

## Motivational Orientations and Self-determination Theory in Learning Arabic as a Second Language

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### ABSTRACT

This study examined Arabic learners' motivation towards learning Arabic at the Academy of Islamic Studies, Nilam Puri, University Malaya. A total of 265 first and second year students, comprising of 99 males and 166 females, were randomly selected. A Principal Component Analysis (PCA) was performed to categorize the questionnaire into latent factors. The analysis yielded six interpretable factors with eigenvalues greater than one, which accounted for 55.1% of proportion variance in Students' Motivation of Language Learning scores (SMLA). Regression analysis examined the direction, weight, and predictive ability for each predictor extracted from the PCA. The overall model was statistically significant,  $[F(7, 229) = 20.10, MSE = 31.02, p = .001]$ , and the set of the predictors accounted for 56% of the total variance explained by the model. Religious motivation, introjected regulation, and external regulation were found to be significantly correlated with intrinsic motivation. Furthermore, demotivation, motivation, gender, and age were found to be statistically insignificant. In conclusion, the study found that religious motivation was the main determinant in learning Arabic, although other factors such as introjected regulation and external regulation were also found to be significant factors.

**Keywords:** Motivational orientation, self-determination, religious motivation, introjected regulation, external regulation

### INTRODUCTION

Undoubtedly, non-cognitive factors have been widely accepted today as the active determinants in the success of students' learning activities (Deci, Vallerand, Pelletier and Ryan, 1991; Ryan and Deci, 2000a; 2000b). Historically, educational psychologists concentrated on cognitive factors of learning (such as intelligence, memory, and information processing etc) as the only predictors of achievement in learning processes. In a previous study, researchers asserted that the cognitive aspects explained up to 50% of the variance in achievement (see Schiefele, Krapp and Winteler, 1992).

Many studies have examined students' incentives toward learning activities in general and toward language learning in particular, in order to investigate why equally intelligent students are divergent in academic performance and language proficiency (Hidi and Harackiewicz, 2000; Hidi, 2000; Gardner and Lambert, 1972; Dornyei, 1990). In general, however, researchers have underestimated the significant role of non-cognitive elements in language learning and this is largely due to the belief that cognitive factors are the only determinants of success in the academic arena (Horwitz, 1995).

The revolution against the traditional perception of learning processes, in which

cognitive factors are believed to account for the success or the failure of learning activities in second language learning, started as early as 1970 when Gardner and Lambert showed theoretically and empirically that attitudes and students' feelings towards a target language (motivation) are positively correlated with the level of proficiency in the foreign language. Almost two decades later, Oxford and Nyinkes (1989) asserted that motivation is the most influential factor affecting language-learning strategies. These findings are supported by Oxford and Ehrman (1997) who found a strong correlation between intrinsic motivation and the intention to use the language outside the classroom ( $\rho = 0.31$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). Meanwhile, the overall use of language learning strategies is strongly correlated with strong motivation and interest, especially intrinsic interest to use the language outside the classroom.

Motivation (as one of the non-cognitive elements) is defined as "the choices people make as to what experiences or goals they will approach or avoid, and the degree of efforts they will exert in that respect" (Keller, 1983, p. 389). Keller (1983) also divides the determinants of motivation into four categories, namely interest, relevance, expectancy, and outcomes. This is in contrast to the language-learning context, which has generally been categorized into two categories based on the sources and types of incentives.

Generally, researchers consider motivation crucial to the success of learning activities. Two types of motivation have been identified by scholars; these are intrinsic motivation and extrinsic motivation (Vallerand, Pelletier, Blais, Briere, Senecal and Vallieres, 1992; Noels, Pelletier and Vallerand, 2000; Reiss, 2004; 2005). The first type refers to a learner's desire to engage in learning activities without being compelled to do so or getting any payoff. This means that he/she is personally involved with a "full sense of wanting, choosing and personal endorsement" (Deci, 1992, p. 44). Psychologists believe that this kind of orientation directs attention and helps in energizing students' mood into action (Hidi, 2000). Moreover,

intrinsic motivation may lead to the increase of knowledge, value, and positive emotions. This also means that through persistence of engagement, which is the major characteristic of intrinsic motivation, a learner will develop knowledge structures, experience positive effects, and is highly devoted for the objects fall into his/her mind (Hidi, 2000; Hidi and Harackiewicz, 2000; Reiss, 2004; 2005). On the other hand, extrinsic motivation means an engagement in learning activities as a means to an end. The engagement may not be fully interesting to the learner, but since it is a channel to a targeted goal, the learner will devote some effort to achieve it.

