



Exploring Social and Academic Motivations Behind High School Graduates' Selection of Arabic Language

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Keywords:

Arabic Language Education;
Choosing the Major;
SMA Graduates,
Motives for

Abstract

This study explores the motivations of high school alumni in choosing the Arabic Language Education program at IAIN Kerinci, as well as the factors influencing their decision to select this major. This research is essential as a preliminary step to examine the extent of interest among Arabic language learners with non-pesantren backgrounds in Indonesia in general. It has implications for urging scholars to formulate policies and strategies that address their cognitive needs in acquiring the Arabic language. This is due to the fact that conventional approaches may not be sufficient for them to successfully master the four language skills. A qualitative method with a descriptive analysis approach was employed. The findings reveal that students from non-boarding school backgrounds select the Arabic Language major for three main reasons: (a) religious motives, where they study Arabic to understand and teach Islamic teachings (*fahm al-maqru*); (b) academic motives, where they aim to comprehend Arabic sciences and skills (*istima'*, *kalam*, *qira'ah*, and *kitabah*); and (c) professional, practical, and pragmatic motives, such as becoming a teacher and communicating orally (*muhadatsah*) in Arabic. This research presents a novelty by refuting Herdah (2020) findings, showing that not all Arabic learners study the language for ideological and economic reasons. These insights offer a new perspective on the diverse motivations behind studying Arabic, providing a comprehensive understanding of their motivations.

Kata Kunci:

Lulusan SMA;
Motivasi Memilih Jurusan;
Pendidikan Bahasa Arab;

ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini mengeksplorasi motivasi alumni SMA dalam memilih program Pendidikan Bahasa Arab di IAIN Kerinci, serta faktor-faktor yang memengaruhi keputusan mereka dalam memilih jurusan ini. Penelitian ini penting sebagai langkah awal untuk mengkaji sejauh mana minat di kalangan pelajar bahasa Arab yang berasal dari latar belakang non-pesantren di Indonesia secara umum. Penelitian ini memiliki implikasi untuk mendorong para akademisi merumuskan kebijakan dan strategi yang dapat memenuhi kebutuhan kognitif mereka dalam mempelajari bahasa Arab. Hal ini disebabkan oleh fakta bahwa pendekatan konvensional mungkin tidak cukup untuk membantu mereka menguasai empat keterampilan bahasa secara

efektif. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode kualitatif dengan pendekatan analisis deskriptif. Temuan penelitian mengungkapkan bahwa mahasiswa dari latar belakang non-pesantren memilih jurusan Pendidikan Bahasa Arab karena tiga alasan utama: (a) motif religius, di mana mereka mempelajari bahasa Arab untuk memahami dan mengajarkan ajaran Islam (fahm al-maqru); (b) motif akademik, di mana mereka bertujuan untuk memahami ilmu dan keterampilan bahasa Arab (istima', kalam, qira'ah, dan kitabah); dan (c) motif profesional, praktis, dan pragmatis, seperti menjadi guru dan berkomunikasi secara lisan (muhadatsah) dalam bahasa Arab. Penelitian ini menyajikan pembaruan dengan membantah temuan Herdah (2020) yang menunjukkan bahwa tidak semua pembelajar bahasa Arab mempelajarinya karena alasan ideologis dan ekonomi. Wawasan ini memberikan perspektif baru mengenai beragam motivasi dalam mempelajari bahasa Arab, sehingga memberikan pemahaman yang lebih komprehensif tentang motivasi mereka.

**Article
Information**

**Submitted 2025-03-16. Received 2025-03-16. Revised 2025-04-22.
Accepted 2025-04-30. Published 2025-07-07.**

INTRODUCTION

Motivation is one of the crucial factors influencing students in making decisions regarding their choice of study programs (Koyuncuoglu, 2020). Motivation impacts discipline, consistency, responsibility, perseverance, and enthusiasm for learning (Filgona et al., 2020). Additionally, it serves as a driving force in the pursuit of desired outcomes (Susanti, 2019).

Intrinsic motivation tends to be stronger than extrinsic motivation (Zubairi, 2023) in achieving goals (Ayu, 2019). In the context of learning, motivation serves three key functions: it acts as a determinant in reinforcing learning, clarifies objectives, and fosters perseverance (Putri et al., 2022).

