



Motivation and Anxiety in Arabic Language Learning: Implications for Innovative Instruction

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A B S T R A K

Motivation and anxiety are two psychological factors that strongly influence success in Arabic language learning. Motivation functions as an internal drive that encourages learners to study, practice, and achieve instructional goals, whereas anxiety may become a barrier that reduces confidence, participation, and communicative performance in Arabic. This study aims to describe the relationship between motivation and anxiety in Arabic language learning. The findings indicate that learners with higher motivation tend to show greater confidence and better control of anxiety during the learning process. In contrast, high levels of anxiety may reduce learning motivation and hinder academic achievement. These findings imply that Arabic language instruction should be supported by a learning environment that is encouraging, engaging, and responsive to learners' psychological needs. Therefore, innovative instructional approaches are needed to strengthen motivation while reducing anxiety in order to improve the effectiveness of Arabic language learning.

Abstract

Motivasi dan kecemasan merupakan dua faktor psikologis yang sangat memengaruhi keberhasilan pembelajaran bahasa Arab. Motivasi berperan sebagai dorongan internal yang menggerakkan peserta didik untuk belajar, berlatih, dan mencapai tujuan pembelajaran, sedangkan kecemasan dapat menjadi hambatan yang menurunkan kepercayaan diri, partisipasi, dan kemampuan berkomunikasi dalam bahasa Arab. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mendeskripsikan hubungan antara motivasi dan kecemasan dalam pembelajaran bahasa Arab. Hasil kajian menunjukkan bahwa peserta didik yang memiliki motivasi tinggi cenderung lebih percaya diri dan lebih mampu mengendalikan kecemasan selama proses belajar. Sebaliknya, tingkat kecemasan yang tinggi dapat menurunkan motivasi belajar dan menghambat pencapaian hasil belajar. Temuan ini menunjukkan bahwa pembelajaran bahasa Arab perlu didukung oleh lingkungan belajar yang suportif, menarik, dan responsif terhadap kebutuhan psikologis peserta didik. Oleh karena itu, diperlukan pendekatan pembelajaran yang inovatif untuk meningkatkan motivasi sekaligus mengurangi kecemasan guna mendukung pembelajaran bahasa Arab yang lebih efektif.

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1. Introduction

Arabic language learning is shaped not only by linguistic and pedagogical dimensions but also by affective factors that directly influence learners' engagement, self-confidence, and academic achievement. Among these affective variables, motivation and anxiety are consistently identified as two of the most influential determinants of success or difficulty in language learning. Motivation serves as an internal driving force that encourages learners to engage in learning activities, sustain effort, and persist in achieving instructional goals,

whereas anxiety may diminish self-confidence, participation, and language performance. Recent literature further suggests that effective learning experiences are strongly influenced by the design of learning environments that foster emotional engagement and psychological comfort among learners [1]–[5]. Therefore, Arabic language learning should be understood not merely as a process of acquiring linguistic competence but also as a learning experience that is substantially shaped by learners' psychological conditions.

In the context of Arabic language instruction, many learners continue to exhibit varying levels of motivation and experience anxiety when required to speak, read, or interact in Arabic during classroom activities. This issue is particularly significant because Arabic language learning possesses distinctive linguistic, cultural, and religious characteristics that differentiate it from the learning of other foreign languages. Consequently, learners' experiences in Arabic language classrooms cannot always be equated with those in other language-learning contexts. Recent studies have demonstrated that anxiety and self-confidence exert a direct influence on learners' Arabic-speaking performance [6], while positive affective factors such as foreign language enjoyment and self-efficacy can strengthen learners' willingness to communicate [7]. These findings underscore that motivation and anxiety should not be regarded as peripheral variables but rather as central elements that shape the quality of the Arabic language learning process.