However, Deci and Ryan (1985) suggest that, although extrinsic or instrumental motivation is an involvement in activities for reward or outside forces, "it is possible, through the developmental processes of internalization and integration, for an extrinsic regulatory process to become a part of the self and thus to be the basis for self-determined" (p. 45). According to self determination theory, students' motivation for academic struggle varies in both magnitude and quality and both variations predict learning, achievement, and continuation of academic exercises and learning activities (Deci and Ryan, 2002; Reeve, Deci and Ryan, 2004). Hence, intrinsic motivation emerges from the learner's personal needs and rooted inner desires towards target goal(s), rather than from outside pressures or tangible rewards (Deci, Ryan, Hardre, Chen, Huang, Chiang, Jen and Warden, 2006). An abundance of research has asserted that instrumental orientation usually undermines intrinsic motivation, and as a result, diminishes the outcomes of learning activities. However, there are many studies which have found the usefulness and fruitfulness of the integration of both orientations to enhance learning processes (Ryan, Mims and Koestner, 1993). On the other hand, Deci and Ryan (2002), Reeve, Deci and Ryan (2004), Deci *et al.* (2006) and Reiss (2004; 2005) contended that intrinsic motivation facilitates learning acquisition, promotes deep information processing, and empowers students' memories and recall. It was also found that

intrinsically motivated students reported more involvement, curiosity, persistence, and eagerly participating in their tasks (Deci and Ryan, 2000; Hidi, 2000; Hidi and Harackiewicz, 2000; Reeve, Nix and Hamm, 2003; Reiss, 2004; 2005).

Thus, the relationship between the two orientations is complex because of the convergence of some extrinsic motivation factors with intrinsic motivation factors. This adds more ambiguity to the issue of motivation in general.

In second language learning, numerous theoretical studies have also concentrated on the role of motivation in learning. In the early work on the impact of motivation on language learning, Gardner and Lambert (1972) identified two types of orientation in second language learning, namely integrative and instrumental orientations. As the terms connote, the first refers to the engagement in language learning activities for the purpose of assimilation and identification or at least a desire to meet and integrate with members of the target language group. A learner studies the target language in order to master the language or perhaps to have contact with the second language community. On the other hand, instrumental orientation denotes involvement in language learning as a tool to achieve a specific materialistic or pragmatic goal. These two orientations are widely accepted and their validity has been confirmed by some studies (Dornyei, 1990).

In fact, after much of criticisms of his model, Gardner (1988) agreed that integrative motivation is not the only element that contributes to language learning acquisition and it cannot account for all variances in second language achievement. Nevertheless, Gardner still maintains that integrative orientation is more important in determining the outcomes of language learning processes than instrumental orientation (Crookes and Schmidt, 1991). He emphasizes that learners with integrative motivation will become deeply involved in the target language, have positive feelings towards that language and community, evaluate the learning processes positively, and struggle to practice the language. These features,

according to Gardner (1988), are sufficiently logical evidences to claim and predict that the learner will probably become more successful in second language learning than a learner who is instrumentally motivated.

McDonough (1981) divided the integrative concept into two aspects: (1) a general motive to communicate and associate with the entire second language society, and (2) an interest to belong to a certain community by adapting psychological features of the group. However, it should not necessarily be concluded that the desire to contact and communicate with members of the target second language is the only motive behind adopting the integrative orientation since learners of a second language usually have little or no contact with members of that language community (Clement, Dornyei and Noels, 1994). The ultimate aim of foreign language learning is to be able to communicate with others who learn the language as a second language rather than to have direct contact with native speakers (Dornyei, 1990). Moreover, other studies advocate a combined approach in which both orientations are to be adopted holistically by learners as steps toward proficiency in learning the target language. This approach suggests that a learner will become more successful in learning when both orientations are adopted. As in the issues of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, researchers conclude that both integrative and instrumental goals are not contradictory; rather, they are compatible and positively correlated phenomena (Dornyei, 1990). However, a study by Clement and Kruidenier (1983) revealed that the integrative orientation is effective only in multicultural contexts among an obviously dominant group.

