Investigating Influence of Arabic Teachers' Pedagogical Skills on Students' Engagement in Learning Arabic at Fatimah Azzahra Islamic Junior High School

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Abstract. This article aims to explore and understand the relationship between Arabic teachers' pedagogical competence and students' interest in learning Arabic among seventh grade students at Fatimah Azzahra Magelang Islamic Junior High School. This research is expected to provide in-depth insight into how the quality of Arabic teachers' teaching can affect students' interest and engagement in the learning process. This study used a correlational quantitative approach with data collection tools in the form of a questionnaire consisting of 16 questions for each variable. The research population was all seventh grade students totaling 66 people and at the same time served as the research sample. Data analysis was carried out using the Pearson correlation test. The results showed that there were 16 indicators on each variable (X and Y), with a normal distribution value of Asymp. Sig. 0.222 which indicates that the data is normally distributed. The linearity test produces a significance value of 0.033 which means that the data has a linear relationship. While the Pearson correlation test shows a significant value of 0.021 and a correlation coefficient value of 0.263. This indicates a weak but statistically significant relationship between Arabic teachers' pedagogical competence and students' interest in learning Arabic.

Keywords: Arabic Language Learning, Arabic Teacher, Correlation, Learning Interest, Pedagogical Competence.

1. INTRODUCTION

In the learning process, the role of the teacher is very important, not only as a contributor of material, but also as a facilitator and motivator who is able to arouse students' interest in learning. One of the keys to the success of the teaching-learning process lies in the teacher's competence in carrying out his pedagogical duties. This competence includes the teacher's ability to understand student characters, design learning, carry out the teaching-learning process effectively, and evaluate learning outcomes to improve the overall quality of education

Teachers' pedagogical competence has a major influence on the achievement of educational goals. In this context, the Indonesian government has regulated that teachers must have four basic competencies, namely pedagogical, personality, social and professional competencies. However, of the four competencies, pedagogic competence is the main foundation because it directly concerns the teacher's ability to manage the learning process in the classroom.

One of the main challenges in Arabic language education at secondary school level in Indonesia is the low interest of students in the subject. This is often an obstacle in achieving

optimal learning outcomes. Many students feel that Arabic is difficult to understand, irrelevant, or even boring.(Handayani & Haryati, 2024) In fact, teachers have tried to carry out their duties well, use appropriate methods and media, and create a conducive learning atmosphere.

From this phenomenon, an important question arises: Is there a relationship between Arabic teachers' pedagogical competence and students' interest in learning Arabic? This question is the rationale for writing this article.

The main focus of this study is to see the extent of the influence of teachers' pedagogical competence on the interest of seventh grade students in learning Arabic at Fatimah Azzahra Magelang Islamic Junior High School. This article departs from the concern about the low motivation and attention of students to Arabic lessons even though the teacher has carried out learning according to the correct procedures

The pedagogical competence referred to in this study covers various aspects, ranging from the teacher's ability to understand student characteristics, develop lesson plans, use varied methods, evaluate the learning process and results, to facilitate the optimal development of student potential.(Apriliani et al., 2024) Teachers who have good pedagogical competence are expected to be able to create learning processes that are interesting, interactive and relevant to students' needs.(Salamah & Wibisono, 2024)

On the other hand, student learning interest is one of the important factors that determine the success of education. High interest in a subject will encourage students to learn actively, enthusiastically and responsibly. Interest in learning is also closely related to students' intrinsic motivation, which is the drive from within students to engage in learning activities because they feel interested, happy, or find these activities meaningful.

Students' interest in learning does not just appear. This interest can be built and grown through various ways, one of which is through the approach taken by the teacher in learning. Teachers who are able to deliver material in a fun, interactive way, and relate it to students' daily lives, will more easily attract their attention and increase their interest in learning.

Therefore, this article tries to test whether there is a significant relationship between Arabic teachers' pedagogical competence and students' interest in learning Arabic. If a strong relationship is found, then this finding can provide important input for the world of education, especially in efforts to improve the quality of Arabic language learning in schools.

The research in this article uses a quantitative approach with a correlational method. Data were collected through distributing questionnaires to all seventh grade students at Fatimah Azzahra Islamic Junior High School Magelang, totaling 66 people. The independent variable in this study is teachers' pedagogical competence, while the dependent variable is students'

interest in learning Arabic. The results of statistical analysis using Pearson correlation showed a weak but significant relationship between the two variables.

