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### Factors Influencing Motivation in Online Learning Arabic of Indonesian Older Man

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#### ABSTRACT

The phenomenon of the Covid-19 pandemic that has hit currently affects changing the learning system from offline to online learning. Several current research results reported that changes in the learning system affect the demotivation of students to learn. However, the demotivation phenomenon does not affect elderly Indonesian men. Therefore, this study explores the motivational factors of these older men in participating in an online Arabic learning program organized by one of the informal institutions in Indonesia. This research uses a narrative research approach. Data is extracted through in-depth virtual interviews using WhatsApp media. The results showed that several factors influenced the motivation to learn Arabic online from older men, namely: motivation to understand the Qur'an, motivation from friends, and the presentation of interesting Arabic material.

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#### Keywords

Arabic; Older Man; Motivation; Online Learning

#### مستخلص البحث

ظاهرة جائحة كوفيد-19 الذي أصابها حاليًا تأثير على تغيير نظام التعلم من التعلم غير المتصل بالإنترنت إلى التعلم عبر الإنترنت. تشير العديد من نتائج البحث الحالية إلى أن التغييرات في نظام التعلم تؤثر في الواقع على تثبيط الطلاب للتعلم. ومع ذلك، فإن هذه الظاهرة المثبطة لهمم ليس لها أي تأثير على الذكر الإندونيسي المسن. لذلك، تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى استكشاف العوامل المحفزة لهؤلاء الرجال المسنين في المشاركة في برنامج تعلم اللغة العربية عبر الإنترنت الذي تنظمه إحدى المؤسسات غير الرسمية في إندونيسيا. يستخدم هذا البحث نهج البحث السردية. يتم استخراج البيانات من خلال المقابلات الافتراضية المتعمقة باستخدام وسائط واتساب. وأظهرت النتائج أن هناك عدة عوامل أثرت في الدافع لتعلم اللغة العربية عبر الإنترنت لرجل العجوز، وهي: الدافع لفهم القرآن، والدافع من الأصدقاء، وعرض مادة عربية ممتعة.

العربية: رجل العجوز؛ دافع: التعليم عبر الإنترنت

كلمات أساسية

## INTRODUCTION

Currently, the application of online learning to language learning is increasingly being discussed by researchers. Various synchronous media such as Zoom Cloud Meeting (Mubarak et al, 2020b), google meets (Al-Marouf et al, 2020), researchers offered WhatsApp (Ilmiani et al, 2020; Wargadinata et al, 2020) and asynchronous media such as google classroom (Ahmadi & Ilmiani, 2020) and Edmodo (Atiah et al, 2020) as alternative media that educators in implementing online learning can use. This is inseparable from the Covid-19 pandemic phenomenon, which demands all educational institutions to transform into an online learning system (Affouneh et al, 2020; Corbera et al, 2020; Schlesselman, 2020).

Various kinds of psychological problems experienced by learners. Feelings of sadness, anxiety and disappointment arise due to the gap in the relationship between educators and students following the online learning process (Murphy, 2020; Puspitasari et al, 2020; Xue et al, 2020). This case certainly affects the demotivation of learners when the online learning process takes place.

In language learning, motivation has a very complex role (Escobar Fandiño & Silva Velandia, 2020). Motivation affects several aspects such as cognition, behaviour, emotions, decision-making processes and biological elements (Liu, Wang, & Ryan, 2015). With motivation, language learners can encourage their behavior to achieve the language learning goals that have been formulated (Jiménez, Rodríguez, & Vidal, 2017; Martínez Clares, Pérez Cusó, & Martínez Juárez, 2016; Rusady, 2018). From these statements, motivation plays a major role in achieving language learning, namely mastering the language being learned. Motivation is also the main capital for learners to continue to know in any condition, especially during the Covid-19 pandemic.

A phenomenon of the learning demotivation that occurs due to the pandemic does not affect an elderly 73-year-old man who we will examine in this study. Raden (pseudonym) participated in the online Arabic learning process held by the Al-Azhar Arabic Language Education Institute located in Pare, Kediri, East Java Province, Indonesia. He took three programs at once offered by the institution. He took it within two months, as for the three programs, namely (1) *Kallimniy*, which focuses on aspects of basic mastery of Maharah Kalam, (2) *Tamyiz*, which focuses on aspects of mastery of the basic level of *Nahwu*, and (3) *Tarkibiy*, which focuses on aspects of mastery of mid-level of *Nahwu*.