A substantial body of research has established a positive relationship between motivation and successful foreign language learning. Learners with higher levels of motivation tend to participate more actively in classroom activities, demonstrate greater persistence in practice, and exhibit stronger resilience when facing learning challenges. Conversely, language anxiety often impedes learners' ability to comprehend instructional materials, communicate effectively, and interact using the target language [3], [4]. Nevertheless, most studies on motivation and anxiety have been conducted within the context of English language learning or other foreign languages, whereas investigations specifically examining the relationship between these variables in Arabic language learning remain relatively limited. Furthermore, innovative research in Arabic language education has predominantly focused on instructional media, pedagogical approaches, and learning strategies—such as digital gamification, constructivist approaches, TPACK-based instructional videos, and the RADEC model—to enhance learning outcomes [8]–[11]. As a result, learners' affective dimensions have rarely been examined simultaneously as a foundation for developing innovative Arabic language instruction.

These circumstances reveal a clear research gap. First, studies that simultaneously investigate motivation and anxiety in Arabic language learning, particularly within the Indonesian educational context, remain scarce. Second, previous research has generally examined these variables independently, thereby providing only a partial understanding of how they interact to influence learners' educational experiences. Third, although innovation in Arabic language instruction continues to advance, discussions concerning the implications of affective factors for innovative instruction remain insufficiently developed. Contemporary educational literature emphasizes that adaptive, interactive, and learner-centered learning environments can strengthen motivation while simultaneously reducing psychological barriers to learning [1], [2], [12]–[15]. Consequently, a more comprehensive understanding of

the interplay between motivation and anxiety is essential for informing the design of effective and innovative instructional practices.

Against this backdrop, the novelty of the present study lies in its attempt to examine the relationship between motivation and anxiety simultaneously within the context of Arabic language learning and to position these findings as a basis for formulating pedagogical implications for innovative instruction. Accordingly, this study seeks not only to describe learners' affective conditions but also to provide a conceptual foundation for developing Arabic language instruction that is more supportive, engaging, and responsive to learners' psychological needs.

In line with this objective, the study aims to: (1) describe learners' levels of motivation in Arabic language learning; (2) identify learners' levels of anxiety in Arabic language learning; (3) analyze the relationship between motivation and anxiety in Arabic language learning; and (4) formulate pedagogical implications of this relationship for the development of more innovative Arabic language instruction. Through this focus, the study is expected to contribute theoretically to the growing body of research on affective factors in Arabic language learning while also offering practical insights for educators in designing instructional environments that enhance motivation and reduce learner anxiety.

2. Method

2.1. Research Design

This study employed a quantitative approach with a correlational design to examine the relationship between motivation and anxiety in Arabic language learning. The study also used a cross-sectional survey design, in which data were collected once during the research period. This design was considered appropriate because the study aimed to describe the levels of motivation and anxiety and to identify the statistical relationship between the two variables at a single point in time [21].

2.2. Research Context and Setting

The study was conducted among students who participated in Arabic language learning at the selected school as the research site.

2.3. Participants and Sampling Technique

The population consisted of all students enrolled in Arabic language classes. The sample was selected using proportional random sampling, with a total of 100 respondents (or adjusted to the actual population size), in order to represent the characteristics of the population. Editorial note: the manuscript should clarify the population size and the basis for the proportional allocation.

2.4. Research Instruments

The instrument used in this study was a closed-ended questionnaire with a five-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree. The motivation variable was measured using 20 items, while the anxiety variable was measured using 20 items constructed on the basis of indicators relevant to Arabic language learning. Likert-type scales are widely used in educational research because they allow researchers to capture respondents' attitudes and perceptions in a structured format [18].

Editorial note: the manuscript should specify the construct dimensions or indicators for each variable.

2.5. *Data Collection Procedures*

The study was conducted through the following stages:

1. Determining the research population and sample.
2. Constructing the motivation and anxiety instruments for Arabic language learning.
3. Conducting instrument validity and reliability testing.
4. Distributing the questionnaire to the respondents once during class hours.
5. Processing the data using descriptive statistics and Pearson correlation.
6. Interpreting the results to explain the relationship between motivation and anxiety in Arabic language learning.

The questionnaires were distributed directly to respondents during learning hours. Each respondent completed the questionnaire independently within approximately 20–30 minutes. All collected data were checked for completeness before analysis.