This finding indicates that although the relationship found is not very strong, teachers' pedagogical competence still has a role in influencing students' interest in learning. This confirms the importance of developing pedagogical competence for teachers, especially in teaching subjects that are considered less desirable by students such as Arabic.

As an implication of this study, it is recommended that educational institutions provide continuous training and mentoring to Arabic language teachers to improve their pedagogical competence. In addition, teachers also need to continue to reflect and innovate in learning in order to adapt their teaching methods to the needs and characters of students.(Miasari et al., 2022)

This article also opens up opportunities for other article writers to dig deeper into other factors that influence students' interest in learning, such as teaching style, learning environment, family background, and social and emotional support from schools. Thus, improving the quality of Arabic language learning can be done thoroughly and continuously.

By strengthening teachers' pedagogical competence and understanding the factors that influence students' interest in learning, it is hoped that the Arabic language learning process in secondary schools can run more effectively, fun and meaningful. In the end, students are not only able to understand Arabic theoretically, but also able to use it actively in everyday life.

2. THEORETICAL REVIEW

The success of any educational endeavor hinges significantly on the effectiveness of the teaching and learning process. At the center of this process is the teacher, whose role extends beyond merely transferring knowledge. A competent teacher acts as a facilitator, motivator, and guide, helping students navigate their learning journey. One of the most critical competencies that support this role is *pedagogical competence*, which is a core determinant of educational quality and student engagement.

Pedagogical Competence of Teachers

Pedagogical competence refers to the ability of a teacher to manage the teaching and learning process effectively. According to the Indonesian Regulation of the Minister of National Education (Permendiknas No. 16/2007), pedagogical competence includes several components: understanding the characteristics of students, designing and implementing learning, assessing learning outcomes, and developing students' potential.

Good pedagogical competence allows teachers to tailor their teaching strategies to the specific needs of their students. It includes the ability to use various teaching methods, manage the classroom environment, and create an interactive and supportive learning atmosphere. A teacher with strong pedagogical competence knows how to stimulate curiosity, build understanding through contextual learning, and foster critical thinking.

Scholars like Shulman (1987) introduced the idea of *pedagogical content knowledge*, which combines subject matter knowledge with effective pedagogical strategies. For language teachers, including Arabic teachers, this integration is crucial because language learning requires active engagement, cultural understanding, and continuous interaction.

In the context of Arabic language education, pedagogical competence becomes even more significant due to the complexity of the language, the sociolinguistic gap between students' mother tongue and Arabic, and the perceived difficulty of the subject. Teachers are expected not only to master Arabic linguistically but also to design pedagogical strategies that make Arabic learning accessible, interesting, and relevant to students' lives.

Student Interest in Learning

Student interest is defined as a psychological state of focused attention, increased cognitive functioning, and persistent effort in learning activities (Hidi & Renninger, 2006). Interest plays a critical role in determining whether a student is willing to engage deeply in a learning task. It is both a product of intrinsic motivation and a reflection of external conditions that stimulate students' attention and enjoyment.

Interest in learning is shaped by various factors, including personal relevance, enjoyment, challenge level, and social support. Krapp (2005) explains that interest is a key mediator between motivation and learning outcomes. When students are interested in a subject, they are more likely to exert effort, use cognitive strategies, and persist in the face of difficulties.

In foreign language learning, particularly Arabic, interest becomes a pivotal factor due to the high cognitive demands of vocabulary acquisition, grammar mastery, and pronunciation. Arabic language learning often requires long-term commitment and continuous practice. Thus, maintaining student interest is essential to ensure sustained engagement.

Teachers play a central role in fostering this interest. The way a teacher delivers content, interacts with students, and creates a learning environment significantly affects how students perceive and engage with the subject.

The Relationship Between Pedagogical Competence and Student Interest

The relationship between teacher competence and student interest has been widely discussed in educational literature. Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory posits that learning is a social process, and teachers act as mediators in students' cognitive development. A competent teacher can scaffold students' learning, making difficult content comprehensible and stimulating students' interest.

Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory also supports this relationship by highlighting the role of observational learning and modeling. Students who perceive their teachers as competent and enthusiastic are more likely to mirror this behavior, leading to greater interest and motivation in the learning subject.

