets the needs for support, autonomy, and

competence can increase students' intrinsic motivation. Teacher support in this context becomes a very strong support in shaping sustainable learning motivation.

The comfort of learning facilities and a positive classroom atmosphere provide a sense of security and comfort, which are important prerequisites for effective learning, as stated by Fraser (2012). This aspect is highly relevant in the context of Arabic language learning, which requires high concentration and intensive verbal interaction.

Positive social interactions, both with lecturers and classmates, help create a supportive learning environment. In the context of learning Arabic, which requires courage to speak and express oneself, this atmosphere is crucial.

This study also confirms that motivation acts as a mediator between the learning environment and learning outcomes. This reinforces the hypothesis that creating a conducive learning environment is a long-term investment in students' academic achievement.

In the context of Islamic religious higher education institutions, these findings provide important insights for academic management to pay more attention to the learning environment, not just focusing on the curriculum and methods. Small improvements in faculty-student interactions, classroom layout, and student-centered instructional strategies can have a significant impact.

Thus, these findings reinforce the argument that positive perceptions of the learning environment—in terms of physical comfort, quality of learning facilities, classroom atmosphere, and lecturer-student interaction—contribute greatly to increasing student motivation to learn. In the context of the Arabic language matriculation program, this is particularly relevant because this phase serves as the foundational stage of language learning, where students' self-confidence and active engagement are still in the formative stages. The indirect impact is also evident in improved learning outcomes, as demonstrated by the regression analysis ( $\beta = 0.52$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ).

In line with the theory proposed by Schunk, Pintrich, & Meece (2014), learning motivation is not only influenced by internal factors but also by environmental stimuli that create positive perceptions of the learning process. When students feel physically and emotionally supported, their motivation to actively participate in learning increases, and this ultimately has a direct impact on their academic achievements.

In addition, Santrock (2021) also emphasizes that positive learning experiences at the beginning of college (such as in matriculation programs) can shape more effective long-term learning patterns. Therefore, the quality of the learning environment in the matriculation phase needs special attention from educational institutions, especially in Islamic Higher Education Institutions that have a background of diversity in students' readiness in Arabic language.

Thus, both quantitative and qualitative data show a strong alignment that a quality learning environment—both physically and psychosocially—is an important factor in shaping learning motivation and improving student learning outcomes in Arabic matriculation programs.

## 5. CONCLUSIONS

This study proves that the learning environment has a significant influence on student motivation and learning outcomes in the Arabic language matriculation program at Islamic Religious Colleges. Teacher support, comfortable facilities, and a positive classroom atmosphere contribute to shaping students' intrinsic motivation, which in turn impacts their academic achievement.

Quantitative data reveal a significant correlation between perceptions of the learning environment and motivation and exam results. Qualitative findings reinforce this by describing

how elements of the learning environment are perceived by students and teachers in daily teaching practices.

These findings emphasize the importance of designing a learning environment that is physically and psychologically supportive. Islamic Religious Universities need to consider these results in developing matriculation programs to make them more effective and student-success oriented from the start of their studies.

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