In contrast to Gardner and Lambert's (1972) study, Noels, Pelletier and Vallerand (2000) in their study conducted in both bilingual and multilingual environments, involving French, English, and Spanish found four major orientations to be common among all the learners who had participated in the study. These orientations are the willingness to travel, seeking friendship among other communities, knowledge, and instrumental orientation. They

argued that inclination to communicate and identify with members of the target second language may be very important to arouse motivational orientation in learning a foreign language in a specific socio-cultural context, but it is not necessarily sufficient to energize learners to engage in language learning activities.

However, their four motivational orientations cannot be fully applied to learning Arabic in Islamic society or among Muslims. The reason is that the majority of Muslim non-Arabic speakers are learning Arabic for the sake of their religion. Therefore, any investigation about Arabic learners' motivational orientation, in addition to these orientations, should also include the element of belief. Researchers should not simply conclude that orientation is a cross-cultural goal because second language learners' orientations are conventionally lumped with the socio-cultural setting where they live and that research findings should automatically reflect the reality where the data are collected (Clement, Dornyei and Noels, 1994). Furthermore, Dornyei (1990) hints that the integrative approach has been found to predominate among learners whenever language learning is undertaken for knowledge and professionalism. This means that the learner is beyond the intermediate level and is moving to a more advanced level in which intrinsic motivation plays a major role in language proficiency. On the other hand, he argues that the nature of motivational orientation will definitely reflect the milieu where learning takes place. This also indicates that although motivational dimensions by Gardner and Lambert's might be cross-cultural components, social contexts and culture could also significantly contribute to the formulation and shaping of learners' orientation.

Nevertheless, in their self-developed items designed to assess students' desire to learn a second language, Clement, Dornyei and Noels (1994) employed Principal Component Analysis (PCA) and retained five interpretable and meaningful factors which accounted for 41.5% of the variance in the study. These factors are Xenophilic, (friendship) identification, sociocultural, instrumental-knowledge, and

English media with the eigenvalues of 5.97, 1.53, 1.62, 1.17, and 0.92, respectively. Moreover, when they identified the cultural, friendship, and identification dimensions as integrative orientations, they associated factor four, i.e. learning language for the purpose of knowledge with instrumental orientation, based on the findings by Clement and Kruidenier (1983).

On the other hand, it is generally accepted that the overwhelming majority of Muslim Arabic language learners in Islamic non-Arabic speaking countries are learning Arabic as an instrument of knowledge in order to understand Islam better. Although the elements of friendship and brotherhood among the learners and Arabic native speakers cannot be totally ruled out as affective factors energizing their motivational orientation, "affective predispositions towards the target language community are unlikely to explain a great proportion of the variance in language attainment" (Dornyei, 1990, p. 49).

Hence, the main objective of the present study was to investigate Arabic language learners' motivational orientations towards learning Arabic language as a second language, and whether Clement and Kruidenier's findings (1983) were held when learning Arabic. Moreover, since social context and culture have influence on students' orientations, this study also investigated the Academy of Islamic Studies students' orientation towards learning Arabic as a second language and the possibility of a religious factor influencing their intrinsic motivation toward learning Arabic.

## METHOD

### *Participants*

A total of 265 first and second year students (age 18-20) from the Academy of Islamic Studies, Nilam Puri participated in this study. They were randomly selected and voluntarily accepted to answer the questionnaires. These students were learning Arabic as a second language in order to pursue degrees in various fields of Islamic Studies. The Academy of Islamic Studies in Nilam Puri is a pre-university centre which is affiliated with the University of

Malaya, where students are introduced to basic courses, particularly in Arabic language and bachelor degree prerequisites which qualify them to undertake undergraduate programmes in various specializations in the Islamic Studies. The sample comprised 99 (37.4%) males and 166 (62.6%) females. These students were from various types of schools such as Arabic schools (SAR), National Islamic schools (SMKA), and National Secondary schools (SMK). The respondents had spent a minimum of 5 years and a maximum of 11 years learning Arabic, but none of them had lived in or visited any Arabic countries.

### *Instrument*

A students' Motivation in Learning Arabic (SMLA) inventory, developed by Kaseh and Nil Farakh (2003), was used in this study. This inventory consisted of 63 items measuring different societal and psychological factors that motivate students to have better performance in learning Arabic. The factors were intrinsic and extrinsic motivation and their sub-sections included factors such as accomplishments, stimulation, external regulation, introjected regulation, identified regulation, amotivation, and demotivation.