Raden's enthusiasm and motivation in participating in the three programs are interesting things to explore. The results of this study are expected to provide insights, especially for young learners to be more motivated in participating in learning Arabic online. The current pandemic should not affect the motivation of young learners who are more familiar with the use of information technology or,

more popularly known as pro gadgets (Mubarak, Wahdah, Ilmiani, & Hamidah, 2020a).

Several previous studies are relevant to the studies this study. Fryer (2019), in his research, revealed that students' understanding of what they will achieve from the learning process in the classroom is one of their motivation to learn (Fryer, 2019). Kaharudin (2020), in his research, revealed that the integration of technology and culture affects students' motivation to learn English (Kaharuddin, 2020). Kung (2019), in his research, also reported that material derived from student's daily reading materials and the selection of effective instructional strategies from educators had a positive impact on student's motivation to learn reading (Kung, 2019). In their research, Nitta and Studa (2020) report that collaboration in the form of social interaction between educators and students in improving the quality of lessons can foster student motivation (Nakata, Nitta, & Tsuda, 2020). Finally, the integration of Japanese language learners with direct learning experiences with the Japanese language learning community is an important motivational element in the mastery of the language being learned (de Burgh-Hirabe, 2019).

From the preview studies, the researcher found several learning motivation factors for students that can be used as a reference in the framework of this study. However, researchers have not found a motivating factor for learning a language from someone who is already in old age (elderly) as we know that someone who has entered old age (elderly) certainly experiences various kinds of problems such as a weak hearing system and difficulty of understanding the massive development of information technology, especially in the current Covid-19 pandemic. Therefore, this research has a novelty about how an older man (elderly) is motivated to learn Arabic even though it is held online.

## METHOD

This study used a narrative research approach (Narrative Research) to explore stories of experiences and phenomena experienced by participants directly (Clandinin & Huber, 2010). This study narrated the motivational factors experienced by an older man named Raden (pseudonym) in participating in an online Arabic language learning program organized by the Al-Azhar institute, Pare, Kediri, East Java.

The participant in the study was an Indonesian older man who was 73 years old. At a young age, he was a worker in an entertainment company in charge of the artist's readiness for filming or soap operas. When he was active in his work, he admitted that his busy life resulted in a lack of routine in implementing the five daily prayers. Until finally, he got the opportunity to carry

out the pilgrimage in the holy land of Mecca. Upon his return from the sacred land of Mecca, he felt a drastic change in him. The five daily prayers, which he used to leave behind, are now starting to perfect, and he is also active in participating in assembly activities held in mosques. This is also one of his motivations to begin learning Arabic even though he is no longer young and has even entered old age (elderly). He was willing to be a participant in this research voluntarily.

Data were obtained from in-depth virtual interviews using WhatsApp (Gibson, 2020). The interview data analysis procedure follows Widodo (2014) with data transcription steps as follows: (1) Listening repeatedly to recorded interview data to find themes or important points needed, (2) writing interview transcripts in the right format, sorting and classifying important data, (3) interpreting interview data by interpreting each word and sentence conveyed by the participants, communicating the views or viewpoints of participants, (4) producing objective data by providing opportunities for participants to provide feedback from the results of data interpretation (Widodo, 2014).

## RESULTS & DISCUSSION

In this study, researchers explored the motivational factors of an older man named Raden (pseudonym) who participated in an online Arabic learning program organized by the Al-Azhar institute, Pare, Kediri, East Java. There are several motivational factors in online Arabic learning.

### **Motivation to Understand the Meaning of the Al-Qur'an**

Raden was undergoing retirement by actively participating in various activities at the mosque located in the Serpong District, South Tangerang City, Banten Province, Indonesia. Not infrequently, he was asked to fill a lecture at the mosque. This was narrated by him as follows.