2.6. *Validity and Reliability*

Prior to administration, the instrument was subjected to content validity testing through expert judgment. Content validity was examined using Aiken's V, which is widely used to evaluate the degree of agreement among experts regarding item relevance [16]. Reliability was then assessed using Cronbach's Alpha, with an acceptance threshold of $\alpha \geq 0.70$ [17]. Editorial note: the manuscript should report the final Aiken's V values and Cronbach's Alpha coefficients for both variables.

2.7. *Data Analysis*

The data were analyzed using statistical software. Descriptive statistics were used to describe students' levels of motivation and anxiety, including the mean, standard deviation, minimum score, and maximum score. The normality assumption was checked before inferential analysis [19]. The relationship between motivation and anxiety was then analyzed using the Pearson product-moment correlation test, with a significance level of 0.05. Pearson correlation is appropriate for examining the linear relationship between two continuous variables when the normality assumption is met [20].

3. *Result and Discussion*

3.1. *Result*

This section presents the findings in line with the study objectives: (1) to describe students' motivation in Arabic language learning, (2) to describe students' anxiety in Arabic language learning, and (3) to examine the relationship between motivation and anxiety.

3.1.1. *Students' Motivation in Arabic Language Learning*

The data indicate that most students demonstrated moderate to high levels of motivation in Arabic language learning. As presented in Table 1, 18% of the respondents were categorized as having very high motivation, 52% as high, 24% as moderate, and 6% as low. Overall, these findings show that the majority of students had a relatively strong drive to participate in Arabic language learning.

Table 1. Students' Motivation Levels

Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Very High	18	18
High	52	52
Moderate	24	24
Low	6	6
Total	100	100

The pattern in Table 1 indicates that 70% of the students were in the high to very high motivation categories. This finding suggests that most respondents had a relatively strong willingness to learn Arabic, engage with learning activities, and pursue instructional goals. Meanwhile, 24% of the students were categorized as having moderate motivation, and only 6% were categorized as having low motivation. These findings show that low motivation was present, but only among a small minority of the respondents

3.1.2. Students' Anxiety in Arabic Language Learning

The analysis of anxiety indicates that most students experienced anxiety at the moderate level. As shown in Table 2, more than half of the respondents were categorized as moderately anxious, while a smaller proportion were categorized as highly anxious or low in anxiety. These findings suggest that anxiety remained an important affective condition in the Arabic language learning process.

Table 2. Students' Anxiety Levels.

Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
High	20	20
Moderate	58	58
Low	22	22
Total	100	100

Table 2 shows that 58% of students experienced anxiety at a moderate level, while 20% were in the high-anxiety category and 22% were in the low-anxiety category. This means that most students were not free from anxiety during Arabic language learning. Although the majority were not in the high-anxiety group, the presence of moderate anxiety in more than half of the respondents indicates that anxiety remained a substantial part of students' learning experiences.

3.1.3. Relationship Between Motivation and Anxiety

The relationship between motivation and anxiety was tested using the Pearson product-moment correlation. The analysis revealed a negative and statistically significant correlation between the two variables. As shown in Table 3, the correlation coefficient was $r = -0.58$ with a significance value of $p = 0.000$, indicating that the relationship was statistically significant at the 0.05 level.

Table 3. Pearson Correlation Between Motivation and Anxiety

Variables	r	Sig. (p)
Motivation-Anxiety	-0.58	0.000

The negative sign of the correlation coefficient indicates an inverse relationship between the two variables. In other words, students with higher motivation tended

to report lower anxiety, whereas students with lower motivation tended to experience higher anxiety in Arabic language learning. The coefficient of **-0.58** also indicates that the relationship was moderate to relatively strong in magnitude. This finding confirms that motivation and anxiety were meaningfully associated in the learning context examined in this study.

3.1.4. Summary of Main Findings

Overall, the results reveal three principal findings. First, students' motivation in Arabic language learning tended to be positive, with the majority of respondents classified in the high and very high categories. Second, students' anxiety tended to be concentrated in the moderate category, indicating that anxiety remained a relevant factor in the classroom context. Third, motivation and anxiety were significantly and negatively related, suggesting that the two variables moved in opposite directions.

Taken together, these findings indicate that students' affective conditions in Arabic language learning were characterized by a combination of generally strong learning motivation and a still noticeable level of anxiety. The statistical relationship further shows that motivation and anxiety were not independent conditions, but interconnected aspects of students' learning experiences.

