


## ISLAMIC BOARDING SCHOOL STUDENTS' MOTIVATIONS AND CHALLENGES IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNING: A CASE STUDY AT NURUL HAKIM ISLAMIC BOARDING SCHOOL

M Ragil Dwifani Azzura<sup>1</sup>, Dewi Saniati<sup>2</sup>, Pavla Andrysova<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Tarbiyah and Teacher Training Faculties, Mataram State Islamic University, Indonesia

<sup>2</sup>International Islamic University Malaysia, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

<sup>3</sup>University of Palacky, Olomouc, Czech Republic

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### ABSTRACT

This study aims to provide an overview of learning *Al-Tibyân fi Ulûm Al-Qurân* with a student-centered learning approach at the Al-Bidayah Islamic Boarding School, Jember. The method used in this research is descriptive qualitative method. The data collection technique of this research used observation, interview, and documentation techniques. The data analysis used in this study is an interactive model data analysis for Miles, Huberman and Saldana namely data collection, data condensation, data presentation and drawing conclusions. In the *Al-Tibyân fi Ulûm Al-Qurân* learning activities at Al-Bidayah Jember Islamic Boarding School using a student-centered learning approach and collaborating between the discussion method and the lecture method. This student-centered learning approach has succeeded in creating independence in learning and enthusiasm for learning so as to create students who are independent in reading books.

Research Paper

Pesantren Reviews

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### INTRODUCTION

Motivation is a psychological construct that drives individuals to engage in behaviour or activities to achieve goals or satisfy needs (Adiele & Abraham, 2013). In educational settings, motivation is a critical factor influencing learning outcomes and academic performance (Alashry et al., 2019). This study explores students' motivations and challenges in their English language-learning journey at Nurul Hakim Islamic Boarding School, a renowned institution emphasizing Islamic teachings and holistic development. Motivation encompasses intrinsic and extrinsic factors influenced by personal beliefs, values, attitudes, interests, social norms, and environmental factors (Bartelds et al., 2020).

Various motivations arise in English language learning at Islamic boarding schools,

including the importance of English as a global language, the need to access international knowledge and technology, and the religious duty to learn Arabic and English for Islamic studies (Bahtiar et al., 2022). Socialization processes, peer influence, teaching methods, attitudes, resource availability, and technology also impact students' motivation levels (Astuti et al., 2020).

While English language learning offers advantages, it also presents challenges that impede progress and affect motivation, engagement, and achievement. Common challenges for English language learners include complex grammar and sentence structure, pronunciation and accent difficulties, vast vocabulary with multiple meanings, cultural differences hindering communication, fear of making mistakes, limited exposure to English, diverse learning

**Correspondance Address**

E-mail: mhmmdragil377@gmail.com

styles, and lack of motivation or interest (Diamond et al., 2019). Islamic boarding school students face specific challenges in learning English as a foreign language. These challenges include limited exposure to English outside the classroom, inadequate resources and facilities, differences between English and their native language in structure and grammar, and cultural and religious norms' influence on attitudes and motivation towards English language learning (Hajebi et al., 2018).

Nurul Hakim Islamic Boarding School, located in a culturally rich and diverse community, provides comprehensive Islamic education, emphasizing character development, religious teachings, and academic excellence. English language learning is essential in the school's curriculum, preparing students for future global engagement. However, students at Nurul Hakim encounter challenges due to limited exposure to English outside the classroom and resource limitations stemming from the school's unique characteristics and cultural diversity. Motivation and the spirit of struggle are significant within the Islamic faith, emphasizing personal effort and striving towards goals. Students at Nurul Hakim are reminded of the importance of motivation and dedication in their English language-learning journey, aligning with the teachings of Islam.

Understanding the specific conditions within Nurul Hakim Islamic Boarding School is crucial to address the student's language learning needs. Stores, such as cultural backgrounds, language proficiency levels, and exposure to English outside the school, significantly influence their language learning experiences. This research aims to provide valuable insights into students' motivations and challenges in their English language-learning journey at Nurul Hakim Islamic Boarding School, contributing to future research endeavours.

## METHOD

This study presents a qualitative research study to explore students' motivations and challenges in learning English at Nurul Hakim Islamic Boarding School. The study employs a qualitative research method comprehensively

understand the subject, focusing on individual and group perspectives and examining social and human issues (Atmowidjoyo et al., 2022).

The research adopts a case study approach, which involves exploring and analysing a single case within its real-life context (Almira, 2021). The case study research method allows for a deep understanding of complex phenomena and is well suited for investigating the motivations and challenges in language learning. Qualitative data analysis was conducted using a content analysis technique. The analysis involved several stages, including data condensation, data display, and drawing conclusions or interpretations (Bogdan & Biklen, 1997).

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### Student's Motivations of English Language Learning

The data analysis revealed several critical motivations expressed by the students in their English language-learning journey. These motivations include job opportunities, cultural exchange, communication with others, personal development, and prospects. These findings align with previous studies and theories on motivation in second language acquisition, providing additional support and insights. The theoretical frameworks employed in this study, namely the intrinsic motivation theory, extrinsic motivation theory, instrumental motivation theory, integrative motivation theory, achievement motivation theory, self-determination theory, and investment theory, offer valuable perspectives for analyzing and understanding the motivations expressed by the students.

First, the instrumental motivation theory posits that individuals are motivated to learn a language for utilitarian purposes, such as career advancement and economic opportunities (H. E. Gardner, 2000). This theory aligns with the findings of this study, particularly the significant motivation of job opportunities expressed by the students. The students' recognition of English as a means to enhance their career prospects highlights the importance of external motivation factors in language learning. These findings support the validity and consistency of the instrumental motivation theory across different research contexts.