In the specific context of Arabic language learning, research has shown that the quality of instruction, particularly the use of student-centered and culturally responsive teaching strategies, can enhance motivation and interest. For example, incorporating Arabic media, Islamic cultural references, and interactive activities like role-playing or games can make the learning process more engaging.

Studies by Albantani (2019) and Fitriyah (2020) also reveal that the use of modern digital platforms such as social media, QR codes, and visual media in Arabic teaching contributes positively to students' enthusiasm. These methods are often rooted in pedagogical strategies that prioritize engagement, relevance, and interaction—hallmarks of strong pedagogical competence.

Pedagogical Challenges in Arabic Language Learning

Arabic poses unique challenges for non-native speakers in Indonesia. The differences in script, phonology, morphology, and syntax compared to Bahasa Indonesia can create cognitive barriers. Without effective pedagogical intervention, students may lose interest quickly.

Thus, Arabic teachers must be well-equipped not only in content but also in adaptive teaching. Teachers should understand their students' cultural backgrounds and learning styles and be capable of using technology and media to bridge the gap between student expectations and curriculum content.

Additionally, teaching Arabic requires balancing the classical (fusha) and colloquial (amiyyah) varieties, making the learning process more complex. Pedagogical competence ensures that the teacher can guide students through this complexity with clarity and motivation.

Theoretical Assumptions Guiding This Study

This research is grounded in the assumption that students' interest in learning is not a fixed trait but can be cultivated through intentional instructional design and teaching behavior. The hypothesis is that a statistically significant relationship exists between the pedagogical competence of Arabic teachers and students' interest in learning Arabic.

The study utilizes a correlational framework to test this relationship quantitatively, aiming to provide empirical evidence supporting the theoretical claims from educational psychology and language pedagogy. The variables of pedagogical competence and student interest were operationalized through structured questionnaires, providing measurable indicators for each construct.

Implications of the Theoretical Framework

If a significant positive correlation is found, it would imply the need for systematic efforts to enhance pedagogical training for Arabic teachers in Indonesian secondary schools. Teacher professional development programs must focus not only on subject content but also on pedagogical strategies tailored to language education.

Moreover, the findings would support the call for interactive, student-centered Arabic curricula that align with the motivational psychology of students. Schools and educational policymakers must create supportive environments where pedagogical innovation is encouraged and facilitated.

3. METHOD

This study uses a quantitative approach with the type of correlational research. This approach was chosen to examine the extent to which there is a relationship between two variables, namely the pedagogical skills of Arabic language teachers as the independent variable and the level of student interest in Arabic language learning as the dependent variable. Correlational research aims to reveal the level of association between two variables without manipulating them, so as to provide an objective picture of the relationship that exists between them.

The research in this article consists of two main variables, namely the independent variable (X): Pedagogical competence, which includes the teacher's ability to understand student characteristics, design learning, implement teaching and learning activities, and evaluate and develop learning according to pedagogical principles. Dependent variable (Y):

Students' interest in learning Arabic, which reflects the extent to which students show interest, active involvement, and motivation in following the Arabic learning process in class.

The main instrument in this research is a questionnaire which is arranged in the form of a Likert scale. This questionnaire is divided into two major parts in accordance with the research variables. The first part measures students' perceptions of Arabic language teachers' pedagogical skills (16 statement items) while the second part measures students' interest level in participating in Arabic language learning (16 statement items).

Each statement item in the questionnaire uses a five-point Likert scale, ranging from Strongly Agree (5) to Strongly Disagree (1). This assessment is intended to capture the tendency of students' attitudes and assessments of each aspect of the variable under study.

Data was collected through distributing questionnaires online to all respondents in controlled conditions, so that students could understand and answer statements properly. The researcher also provided a brief explanation before the filling began and ensured that there was no intervention from other parties during the process.