The questionnaire was derived from the pattern of motivational orientation and self-determination theory survey (Noels *et al.*, 2000). Noels *et al.* (2000) also asked about the different types of motivational orientation toward second language learning based on the self-determination theory of Deci and Ryan (1985). Meanwhile, Kaseh and Nil Farakh (2003) included an element of religious factor that was not available in the instrument by Noels *et al.* (2000). The instrument ranged from very strongly disagree to very strongly agree on a 7-interval scale.

## **PRELIMINARY ANALYSIS**

All the participants completed the questionnaires providing brief demographic variables regarding age, gender, previous school, year of the study, and CGPA. Each item of the questionnaire

asked the students how strongly they agreed or disagreed with the statements. However, CGPA could not be included in the final analyses because it was unavailable for the first year students.

Moreover, to evaluate the internal consistency of the items, Cronbach's alpha was examined and it was found to range between .85 to .86. Furthermore, an examination of the means, standard deviations, skewness, and kurtosis values for the final earned factors suggested that an assumption of normal distribution was held. When a further test was done using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test, the results indicated that the test was statistically insignificant ( $p > .05$ ), except for the minor cases, while  $p > .05$  meant that the normality assumption was held. Moreover, the Shapiro-Wilk test also supported the assumption of normality. Based on these results, it could be concluded that normality assumptions were tenable and the parametric data analyses were justifiable. On the other hand, the linearity assumption means that there is a straight-line relationship between two variables. Linearity is very important in a practical sense because Pearson's  $r$  only captures the linear relationship (Tabachnick and Fidell, 2001). According to Schumacker and Lomax (1996), the extent to which one or both variables deviate from the assumption of a linear relationship will affect the size of the correlation coefficient. The researcher had conducted a series of multiple regressions using a studentized (SRED) residual pilot against each of the predicted dependent variables to examine the linearity. Visual inspection of the residual plots showed that the scores were randomly scattered, with no distinct pattern, and thus, suggesting that this assumption was reasonably met. Finally, lack of evidence of serious violations of the assumptions provided justification for the researcher to continue with the analysis (Tabachnick and Fidell, 2001).

## **RESULTS**

A Principal Component Factor Analysis (PCA) with varimax rotation was performed on the data obtained from the respondents. The method

was used mainly to summarize the number of items into latent variables. The analysis strategy involved an iterative process, whereby the items that did not contribute significantly (i.e. those with loading  $<|.40|$  or those with factorial complexity) were automatically eliminated from the list and the Principle Component Analyses were reanalyzed. These processes were repeated several times before the satisfactory factors were retracted and obtained. Hence, the initial pool of 63 items was then reduced to 31 items as a result of PCA, while items that did not significantly contribute to the analysis or redundant items were eventually discarded. Based on the rule of thumb, the only factors with the eigenvalue of 1 or greater were considered as good factors and were therefore retained. These processes enhanced the reliability and interpretability of the factors.

The analysis yielded a total of six interpretable factors with eigenvalues greater than one (see Table 1), and these accounted for 55.1% of the proportion variance in the students' motivation of language learning scores (SMLA). Furthermore, the degree of intercorrelation among the items also reached the acceptable level, with the Barlett's test of Sphericity was statistically significant,  $\chi^2(465) = 2765.444$ ,  $p = .001$ , indicating that the co-efficient in the correlaton matrix was different from zero and did not occur as a result of chance (Edgar and Shields, 1999). The overall MSA, which is an index of the extent to which correlation co-efficients conform to zero, was also fulfilled.

The root-greater-than-one criterion was used to extract the factors and eventually six meaningful and interpretable factors were obtained (Table 1). The first factor contained nine items that reflected the students' inner feelings toward learning Arabic primarily as a tool of exploring and gaining knowledge and was labelled as intrinsic motivation – knowledge. The second factor included seven statements that generally described demotivation in learning Arabic. Meanwhile, the third factor consisted of four items pertaining to the feelings associated with religion as a motive to learn Arabic and was characterized as religious motivation. The

fourth factor was represented by four items and was labelled as extrinsic motivation–introjected regulation. Introjected motivation means motive emerges within the individual (self); it is not a part of the integrated self but rather emerges as a result of internal control. Thus, it is closer to the external than the internal (Deci, Vallerand, Pelletier and Ryan, 1991). The fifth factor consisted of four items and was loaded in a factor named as extrinsic motivation–external regulation. The locus of causality is external regulation because it is totally determined by outside forces and coercion whether seeking praise or avoiding punishment and it represents the least self-determined form of extrinsic motivation (Deci *et al.*, 1991). The sixth factor contained three items and labelled as amotivation.