Factors influencing the choice of a college major include the ease of entry into the selected program, the influence of significant persons (Huong & Huy, 2021) describe the influence of parents, family, friends, teachers, counselors, and the availability of information (Panggoa et al., 2023), financial considerations (Kuhail et al., 2023), and career opportunities (Cynthia et al., 2019).

At IAIN Kerinci, the Arabic Language Education program is among the less popular majors and is primarily recommended for graduates of Islamic boarding schools (pesantren). However, some students enrolled in this program are high school (SMA) alumni. These SMA alumni face significant challenges in their studies due to the differences in their educational backgrounds compared to students from pesantren who

already have a foundational understanding of Arabic. This phenomenon is intriguing to explore in terms of their motivation dynamics and academic adjustment.

The purpose of offering the Arabic Language Education program (PBA) is to equip students with the ability to communicate in Arabic (Batmang, 2020). Its orientations include religious, academic, professional, ideological, and economic aspects (Herdah, 2020).

In high school, Arabic is not a core subject. Mandatory courses include Religious and Character Education, Pancasila Education, Indonesian Language, Mathematics, English, Physical Education, History, and Arts and Culture (Aryanto et al., 2022).

This study explores the motives of high school alumni in choosing the Arabic Language Education (PBA) program at IAIN Kerinci, as well as the factors influencing their decision in selecting the major. This issue is important to examine because strong learning motivation can significantly impact students' decision-making processes when selecting a major, even for those without a pesantren educational background.

This research refers to several previous studies, such as the motives for choosing Arabic Language Education (PBA), which include career prospects, interest in the language itself, academic stimulation, and the desire to delve into the culture, history, and religion of Arab communities (Brosh, 2013).

Furthermore, in terms of motivation, students choose Arabic Language Education (PBA) due to both internal and external factors. The first category, internal factors, includes the desire to deepen understanding of Islam, learn the language of the Qur'an, and improve language skills for religious and academic purposes (Al-Muhsin et al., 2021). The second category, external factors, encompasses encouragement from parents or family, peers, positive perceptions of the teaching profession, a supportive and enjoyable learning environment, and backing from lecturers (Mujahidah et al., 2021).

This study aims to explore the social and academic motivations that drive high school graduates in choosing the Arabic Language Education program. In this context, the primary goal of the study is to understand the factors influencing their decision to select the Arabic Language Education major as their field of study. This research will also identify various social considerations, such as the influence of family, community, and religious environment, as well as academic motivations related to their interests and objectives in learning the Arabic language.

This is highly relevant to the focus of the study, which explores the motivations of high school alumni in making the decision to choose the Arabic Language Education program at IAIN Kerinci and the factors influencing their decision. According to this study, strong learning motivation can influence the process of selecting a major, even for those who do not have a pesantren (Islamic boarding school) background. By delving deeper into the factors that motivate them, this study aims to provide a broader understanding of how social and academic motivations play a role in the decision-making process of choosing a major, particularly for those coming from non-pesantren backgrounds.

METHOD

This research is based on the Interpretive Paradigm. The Interpretive Paradigm is a paradigm that seeks to understand human behavior. This paradigm emphasizes the role of language, interpretation, and understanding. The interpretive paradigm posits that social reality is subjective, created, and interpreted.

Human nature is seen as the creator of their own world, giving meaning to the world. Science relies on interpretation, and the purpose of research in this paradigm is to interpret the world, understand social life, and emphasize meaning and understanding (Manzilati, 2017). In this study, the interpretive paradigm is used to understand the learning motivation of high school alumni students who chose the Arabic Language Education Program at IAIN Kerinci as their major. Through this paradigm, researchers aim to interpret and understand the experiences, meanings, and motivations behind these students' decisions.

The approach used in this research is the Case Study Approach. Case study research is transdisciplinary because it does not have an orientation toward a specific discipline and can therefore be used in various disciplines. Case study research also emphasizes the "case" as the object of study (Fitrah, 2017). In this research, the case studied is the learning motivation of high school alumni students in choosing the Arabic Language Education Program at IAIN Kerinci. This case study aims to provide a deep understanding of the phenomenon, specifically how learning motivation influences the decisions of high school alumni in choosing a study program and how this motivation affects their learning process in higher education.