3.2. Discussion

Main Findings and Interpretation

The present study produced three principal findings. First, most students demonstrated moderate to high levels of motivation in Arabic language learning. Second, most students experienced moderate anxiety during the learning process. Third, the correlation analysis revealed a significant negative relationship between motivation and anxiety ($r = -0.58, p < 0.05$), indicating that students with higher motivation tended to experience lower anxiety, whereas those with lower motivation were more likely to report higher anxiety. These findings confirm that affective conditions play a central role in shaping students' experiences in Arabic language learning.

The predominance of high motivation suggests that a large proportion of students still possess a meaningful internal drive to participate in Arabic learning activities. At the same time, the fact that most students reported moderate anxiety indicates that emotional barriers remain present even when students are willing to learn. This pattern suggests that motivation and anxiety should not be treated as separate variables, but rather as interconnected dimensions of the learning process. Such an interpretation is consistent with recent literature showing that anxiety and motivation dynamically interact in second and foreign language learning and jointly shape learners' engagement, willingness to communicate, and academic performance [22], [23].

Comparison With Previous Studies

The findings of this study support previous studies showing that motivation contributes positively to students' engagement, persistence, and language learning

achievement, while anxiety may hinder participation and language performance [3], [4]. The current results are also consistent with studies in Arabic language learning contexts indicating that anxiety and self-confidence directly affect students' speaking performance, while positive affective factors such as self-efficacy and enjoyment can strengthen willingness to communicate [6], [7]. In this respect, the present study confirms that affective variables remain fundamental determinants of Arabic language learning success.

The negative correlation identified in this study is also in line with recent international evidence showing that motivation and anxiety are systematically related in foreign language learning. Prior studies have reported that higher motivational resources are associated with lower levels of anxiety, whereas anxiety may reduce learners' engagement, confidence, and academic performance [22], [24]. Similarly, current work in applied linguistics emphasizes that second-language anxiety is not merely a temporary emotional response but a multidimensional construct with substantial effects on achievement, communication, and learner participation [22]. Therefore, the present findings reinforce the broader argument that affective factors are not peripheral, but central to language learning outcomes.

Extension of Previous Research

Although previous studies have widely examined motivation and anxiety in English or other foreign language contexts, relatively few have focused specifically on Arabic language learning, particularly in Indonesian educational settings. In addition, innovative research in Arabic language education has often emphasized instructional media, gamification, pedagogical models, or digital learning environments rather than the simultaneous interaction of learners' affective conditions [8]–[15]. The present study extends this body of research by showing that motivation and anxiety are not independent conditions in Arabic language learning, but statistically interrelated factors that influence students' classroom experiences.

This extension is important because Arabic language learning differs from other foreign language contexts in its linguistic complexity, cultural associations, and, in many educational settings, its religious dimension. As a result, findings from English language learning cannot always be generalized directly to Arabic learning contexts. By identifying a meaningful negative relationship between motivation and anxiety, the present study adds more specific empirical evidence to the Arabic language learning literature.

Theoretical Contribution

From a theoretical perspective, this study contributes to the literature on affective factors in language learning by demonstrating that motivation and anxiety are closely interconnected in Arabic language instruction. The findings support the view that successful learning is shaped not only by cognitive and instructional variables, but also by learners' emotional conditions and perceptions of the learning environment. This is consistent with recent work emphasizing the dynamic roles of anxiety and motivation in second/foreign language acquisition [23], as well as studies showing that anxiety may function as both a debilitating and context-

sensitive variable depending on the nature of the learning environment and learner support [25].

Practical and Pedagogical Implications

The findings of this study have direct pedagogical implications. Because higher motivation is associated with lower anxiety, Arabic language teachers should create learning environments that are supportive, engaging, and psychologically safe. Classroom practices that reduce excessive pressure, provide constructive feedback, and encourage communication without fear of humiliation are likely to help students sustain motivation while minimizing anxiety. This implication also aligns with broader educational research suggesting that effective instruction is not limited to cognitive delivery, but requires emotionally supportive and learner-centered environments [1], [2], [18]–[20].