Second, the integrative motivation theory suggests that individuals are motivated to learn a language to integrate into the target language community and foster positive cross-cultural interactions (H. Gardner, 2020). The research findings support this theory, with cultural exchange emerging as a strong motivation for learning English among students. It emphasizes the influence of external factors, such as the learning environment and teacher qualifications, on students' motivation to learn English. Educators can address the student's motivation for integrating into the target language community by fostering a learning environment that promotes cultural exchange and understanding.

Third, the achievement motivation theory emphasizes the importance of language proficiency for successful communication (Barrot, 2019). The research findings align with this theory, as effective communication emerged as a central motivation for the students: low learning motivation and the accumulation of new memories as factors influencing learning difficulties in English. Educators can enhance students' communicative competence by addressing students' motivation for effective communication and providing opportunities for language practice.

Fourth, the self-determination theory suggests that individuals are motivated by intrinsic factors such as personal growth, autonomy, and competence (Aprianto et al., 2022). The motivation for personal development identified in this study aligns with this theory – the role of teachers in creating a learning atmosphere that is fun and engaging for students. Educators can create a supportive learning environment that promotes autonomy and competence by nurturing students' intrinsic motivation for personal development.

Fifth, the investment theory asserts that individuals are motivated to learn a language to invest in their future goals and aspirations (Alrawahi et al., 2020; Pohan et al., 2020). The research findings support this theory, as the motivation for prospects highlighted the students' recognition of English as a global language and its significance for future opportunities. External factors such as access to learning resources and a conducive learning environment influence students' motivation to learn English. By

recognizing English as a gateway to global opportunities and addressing these external factors, educators can foster students' motivation for investing in their future goals.

### Challenges in English Language Learning

The data analysis revealed several key challenges encountered by the students in their English language-learning journey. These challenges include language difficulties, understanding spoken English, reading and writing, frustration and hesitation, and listening and comprehension. These findings resonate with previous studies and theories on language learning difficulties, providing additional support and insights.

First, a cognitive-interactionist theory by Andoh et al., (2020) and a socio-cultural theory by Vygotsky & Cole in Purwanto et al., (2022) shed light on the language difficulties experienced by students. These theories emphasize the cognitive processes involved in language acquisition and the influence of social interactions. Students' struggles in pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, and language use reflect the complex nature of language learning and the need for explicit instruction and practice. Low learning motivation and forgetting as contributors to difficulties in English language learning. By understanding the cognitive and social aspects of language learning, educators can provide targeted support and scaffolded instruction to address these challenges.

Second, a comprehension-based theory of listening provides insights into the challenge of understanding spoken English faced by some students. This theory highlights the difficulties in processing spoken language due to its transient nature and the listener's limited cognitive resources (Lambert et al., 1960). Students' struggles in comprehending spoken conversations and instructions. This research study has provided valuable insights into the motivations and challenges faced by students in Islamic Boarding Schools in their language-learning journey. Regarding students' motivations, the research identified various factors such as job opportunities, cultural exchange, effective communication, personal development, and prospects.

These motivations resonate with instrumental motivation, integrative motivation, communicative competence theory, self-determination theory, and investment theory.

Recognizing and understanding these motivations is crucial for designing effective language learning programs that cater to the needs and aspirations of students in Islamic Boarding Schools. By tailoring instructional strategies that promote intrinsic motivation and incorporating engaging activities aligned with individual motivations, educators can enhance students' learning experiences and foster learner autonomy. Creating a supportive and inclusive learning environment that acknowledges and values students' motivations is essential to encourage language development and academic performance.

Regarding challenges faced by students, the research highlighted language difficulties, understanding spoken English, reading and writing, frustration and hesitation, and listening and comprehension as common challenges. These challenges align with cognitive-interactionist theory, sociocultural theory, and comprehension-based theory of listening, cognitive theories of reading and writing, and the affective filter hypothesis (Efriza et al., 2020; Fisher et al., 2017; Garandeanu et al., 2022).

Differentiated instruction, targeted support, and a supportive learning environment are necessary to address these challenges. By incorporating explicit instruction, scaffolded practice, and practical support mechanisms, educators can help students overcome these challenges and promote their language development. Furthermore, recognizing the emotional aspect of language learning challenges and creating a positive learning environment can alleviate emotional barriers and foster students' language learning progress.

In conclusion, addressing the motivations and challenges identified in this research was crucial for creating inclusive, culturally responsive, and effective educational environments that support students' language learning and overall development in Islamic Boarding Schools. By leveraging students' motivations, tailoring instructional strategies, and creating a supportive learning environment, educators and stakeholders can work towards empowering students to achieve their language learning goals and thrive in their educational journey.

## CONCLUSION

This research study has provided valuable insights into the motivations and challenges faced by students in Islamic Boarding Schools in their language-learning journey. Regarding students' motivations, the research identified various factors such as job opportunities, cultural exchange, effective communication, personal development, and prospects. These motivations resonate with instrumental motivation, integrative motivation, communicative competence theory, self-determination theory, and investment theory.

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### Author Declarations

### Author contributions and responsibilities

The authors made major contributions to the conception and design of the study. The authors took responsibility for data analysis, interpretation and discussion of results. The authors read and approved the final manuscript.

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#### Availability of data and materials

All data is available from the author.

#### Competing interests

The authors declare no competing interests.

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