Thus, the chosen method for this research is qualitative descriptive analysis. Qualitative research is descriptive, emphasizing explanations in the form of descriptions. The data collected are all in the form of descriptive data such as words, images, and similar types, not numerical data, and will not be converted into numbers. In this study, the descriptive qualitative analysis method is used to describe and analyze the learning motivation of high school alumni students in choosing the Arabic Language Education major at IAIN Kerinci.

The object and subject of the study are all high school alumni students who have chosen the Arabic Language Education Program at IAIN Kerinci as their major, specifically fourth-semester high school alumni students of the Arabic Language Education Program, totaling four individuals. The sample selection is based on the consideration that this class is a core class in the teaching and learning process. The sampling method used is purposive sampling, a technique for determining the sample with specific considerations.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Factors Behind the Lack of Arabic Language Education in High Schools

Based on the research findings, Arabic language instruction is largely absent in public high schools, with the exception of one school where an alumnus had attended. These findings were obtained through interviews with alumni of public high schools. Among the four informants, only one reported having received Arabic lessons, and even then, only during the third year of high school and in a very limited scope. The informant stated, *"I only studied Arabic in the third year of high school, but it wasn't in depth. It was lacking many students didn't understand, I didn't really understand either, basically we didn't grasp the material at all."* Meanwhile, the other three informants admitted that they had never received any Arabic instruction whatsoever. One of them remarked, *"I have no experience because we never studied it there was no such subject at all."*

At the school attended by the one informant who did receive instruction, Arabic was indeed only taught in the final year and not in depth. As explained by Farihana and Mufidah (2024), some students from non-pesantren backgrounds have had some limited exposure to Arabic learning. However, the instruction they received was minimal, likely due to time constraints, limited class hours, or other challenges.

Based on the research findings, Arabic language instruction is largely absent in high schools, except for one school where an alumnus studied. In this particular school, Arabic was only taught in the third year and not in depth. As noted by Farihana and Mufidah (2024) some students from non-pesantren backgrounds have had some exposure to Arabic language learning. However, the instruction they received was minimal, likely due to time constraints or limited instructional hours, or other challenges.

Furthermore, students from general education backgrounds may not have received any Arabic language instruction at all (Farihana & Mufidah, 2024). This is understandable, as Bahraen (2012) pointed out that one reason Arabic is not included as an additional subject in schools is due to the complex and difficult grammar, which makes it challenging to learn. Bahraen (2012) further explained that those who find Arabic difficult to learn because of its grammar are often impatient, hasty, and lack a fundamental understanding of the language.

Nonetheless, despite the perceived difficulty of Arabic, high schools actually have the authority to introduce Arabic language courses. With the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum, schools have full autonomy to add Arabic to their curriculum (Aryanto et al., 2022). Ardianti (2023) also emphasized the importance of Arabic for Muslims, as it is the primary means to understand Islamic teachings. Arabic is used in the primary sources of Islamic law, namely the Qur'an and Hadith, as well as in both obligatory and voluntary religious practices. However, Arabic is predominantly taught in pesantren, where students are required to communicate in Arabic. In contrast, in general schools, Arabic instruction is rarely taught in depth and usually only covers basic material.

Based on the research, the primary factors contributing to the limited Arabic language instruction in high schools are the perceived complexity of Arabic grammar and the limited time and resources available to teach it. Although there is potential to incorporate Arabic into the high school curriculum through the Merdeka Curriculum, Arabic language instruction remains predominantly focused in pesantren. Given its critical importance in understanding Islamic teachings, further efforts should be made to integrate Arabic language education into general high school curricula, to broaden students' access and understanding of the language.

Arabic Learning Experience for High School Alumni

Research findings reveal that university students who are high school alumni generally lack experience in learning Arabic, as Arabic language courses were not offered in their high schools. The exception is one student who had some exposure to Arabic in the third year of high school, though this instruction was not in depth. This observation was also supported by a study conducted by Kontributor PBA IAIN Gorontalo (2021), which assessed general alumni. The results of these initial tests, designed to evaluate the basic Arabic skills of new students, indicated that most students from high schools had little to no prior experience with Arabic language learning.