*After I retired from the world of adultery, I actively participated in various activities at the BSC Serpong mosque, such as recitation, religious studies, tadarus, and various other activities. I am often asked to give lectures at the mosque. (Raden, WhatsApp Interview, 29 December 2020)*

During the active participation in various activities at the mosque, someone explained to him the importance of the Al-Qur'an. He narrated this in the following interview data:

*So, once upon a time, there was someone who explained to me that understanding the Qur'an is very important. The person told me, if we can speak in Arabic, then it will be easy to understand the Qur'an. That person added that those who understand the meaning of Al-Qur'an will die,*

*inshaAllah, will get happiness. (Raden, WhatsApp Interview, 29 December 2020).*

From this statement, he concluded that if a person can speak Arabic, that person will also find it easy to understand what the Qur'an describes in its verses. People who understand the meaning of Al-Qur'an will give happiness to that person at the time of death and in the period after the death. Raden also added the following interview data:

*All praises to Allah. This person made me realize how important it is to understand the Qur'an. At my very old age, of course, preparing myself to face death should be my priority in the future. (Raden, WhatsApp Interview, 29 December 2020).*

From the interview data above, the researcher concluded that his motivation to learn Arabic was to understand the meaning of Al-Qur'an, which was also a step in Raden's preparation for facing death. This statement indicates that understanding the goals to be achieved in a lesson is a motivation to learn about it. This finding is in line with the results of Fryer (2019), who reported that students' understanding of what they would achieve from the learning process was one of the factors of learning motivation.

Also, this finding explained that the Al-Qur'an, which was sent to the world using Arabic, is the main motivation for learners to learn Arabic. This is similar to what was reported by Letmiros (2019) that one of the motivations for someone to want to learn Arabic is because the Qur'an is written in Arabic. To understand the meaning of Al-Qur'an, of course, you have to start with mastery of the Arabic language aspects

### **Motivation from Friends**

During the pandemic, several informal Arabic education institutions held online Arabic language learning courses. Various programs are offered with different focuses and studies. The Al-Azhar Institute located in Kampung English, Pare, Kediri, East Java, organizes several online Arabic language learning programs, namely: (1) the *Hifdziy* program, which is focused on improving vocabulary memorization (*mufradat*), (2) the *Kallimniy* program, which is focused on improving mastery *Maharah Kalam*, (3) the *Tarkibiy* program which focuses on mastering *Nahwu* and the *Sharf*, and (4) the *Tamyiz* program which focused on aspects of translating the Qur'an. Based on the interview results, initially, Raden only chose the *Tamyiz* program, which focused on aspects of Al-Qur'an translation. He got the program from a recommendation by one of his friends. He narrates this in the following data:

*At that time, there was a friend of mine who was almost the same age as me. Yes, about five years below me. He said, let's learn how to translate the Al-Qur'an. There is a Tamyiz program that focuses on translating the*

*Al-Qur'an. Yes, finally I was interested, so my friend and I joined the Tamyiz program. (Raden, WhatsApp Interview, 29 December 2020).*

From Raden's statement, the researcher concluded that the Arabic language learning program he took was influenced by the recommendation of one of his friends. Even Raden added the following narrative:

*When I followed the learning process, frankly, I had a hard time understanding. Yes, naturally, because of my very old age factor. Of course, it isn't easy to understand what is being described. So I ask my classmates or ask for help if there is something I don't understand. (Raden, WhatsApp Interview, 29 December 2020).*

From the interview results, the researcher concluded that the support from classmates was one of the motivating factors for Raden to learn Arabic. Raden builds communication with his friends if he has difficulty understanding the lessons that have been delivered. Raaper and Brown (2020), in their research, report that peer support, such as being a partner in asking questions and discussions, can contribute to student learning outcomes. This, of course, has implications for Raden's motivation to learn Arabic.

### **Attractive Presentation of Arabic Material**

The *Tamyiz* program is the first learning program that Raden has participated in. In its implementation, the *Tamyiz* program presents materials on translating the Al-Qur'an, which is packaged in the form of song tones familiar to the community. Raden expressed this in the following interview data:

*The Tamyiz program that I participated in for a month was interesting to me. Ustadzah taught the material using song tones taken from 'Sholatulloh', also cangkul, cangkul, cangkul yang dalam', there were also those who used Habib Syech Solo' qasidah tones; the point was interesting and easy to understand and memorize. From here, too, because I feel that the learning process used here is fun, so I continue to take several other programs such as Kallimniy for one month and tarkibiy for one month. (Raden, WhatsApp Interview, 29 December 2020)*

Raden's statement above shows that Arabic language material packaged using songs/chants positively impacts his motivation to take part in an Arabic language learning program on an ongoing basis. Mubarak, Ahmadi, and Audina (2020), in their research report, that Arabic vocabulary material (*mufradat*) packaged in the form of songs/chants contributes to increasing students' learning motivation. Ollerhead (2019) emphasizes that song/music can arouse human emotional arousal, especially in the language learning process.