### REGRESSION ANALYSIS

The multiple regression analysis was performed to examine the direction, weight and predictive ability for each predictor in this study. The correlation among the variables is presented in Table 3. Both predictors or independent variables (Demotivation, Religious motivation, Introjected, Regulation, Amotivation) and criterion or dependent variable (Intrinsic Motivation) were extracted from the PCA and combined with gender and age. A number of significant correlations were obtained. The overall model was statistically significant,  $F(7, 229) = 20.10$ ,  $MSE = 31.02$ ,  $p = .001$ , and the set of the predictors accounted for 56% of the total variance explained by the model. The adjusted coefficient of determination (adjusted  $R^2$ ) was .53, with an estimated standard error of 10.1. This indicated that the model was appropriate and there were relationships between the criterion and predictors. Further analysis of the predictive power of the individual predictors found three predictors to be significantly correlated with intrinsic motivation (criterion). For example, religious motivation was found to be the major predictor of students' intrinsic motivation for learning Arabic:  $F(7, 229) = 20.10$ ,  $MSE = 31.02$ ,  $p = .001$  ( $\beta = .340$ ). This finding

TABLE 1  
Distribution of factor loading and anti image

| Item no | Items   | Factor loading |         |         |         |         |         | Anti image |
|---------|---|----------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|------------|
|         |   | Factor1        | Factor2 | Factor3 | Factor4 | Factor5 | Factor6 |            |
| Item1   | I want to understand the content of the Quran and Hadith better.  |                |         | .655    |         |         |         | .838a      |
| Item2   | For the pleasure I get when I can comprehend some words in the Quran.   |                |         | .730    |         |         |         | .882a      |
| Item3   | For the high feeling that I experience when hearing the Quran recited.  |                |         | .802    |         |         |         | .859a      |
| Item4   | For the pleasure I get when deciphering the beauty of the Quranic verses.   |                |         | .703    |         |         |         | .908a      |
| Item5   | For the pleasure in knowing what the Arabic writers write.  | .548           |         |         |         |         |         | .862a      |
| Item6   | For the satisfied feeling I got in finding out new things.  | .656           |         |         |         |         |         | .881a      |
| Item7   | For the enjoyment I experience when I grasp the complexity of the Arabic grammar.                                 | .711           |         |         |         |         |         | .842a      |
| Item8   | For the satisfaction I feel when I am in the process of accomplishing difficult exercises in the Arabic language. | .664           |         |         |         |         |         | .826a      |
| Item9   | For the satisfaction I feel when I am able to acquire a second language.  | .657           |         |         |         |         |         | .856a      |
| Item10  | For the pleasure I feel when I can engage in conversation with a native Arabic speaker.                           | .653           |         |         |         |         |         | .859a      |
| Item11  | For the enjoyment I feel when I can understand some TV or radio programs in Arabic.                               | .568           |         |         |         |         |         | .934a      |
| Item12  | For the high feeling that I experience while speaking in Arabic.  | .619           |         |         |         |         |         | .888a      |
| Item13  | For the pleasure I get from hearing the Arabic spoken by native Arabs or those fluent in the language.            | .713           |         |         |         |         |         | .859a      |
| Item14  | In order to get a more prestigious job later on.  |                |         |         |         | .742    |         | .699a      |
| Item15  | Because it is a university requirement.   |                |         |         |         | .573    |         | .792a      |
| Item16  | Because I need it to undertake studies in Islamic sciences.   |                |         |         |         | .599    |         | .697a      |