It is understandable that high school alumni lack experience in learning Arabic, as Ardianti (2023) explains that Arabic is more extensively taught in pesantren than in general schools. In public schools, for instance, religious education courses are often offered, but they do not specifically focus on Arabic language instruction. Some general schools, such as Islamic-based private schools, may offer Arabic language courses, but these typically cover only basic material without providing further depth.

High school graduates generally lack experience in learning Arabic, as Arabic is not formally taught in their high schools. One exception is a student who had some exposure to Arabic in the third year of high school; however, the learning was not in-depth. An initial test conducted by Kontributor PBA IAIN Gorontalo (2021) to assess basic Arabic proficiency revealed that the majority of new students with a high school background had no prior experience in learning Arabic. This aligns with Ardianti's (2023) research, which indicates that Arabic is more commonly taught in Islamic boarding schools (pondok pesantren) than in general schools. Although some Islamic-based private schools offer Arabic lessons, they typically cover only basic materials.

Intrinsic Motivation

Research findings indicate that high school alumni who chose the Arabic Language Education major at IAIN Kerinci are driven by intrinsic motivation. This motivation primarily stems from a personal interest in the Arabic language, which is perceived as crucial for understanding the Qur'an and Islamic literature, providing them with personal satisfaction in the learning process.

Table 1. Thematic Analysis of Intrinsic Motivation Factors Influencing High School Alumni in Choosing the Arabic Language Education Major at IAIN Kerinci

No	Theme	Description	Quote
1	Personal Interest	High school alumni choose the Arabic Language Education major due to personal interest in the Arabic language, which is considered crucial for understanding the Qur'an and Islamic literature.	<i>"I hope that by choosing the Arabic language major, I can use it to help me better understand the Qur'an or other Islamic sources, as Arabic is closely related to Islam and the Qur'an."</i>
2	Desire to Deepen Islamic Teachings	Alumni are motivated by the desire to gain a deeper understanding of Islamic teachings.	<i>"So far, there haven't been any external factors supporting this; it truly is an interest that came from within myself. When I first chose the Arabic language major, my reason was to deepen my understanding of the Qur'an."</i>
3	Academic Aspirations	Alumni aspire to master various aspects of the Arabic language, including kalam, istima', qira'ah, and kitabah, for academic achievement and personal satisfaction.	<i>"I want to be able to speak Arabic." Additional: The respondent shows an aspiration to master various Arabic language skills such as kalam, istima', qira'ah, and kitabah.</i>
4	Personal Satisfaction	The process of learning Arabic provides personal satisfaction and meets both academic and spiritual needs. The hope to use Arabic skills in various ways, such as understanding the Qur'an, or helping others, contributes to personal satisfaction.	<i>"My goal and hope are that if I can speak Arabic, it may benefit many people. I hope that my knowledge of Arabic will make it easier for me to understand the Qur'an and other Islamic religious texts."</i>

These findings align with the study by Al-Muhsin et al. (2021), which revealed that many students choose to study Arabic because it is the language of Islam and is considered essential for gaining a deeper understanding of Islamic teachings and for religious purposes.

Additionally, this research is consistent with the findings of Salmas (2020), who emphasized that intrinsic motivation often includes the need to understand Islam more deeply and the aspiration to achieve academic excellence. This intrinsic motivation indicates that students have a strong desire to learn and develop independently, which is a crucial element for long-term academic success.

The study by Sa'diyah and Abdurahman (2021) also reinforces these findings, noting that many students are intrinsically motivated by the desire to understand and master the Arabic language. This is in line with the research by Sari et al. (2018), which explains that the motivation to learn Arabic often arises from a personal interest and desire to master the language as part of self-development. Some students also have a high level of curiosity and wish to expand their knowledge of foreign languages.