However, Raden also experienced several obstacles in participating in the online Arabic learning process, especially when joining the *Kallimniy* program. He narrated as follows:



*I had some difficulties when I joined the Kallimniy program because once a week, the ustadzah - who teaches the program - asks us to have Arabic conversations using the google meet the application. Naturally, I have a little trouble because I am no longer young and not familiar with technological developments. Thank God because my family supports me, and when I wanted to use Google Meet, my child helped me. My child taught me how to use the Google Meet application. (Raden, WhatsApp Interview, 29 December 2020).*

From the results of the interview above, the researcher concluded that the problem experienced by Raden was his lack of knowledge about the use of technology. This is in line with the results of research by Hariani, Arbaini, and Putri, which reported that the majority of parents have insufficient knowledge of technological developments or, more popularly, the term clueless (technology stuttering) (Hariani, Arbaini, & Putri, 2020). Therefore, in her research, Haniah (2014) suggests that we should not be technologically illiterate. People who do not master science and technology will be marginalized and knocked over by the competitive wave of globalization.

From the results of the research above, the researchers concluded that three sources of Raden's motivation to take part in online Arabic learning organized by the Al-Azhar Arabic Language Education Institute, located in Pare, Kediri, East Java Province, are motivated to understand the Qur'an, motivation from friends, and an attractive presentation of Arabic material.

It is undeniable that the motivation to understand the Qur'an is Raden's main motivation to take part in online Arabic learning organized by this institution. This was motivated by the fact that Raden's age, who was no longer young, had moved him to focus more on being involved in religious activities such as religious lectures held at mosques. Certainly, religious studies cannot be separated from quotations from the Al-Qur'an, which form the basis of a speaker in expressing the content of his lecture. To understand the essence of the arguments of the Al-Qur'an, of course, one must begin by understanding the language used by the Al-Quran, namely Arabic. Therefore, the main effort that someone must make in understanding the Qur'an is first to master Arabic (Letmiros, 2019).

Encouragement or motivation from a friend is also one of Raden's joining the online Arabic language learning program. As previously disclosed by Raden, a friend plays an important role in overcoming problems in the learning process, such as difficulties in understanding the Arabic language material that the teacher has delivered. Someone who builds communication to ask questions and discuss with friends about the material that has been studied has implications for one's learning outcomes (Raaper & Brown, 2020).

Finally, the source of learning motivation is also related to implementing engaging and innovative learning (Mubarak, Ahmadi, et al., 2020). As stated by Raden above, the Arabic language material organized by the institution is attractively packaged in the form of popular songs among Raden. The innovative factor of the presentation form became Raden's main factor in taking available advanced Arabic language learning programs such as *Kallimniy* and *Tarkibiy*. This phenomenon proves that innovation in the Arabic learning process can motivate someone to learn Arabic even at old age (elderly).

## CONCLUSIONS

This study explored the motivational factors of 73-year-old older men in participating in the online Arabic language learning program organized by the Al-Azhar Institute, Pare, Kediri, East Java. The results showed that the motivation of the older man to take part in an online Arabic learning program was based on several factors, namely: motivation to understand the meaning of Al-Qur'an, motivation from friends, and the presentation of interesting Arabic material. This study also indicates that the phenomenon of cluelessness (stuttering technology) is the main problem experienced by the elderly in following the online Arabic learning process. The results of this study are expected to provide insight, especially for Arabic learners, both young, old, and elderly, to be more motivated in participating in learning Arabic online. It's never too late to learn Arabic. Researchers are aware of the limitations of this study, such as participants who only represent one gender (male) and only explore one participant. Further research is needed involving various genders (male and female), which will add to the complexity of the narrative.

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