Table 1 (Continued)

|             |  |       |       |       |       |       |       |
|-------------|--|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| Item17      | Because I might need to travel to Arabic countries some day.                               |       |       |       | .676  | .789a |       |
| Item18      | Because I believe that all Muslims should make the effort to learn Arabic.                 | .558  |       |       |       | .864a |       |
| Item19      | Because I would feel guilty if I did not know the language of Islam, which is my religion. | .573  |       |       |       | .878a |       |
| Item20      | Because I choose to speak the language of the prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him).        | .741  |       |       |       | .850a |       |
| Item21      | Because I choose to speak the language of paradise.  | .727  |       |       |       | .815a |       |
| Item22      | I do not need Arabic in order to understand Islam better.                                  |       | .800  |       |       | .827a |       |
| Item23      | I do not care if I do not pass my Arabic.  |       | .725  |       |       | .847a |       |
| Item24      | Learning Arabic is irrelevant to my life in this country.                                  |       | .583  |       |       | .864a |       |
| Item25      | I just do not know how to learn Arabic effectively.  | .683  |       |       |       | .870a |       |
| Item26      | Arabic is simply too difficult for me to learn.  | .614  |       |       |       | .873a |       |
| Item27      | I have never done well in my Arabic tests.   | .599  |       |       |       | .855a |       |
| Item28      | The materials that are used for Arabic courses are not interesting.                        | .493  |       |       |       | .819a |       |
| Item29      | I have only been taught rules of the language but not how to use the language.             | .739  |       |       |       | .723a |       |
| Item30      | The goals and expectations of learning Arabic are not clearly communicated to me.          | .699  |       |       |       | .793a |       |
| Item31      | Beyond the classroom, I do not have the opportunities to practice Arabic.                  | .685  |       |       |       |       |       |
| Eigenvalue  |  | 7.586 | 3.522 | 1.895 | 1.607 | 1.294 | 1.178 |
| Reliability |  | .89   | .86   | .81   | .72   | .69   | .57   |

TABLE 2  
Means, standard deviation and correlation of SMLA items

| Items No. | SMLA Items in Brief   | Means | Std. Deviation | Correlation |
|-----------|---|-------|----------------|-------------|
| 1         | I want to understand the content of the Quran and Hadith better.  | 6.62  | .87            | .74         |
| 2         | For the pleasure in knowing what the Arabic writers write.  | 5.61  | 1.10           | .73         |
| 3         | For the satisfied feeling I got in finding out new things.  | 5.60  | .99            | .73         |
| 4         | For the pleasure I get when I can comprehend some words in the Quran.   | 6.14  | 1.10           | .73         |
| 5         | For the enjoyment I experience when I grasp the complexity of the Arabic grammar.                                 | 5.51  | 1.13           | .73         |
| 6         | For the satisfaction I feel when I am in the process of accomplishing difficult exercises in the Arabic language. | 5.20  | 1.20           | .73         |
| 7         | For the satisfaction I feel when I am able to acquire a second language.  | 5.60  | 1.20           | .73         |
| 8         | For the pleasure I feel when I can engage in conversation with a native Arabic speaker.                           | 5.40  | 1.15           | .73         |
| 9         | For the enjoyment I feel when I can understand some TV or radio programs in Arabic.                               | 5.60  | 1.30           | .73         |
| 10        | For the high feeling that I experience when hearing the Quran recited.  | 6.24  | 1.01           | .74         |
| 11        | For the pleasure I get when deciphering the beauty of the Quranic verses.   | 6.10  | 1.06           | .74         |
| 12        | For the high feeling that I experience while speaking in Arabic.  | 5.75  | 1.12           | .73         |
| 13        | For the pleasure I get from hearing the Arabic spoken by native Arabs or those fluent in the language.            | 5.40  | 1.13           | .72         |
| 14        | In order to get a more prestigious job later on.  | 4.52  | 1.42           | .73         |
| 15        | Because it is a university requirement.   | 4.22  | 1.70           | .73         |
| 16        | Because I need it to undertake studies in Islamic sciences.   | 4.84  | 1.54           | .73         |
| 17        | Because I might need to travel to Arabic countries some day.  | 5.01  | 1.34           | .73         |
| 18        | Because I believe that all Muslims should make the effort to learn Arabic.  | 5.82  | 1.22           | .73         |
| 19        | Because I would feel guilty if I did not know the language of Islam, which is my religion.                        | 5.60  | 1.40           | .74         |
| 20        | Because I choose to speak the language of the prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him).                               | 5.83  | 1.15           | .74         |
| 21        | Because I choose to speak the language of paradise.   | 2.90  | 1.85           | .75         |
| 22        | I do not need Arabic in order to understand Islam better.   | 2.22  | 1.62           | .75         |