Moreover, this research corresponds with the findings of Mujahidah et al. (2021), who revealed that many students have a personal interest in the Arabic language and culture, which drives them to study Arabic and choose this major. Intrinsic motivation plays a significant role in influencing high school alumni to choose the Arabic Language Education major at IAIN Kerinci. They are driven by a personal interest in the Arabic language, which is perceived as essential for understanding the Qur'an and Islamic literature. This aligns with studies indicating that students are motivated by the desire to deepen their knowledge of Islam and achieve academic excellence. Additionally, a strong sense of curiosity and a commitment to independent learning are key aspects of their motivation. Overall, intrinsic motivation is crucial for their academic success and mastery of the Arabic language.

Extrinsic Motivation

The findings of this research show that high school alumni who chose the Arabic Language Education major at IAIN Kerinci were also significantly influenced by extrinsic motivation. This motivation includes various external factors such as family support, peer pressure, career opportunities, availability of information, and financial considerations, all of which play a role in encouraging students to select this major.

Table 2. Thematic Analysis of Extrinsic Motivation Factors Influencing High School Alumni in Choosing the Arabic Language Education Major at IAIN Kerinci

No	Theme	Description	Quote
1	Family Support	High school alumni revealed that there was a strong influence from their families, particularly their parents, in shaping their decision.	<i>"Yes, in fact, it was my parents who recommended that I pursue Arabic studies because it is related to the Qur'an."</i> <i>"Yes, because before choosing a major, we discussed it as a family, so the family was one of the factors in selecting this major."</i>
2	Peer Influence	High school alumni acknowledged the influence of peer pressure in their decision-making process.	<i>"It was because I had friends who were also choosing the Arabic major, so that became a supporting factor."</i>
3	Career Opportunities	High school alumni expressed their perceptions regarding future career opportunities.	<i>"Career opportunities definitely played a part. I hope that with Arabic, I can work in Arabia, in Mecca."</i>
4	Availability of Information	High school alumni stated that information from IAIN Kerinci students, disseminated through brochures, also influenced their decisions.	<i>"Information is also important, such as from students promoting through brochures."</i>
5	Financial Considerations	High school alumni mentioned that financial factors also played a role in their decision-making process.	<i>"Yes, it influenced me, especially considering that the education costs are relatively affordable."</i>

High school alumni mentioned that financial factors also played a role in their decision-making process. "Yes, it influenced me, especially considering that the education costs are relatively affordable."

High school alumni acknowledged the strong influence of parents and friends who chose the same major. Support from family and the social environment became key factors driving them to make this decision. This influence demonstrates that social support and recommendations from close ones are crucial in shaping students' academic decisions.

These findings are supported by research conducted by Imran et al. (2023) and Sari et al. (2018), which identified that external factors like family support and peer encouragement significantly affect the motivation to study Arabic. Both studies found that extrinsic motivation, or motivation stemming from outside the student, plays a critical role in motivating students and is important in their decision to choose the Arabic Language major.

Furthermore, the research findings indicate that the availability of information and exploration opportunities, including campus brochures introducing new foreign language programs, also influenced high school alumni's interest in selecting the Arabic Language major (Panggoa et al., 2023). High school alumni also mentioned that financial factors were an important consideration in their decision to choose the Arabic Language Education major. Factors such as income, future prospects, and potential business opportunities associated with this major influenced their decision (Kuhail et al., 2023).

Additionally, other factors, such as perceptions of teachers and future career prospects, also affected high school alumni's choice of major (Siregar et al., 2019). This includes the availability of good career opportunities and career services related to employment, which played a significant role in determining the major chosen by high school alumni (Cynthia et al., 2019).

The research also showed that the extrinsic motivation of high school alumni for learning Arabic was partly due to a positive and enjoyable learning environment. Additionally, other extrinsic motivations included support and advice from lecturers who motivated students to keep up their enthusiasm for learning Arabic. The incentives provided by lecturers to assist students in learning Arabic were also motivating factors. This aligns with the research of Salmas (2020), which explained that extrinsic motivation for students to enjoy learning Arabic was due to a good and pleasant learning environment. Additionally, other extrinsic motivations included enjoyable activities in learning Arabic and recognition from lecturers or the Special Arabic Language

Exploring Social and Academic Motivations Behind High School Graduates' Selection of Arabic Language Development Program. The advice given by instructors to students was also a motivating factor for them to learn Arabic.