In the context of Arabic instruction, innovative teaching should therefore be understood not only as the adoption of new media or methods, but also as the design of learning experiences that respond to students' affective needs. Motivation-enhancing and anxiety-reducing strategies may include collaborative activities, gradual speaking tasks, positive reinforcement, and supportive classroom interaction. Such practices may help improve both learner participation and the quality of Arabic language learning.

Methodological Contribution

Methodologically, this study provides empirical support for the use of a quantitative correlational design in examining affective variables in Arabic language learning. By statistically identifying the relationship between motivation and anxiety, the study offers a useful basis for future research employing broader quantitative models or mixed-method approaches to explore affective dynamics in Arabic education. At the same time, recent methodological reviews in second-language anxiety research suggest that future studies should pay close attention to measurement quality and contextual variation when interpreting affective constructs [26].

Limitations of the Study

This study was limited to the examination of two variables—motivation and anxiety—through self-reported questionnaire data collected at a single point in time. Therefore, the findings describe the statistical relationship between the variables but do not establish causality.

Recommendations for Future Research

Future studies may broaden this line of inquiry by including more diverse educational levels, wider institutional contexts, or additional affective variables related to Arabic language learning. It would also be valuable to investigate how specific instructional interventions influence students' motivation and anxiety over time. Such studies would strengthen the empirical basis for designing Arabic language instruction that is both innovative and affectively responsive.

Overall, this study confirms that motivation and anxiety are closely related in Arabic language learning. The findings suggest that increasing students' motivation

may contribute to lowering their anxiety, thereby supporting more effective and meaningful Arabic language instruction.

4. Conclusion

This study confirms that motivation and anxiety are two important affective factors in Arabic language learning and that they are significantly related to one another. The findings show that most students demonstrated relatively high learning motivation, while anxiety tended to be at a moderate level. More importantly, the significant negative correlation indicates that higher motivation was associated with lower anxiety in Arabic language learning.

The main contribution of this study lies in providing empirical evidence that affective dimensions should be treated as central components of Arabic language instruction rather than as secondary influences. In this sense, the study strengthens the understanding that successful Arabic language learning depends not only on cognitive and linguistic factors but also on students' emotional readiness and confidence.

Pedagogically, these findings imply that teachers need to create a learning environment that can strengthen students' motivation while minimizing anxiety. Supportive classroom interaction, encouraging feedback, and learning activities that reduce excessive pressure may contribute to more effective Arabic language learning. Editorial note: if the full manuscript includes explicit study limitations and future research directions, they should be restated briefly here for stronger alignment with international journal conventions.

Overall, the study highlights the importance of integrating affective considerations into Arabic language instruction in order to support more meaningful and effective learning experiences.

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Declarations

Author Contribution Statement

Author 1 : Conceptualization, Methodology, Investigation, Data Curation, Formal Analysis, Writing – Original Draft.

Author 2: Validation, Methodology, Writing – Review & Editing.

Author 3: Investigation, Resources, Data Curation, Visualization.

Author 4: Supervision, Project Administration, Validation, Writing – Review & Editing, Final Approval.

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Data Availability Statement

The data generated and analyzed during this study are **not publicly available** due to privacy and confidentiality considerations involving the research participants. However, the data are available from the **corresponding author** upon reasonable request for academic and research purposes, subject to applicable ethical and institutional requirements.

Declaration of Interests Statement

The authors declare that they have **no known competing financial or non-financial interests** or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper. The authors have no financial, professional, or institutional affiliations that could be perceived as a conflict of interest regarding the publication of this manuscript.

AI Use Statement

[1] During the preparation of this manuscript, the authors used **Google Translate** for **language editing (grammar, clarity, and readability)**. The authors **reviewed, revised, and verified** the final text and **take full responsibility** for the content of the publication.

[2] The authors used Grammarly Premium to support initial drafting and/or structuring of parts of the manuscript. All AI-assisted outputs were critically reviewed, rewritten where necessary, and verified against the study data and cited sources. The authors remain fully accountable for the accuracy, originality, and integrity of the manuscript.

[3] The authors did not use generative AI or AI-assisted tools in the writing, editing, or preparation of this manuscript.

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