Table 2 (Continued)

|    |   |      |      |     |
|----|---|------|------|-----|
| 23 | I do not care if I do not pass my Arabic.   | 2.41 | 1.63 | .74 |
| 24 | Learning Arabic is irrelevant to my life in this country.                         | 3.76 | 1.64 | .74 |
| 25 | I just do not know how to learn Arabic effectively.                               | 3.42 | 1.51 | .74 |
| 26 | Arabic is simply too difficult for me to learn.                                   | 3.30 | 1.56 | .74 |
| 27 | I have never done well in my Arabic tests.  | 3.30 | 1.43 | .74 |
| 28 | The materials that are used for Arabic courses are not interesting.               | 3.99 | 1.45 | .73 |
| 29 | I have only been taught rules of the language but not how to use the language.    | 3.73 | 1.40 | .73 |
| 30 | The goals and expectations of learning Arabic are not clearly communicated to me. | 3.50 | 1.53 | .74 |
| 31 | Beyond the classroom, I do not have the opportunities to practice Arabic.         | 6.62 | .87  | .74 |

suggests that religion is the main factor that motivates Muslims in Malaysia and other Islamic non-Arabic countries to learn Arabic (Al-attas, 1980; Wan Daud, 1988; Rosnani, 1996). Meanwhile, extrinsic motivation-introjected regulation was the second predictor which was found to correlate statistically with intrinsic motivation:  $F(7, 229), 20.10, MSE = 31.02, p = .001 (\beta = .257)$ , and it accounted for almost 26% of the variance of the model. This indicated that although learning Arabic was internal to the person, it might also have more “resemblance to external control than to self-determined forms of regulation because it involved coercion and seduction and did not entail true choice” (Deci *et al.*, 1991, p. 329). Similarly, the extrinsic motivation-external regulation was another major determinant of intrinsic motivation:  $F(7, 229), 20.10, MSE = 31.02, p = .001 (\beta = .180)$ . This denoted that learning Arabic could be perceived as a way of living, because many were learning Arabic in addition to religious motivation to get a prestigious job, or as a university requirement, or because they were going to take some courses in Arabic in their future academic endeavour. However, demotivation, amotivation, gender, and age were found to be statistically insignificant:  $\beta = -.055, p = .193, \beta = -.012, p = .389, \beta = .009, p = .818, \text{ and } \beta = -.079, p = .873$ , respectively.

On the other hand, religious motivation and extrinsic motivation (introjected and

external regulations) were positively correlated with intrinsic motivation (.528, .506, .202) respectively, while demotivation and amotivation were negatively correlated with religion motivation (-.218, -.285), respectively. This finding suggests that although instrumental orientations might be considered as another reason for learning a second language, they could be a self-determined reason for engaging in the second language learning task (Noels *et al.*, 2000). Introjected regulation was highly correlated with religious motivation (.541) while amotivation was negatively correlated with it (-.421).

Not surprisingly, amotivation was positively correlated with demotivation (.460) and external regulation (.177), but it was negatively correlated with introjected regulation (-.312). Meanwhile, gender was positively associated with religious motivation (.144), but was negatively correlated with demotivation and amotivation at -.110 and -.179, respectively (Table 3). However, age was only negatively correlated with demotivation (-.115) and moderately correlated with introjected regulation (.087).

In multiple regression equations, the partial coefficient for each variable signifies how much the value of a dependent variable changes when the value of the particular independent variable increases by one unit, while other independent variables are kept constant (Tabachnick and Fidell, 2001).

TABLE 3  
Correlations among the variables

| Factor  | IMK   | Demotiv | R.motiv | EMIR  | EMER  | AMOT  | Gender | Age |
|---------|-------|---------|---------|-------|-------|-------|--------|-----|
| IMK     |       |         |         |       |       |       |        |     |
| Demotiv | -.218 |         |         |       |       |       |        |     |
| R.motiv | .528  | -.267   |         |       |       |       |        |     |
| EMIR    | .506  | -.230   | .541    |       |       |       |        |     |
| EMER    | .202  | .200    | .016    | .167  |       |       |        |     |
| AMOT    | -.285 | .460    | -.421   | -.312 | .177  |       |        |     |
| Gender  | .088  | -.110   | .144    | .062  | -.041 | -.179 |        |     |
| Age     | .003  | -.115   | -.046   | .087  | -.019 | .026  | .076   |     |