The conclusion of this study indicates that extrinsic motivation plays a significant role in high school alumni's decision to choose the Arabic Language Education major at IAIN Kerinci. External factors such as family support, peer influence, career opportunities, availability of information, and financial considerations are the primary motivators. Social support from close circles, particularly from family and friends, strongly influences students' academic choices. Additionally, a positive learning environment and encouragement from lecturers are also crucial in enhancing motivation to learn Arabic. This study aligns with other findings that emphasize the importance of extrinsic motivation in academic decision-making.

Motives of High School Alumni in Learning Arabic

The research findings indicate that high school alumni who chose the Arabic Language Education major at IAIN Kerinci were influenced by three primary motives: religious motives, academic motives, and professional motives.

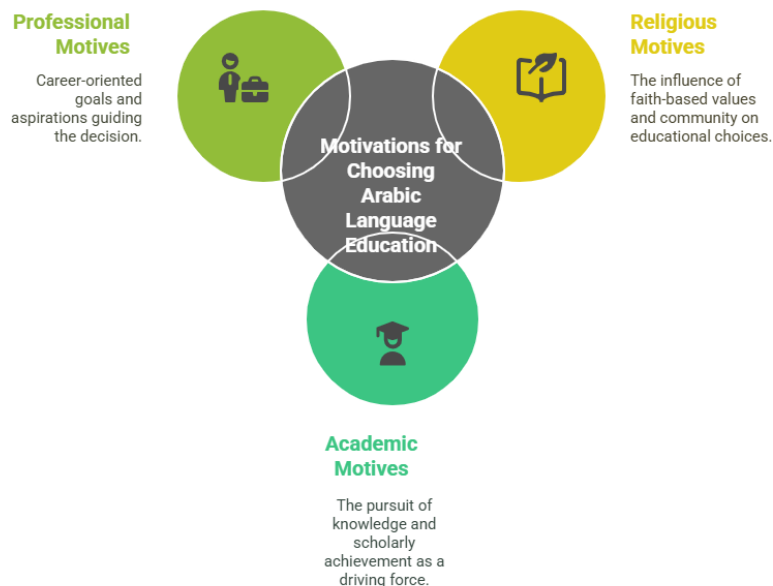


Figure 1. The Motivations of Alumni and Their Influence at IAIN Kerinci

Religious Motives

The research shows that religious motives are a significant factor driving high school alumni to choose the Arabic Language Education major at IAIN Kerinci. The alumni expressed a desire to use their Arabic language skills to better understand the

Qur'an and other Islamic literature. This demonstrates that Arabic is viewed as a crucial tool for deepening one's understanding of Islam, highlighting a strong religious motive (Yul & Andrian, 2024).

This religious motive aligns with the findings of Al-Muhsin et al. (2021), who found that the majority of students chose to study Arabic because it is the language of Islam, and they wanted to understand it better for religious purposes. Salmas (2020) also supports these findings by stating that students' intrinsic motivation is often driven by the need to understand Islam and read the Qur'an in its original language. Additionally, research by Sa'diyah & Abdurahman (2021) found that learning Arabic is important for understanding Islam, further underscores the strong religious motives behind studying this language.

Religious motivation is a primary factor in high school alumni's decision to choose the Arabic Language Education major at IAIN Kerinci. The desire to understand the Qur'an and Islamic texts through the Arabic language underscores the importance of religious impetus in this academic choice. These findings are consistent with previous research highlighting religious reasons as a major motivation for studying Arabic.

Academic Motives

In addition to religious motives, the research findings reveal that academic motives also play a significant role in high school alumni's decision to choose the Arabic Language Education major at IAIN Kerinci. The alumni expressed an interest in mastering Arabic as part of their academic goals, viewing it as a means to achieve academic success and intellectual satisfaction.

This academic motivation aligns with the Expectancy-Value Theory, which explains that students evaluate their potential success in a field—such as Arabic—based on their expectations of the outcomes and the value they place on those goals. In this context, high school alumni perceive studying Arabic as a crucial step toward achieving their desired academic accomplishments, which in turn motivates them to choose this major. Additionally, alumni noted that their experience in learning Arabic, albeit limited, provided a foundational basis for further studies in this field, even if their initial objective was simply to gain general proficiency in the language.

Alumni are also drawn to Arabic due to personal interest in the language and a desire to deepen their knowledge of Arab culture, history, and religion. These findings are consistent with Brosh (2013), who found that many students study Arabic for academic stimulation and to enhance their understanding of Arab culture and religion. Similarly, Yusuf et al. (2020) found that integrative motivation—where students learn a language to be accepted into and engage with the language community—can lead to positive learning outcomes.

Furthermore, research by Sa'diyah and Abdurahman (2021) indicates that students study Arabic to develop proficiency in reading, writing, speaking, and comprehension, reflecting strong academic motivation. High school alumni also reiterated that their limited exposure to Arabic in high school served as a stepping stone for further studies in the field.

Overall, academic motivation plays a significant role in high school alumni's decision to pursue the Arabic Language Education major at IAIN Kerinci. The pursuit of intellectual satisfaction and academic success drives their commitment to mastering Arabic, while their interest in Arab culture and history further reinforces their motivation. These factors indicate that academic motivation contributes significantly to meaningful and sustained learning outcomes.

Professional Motives

Professional motives were also found to play a role in high school alumni's decision to choose the Arabic Language Education major at IAIN Kerinci. Alumni perceive proficiency in Arabic as an important asset for their future careers, both in religious and other professional contexts. The research of Al-Muhsin et al. (2021) supports this finding, noting that many students study Arabic with the expectation of using it in their future careers. Additionally, high school alumni expressed their goal of becoming Arabic language teachers, indicating career aspirations in the field of education. Research by Mujahidah et al. (2021) also supports this finding, showing that motivation to choose the Arabic Language Education program correlates with positive perceptions of the teaching profession.

This professional motivation reflects the view that Arabic language skills are a valuable asset in the job market, potentially opening up broader career opportunities. These findings are in line with the research of Brosh (2013) research, which found that

career orientation is a significant motivation for students who decide to study Arabic. The research of Sa'diyah & Abdurahman (2021) also notes that research also notes that learning Arabic is important for becoming proficient in using the language and being able to teach it, indicating strong professional motivation.

Professional motivation is a significant driver for high school alumni in choosing the Arabic Language Education major at IAIN Kerinci. They perceive Arabic as a valuable skill that enhances career prospects, particularly as educators. This finding is supported by a strong career orientation, with a focus on utilizing Arabic in future professional endeavors.

CONCLUSION

This study reveals three main objectives underlying high school alumni's choice to study Arabic, namely: (a) Religious Motives: High school alumni study Arabic to understand and convey Islamic teachings (*fahm al-maqru*), (b) Academic Motives: Students study Arabic to understand the sciences and skills of the Arabic language, such as listening (*istima'*), speaking (*kalam*), reading (*qira'ah*), and writing (*kitabah*), (c) Professional Motives: High school alumni study Arabic for professional or practical purposes, such as the ability to communicate orally (*muhadatsah*) in Arabic to work as teachers. The results of this study differ from those reported by Herdah (2020) who identified four motives in learning Arabic, including ideological and economic motives. Herdah (2020) argued that ideological and economic motives encompass the use of Arabic for purposes of orientalism, capitalism, and imperialism. However, this study shows that none of the high school students who chose the Arabic Language Education major at IAIN Kerinci have these ideological and economic motives. This implies that not all general public students choose to study Arabic for these four motives. Thus, the three main motives identified in this study are religious, academic, and professional/practical and pragmatic motives. No ideological and economic motives were found among the students who chose to study Arabic.

Based on these findings, it is recommended that the Arabic Language Education program design curricula and instructional strategies that are more responsive to the three primary motivations identified. Learning materials should integrate Islamic values, strengthen language skills comprehensively, and enhance students' professional

Exploring Social and Academic Motivations Behind High School Graduates' Selection of Arabic Language readiness to enter the workforce, particularly in the field of education. Educational institutions are also encouraged to create inclusive and adaptive learning environments that foster student motivation across diverse backgrounds, including those from non-pesantren public schools. Furthermore, promotional efforts for the program should emphasize the relevance and practical prospects of Arabic language proficiency in various social, academic, and professional contexts

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