Note: IMK = Intrinsic motivation – knowledge, Demotiv = Demotivation, R.motiv = Religious motivation, EMIR = Extrinsic motivation – introjected regulation, EMER = Extrinsic motivation – external regulation, AMOT = Amotivation, Gender, Age

TABLE 4  
Coefficient table

|                      | B     | SE   | Beta  | t     | Sig. |
|----------------------|-------|------|-------|-------|------|
| Constant             | 17.29 | 4.44 | -.079 | 3.90  | .001 |
| Demotivation         | .0078 | .060 | -.055 | -1.30 | .193 |
| Religious motivation | .723  | .140 | .340  | 5.16  | .001 |
| EM. Introjected      | .478  | .120 | .257  | 3.97  | .001 |
| EM. Regulation       | .309  | .095 | .180  | 3.26  | .001 |
| Amotivation          | .0093 | .107 | .012  | -.86  | .389 |
| Gender               | .176  | .767 | -.009 | .230  | .818 |
| Age                  | -.213 | 1.33 | -.079 | -.160 | .873 |

## DISCUSSION

The Principal Component Analysis (PCA) indicates that the structural factor of the language learning orientation scale is generally congruent with the previous factor analytic work conducted by Noels *et al.* (2000) on English language learning. It also suggests that the Arabic learners' motivation could be accurately evaluated using the intrinsic and extrinsic motivation subtypes outlined by Deci and Ryan (1985) and Noels, Pelletier, Clement and Vallerand (2000). However, the element of religious motivation must also be highlighted in order to encompass all the aspects that contribute to students' motivation towards learning Arabic.

On contrary to Noels *et al.*'s (2000) extracted factors, this analysis combined both intrinsic motivation-knowledge and accomplishment to form one factor labelled as intrinsic motivation-knowledge. Similarly, both extrinsic motivation (introjected regulation) and identified regulation were joined to form a dimension characterized as introjected regulation. It is worth mentioning that Noels *et al.* (2000) had analyzed their data separately due to what they called a large number of variables. However, the analysis in this study did not separate the intrinsic and extrinsic sub-scales in order to avoid the cross loading (factorial complexity) that had occurred in Noels' analysis.

Thus, the mixing up of some subtypes might result from that analysis which had been carried out together without separating the intrinsic and extrinsic orientation subscales. It was found that

religious motivation was the major predictor of Arabic learners' intrinsic motivation. Moreover, interjected regulation and external regulation were statistically significant as well. This means that although religious motivation might be the main determinant in learning Arabic, it was not the only element, i.e. other elements should not be totally ruled out. Although the correlations between criterion and predictors did not necessarily connote causality, the correlational pattern was consistent with the theoretical prediction that religion, introjected, and external regulation might be related to more self-determined forms of motivation. Therefore, instructors should use all the factors that motivate students.

Based on their personal experience, many Academy of Islamic Studies' students at Nilam Puri were prepared to learn if there was an instructor who is well-prepared, ready to give knowledge, and care for the students' psychological aspects. It is suggested that more attention should be paid to Nilam Puri and meaningful training should be periodically conducted to enhance their academic staff's abilities especially on psychological aspects, methods of teaching, and unfortunately on the body of knowledge as well. It is worth noticing that the majority of the students blame the methods and ability of their instructors. For example, it is rare to find an instructor who speaks Arabic in the classroom, an action that violates the rules of the institution and the procedures of second language learning and teaching. Thus,

it is suggested that the administration should devote more efforts and attentions, not only at the Academy of Islamic Studies, but also at University of Malaya as a whole, in order to overcome the problem of poor performance of the students in learning Arabic.

Another noteworthy finding was that, neither gender nor age was significant in this study. Thus, gender and age did not determine the intrinsic motivation towards learning Arabic. Although this study examined the psychological factors that contributed to students' motivation in learning Arabic, the study did not assign a causal relationship between the predictors and intrinsic motivation. Therefore, an experimental design may be necessary to prove the causality between the criterion and predictors of this study. Moreover, it should be mentioned that all the subjects of this study were Malay Muslims. Therefore, if the study was conducted in other settings or in a broader socio-cultural context, the results might not be the same. Thus, it is suggested that this study be replicated in a wider setting in the future.

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