Data analysis was carried out with the help of statistical software, namely the latest version of SPSS. The analysis techniques used were: Normality test, to determine whether the distribution of data follows a normal distribution. This test is important as a prerequisite for Pearson correlation analysis. The test was conducted using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov method with a significance level of 0.05. Linearity test, to ensure that the relationship between the independent variable and the dependent variable is linear. Pearson correlation test (Product Moment), used to measure the strength and direction of the relationship between teacher pedagogical skills (X) and student learning interest (Y). The interpretation of the correlation value refers to the following guidelines:

Figure 1. Interpretation of the Correlation Value

R value	Interpretation of Relationship
0,00–0,20	Very low
0,21–0,40	Low
0,41–0,60	Medium
0,61–0,80	Strong
0,81–1,00	Very strong

If the significance value (p-value) is less than 0.05, the relationship between the two.

4. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This study aims to examine the relationship between Arabic teachers' pedagogical skills and students' interest in learning Arabic. In the context of Indonesian education, especially in Fatimah Azzahra Islamic Junior High School Magelang, the effectiveness of teachers in delivering material has an important contribution in shaping students' positive attitude towards certain subjects, in this case Arabic.

Interest in learning is not only the result of students' internal factors, but is strongly influenced by how a teacher manages the learning process, including in designing strategies, building interactions, and evaluating learning outcomes on an ongoing basis.(Hazmi et al., 2025) Therefore, the relationship between teachers' pedagogical skills and students' interest in learning is a strategic topic in developing the quality of Arabic language education. In this article, Variable X (Teacher Pedagogical Proficiency): is measured through 16 indicators in a questionnaire, including planning, implementation, and evaluation of learning while Variable Y (Student Learning Interest): is measured through 16 indicators, including students' attention, motivation, and involvement in Arabic learning activities.

This validity test was carried out using the Pearson Product Moment correlation formula on 12 respondents outside the main sample. The results show that all items on instruments X and Y have a value of r count> r table (0.553) at the 5% significance level, so the instrument is considered valid.

While the reliability test was carried out using the Cronbach's Alpha formula. The test results show the value: Teacher Pedagogical Skills (X): $\alpha = 0.836$ while Student Learning Interest (Y): $\alpha = 0.874$ Because the value of $\alpha > 0.7$, the instrument is declared reliable.(Hazmi et al., 2025)

Figure 2

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha	Description
Pedagogical Skills (X)	0,836	Reliable
Student Learning Interest (Y)	0,874	Reliable

The normality test was conducted using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test. The results were:

Figure 3

Variable	Sig. (2-tailed)	Description
X	0,222	Data is normally distributed
Y	0,222	Data is normally distributed

Because the Sig value> 0.05, the data is considered normally distributed. This test is used to see if there is a linear relationship between the two variables. The test results show the value:

Figure 4

Relationship between Variables	Sig. Linearitas	Description
X terhadap Y	0,033	Linear

With a Sig value <0.05, it can be concluded that the relationship between variables X and Y is linear. The correlation test is used to determine the level of relationship between teachers' pedagogical skills and students' interest in learning. The correlation results show:

Figure 5

X and Y variables	r Pearson	Sig. (2-tailed)	Interpretation
Pedagogical Proficiency ↔ Learning Interest	0,263	0,031	Low but significant correlation

The correlation coefficient value of 0.263 shows that the relationship between variables is weakly positive but significant, because the Sig value is <0.05. This means that the better the teacher's pedagogical skills, the more students' interest in learning increases.

The statistical test results above illustrate that there is a significant relationship between Arabic teachers' pedagogical skills and students' interest in learning. However, the relationship is weak, which shows that although teacher teaching has an effect on student interest, there are still many other factors that need to be considered.

Teachers' pedagogical skills, such as the ability to plan lessons, manage the classroom, and evaluate learning outcomes, are important elements in creating meaningful learning. Teachers who are able to relate the subject matter to everyday life tend to be able to arouse students' curiosity and engagement in the learning process.

Meanwhile, students' interest in learning Arabic is influenced by several internal factors such as intrinsic motivation, curiosity, and students' perception of the benefits of Arabic. External factors such as the learning approach used by the teacher, interactive methods, and providing feedback are also determinants.

In the context of learning Arabic, which is often considered difficult by some students, teachers are required to be more creative, communicative and adaptive. Thematic approaches, visual methods, and the use of digital media can be alternatives in increasing interest in learning.

5. CONCLUSION

Based on the results of correlational quantitative research conducted on seventh grade students at Fatimah Azzahra Magelang Islamic Junior High School, it can be concluded that there is a relationship between Arabic teachers' pedagogical skills and students' interest in learning Arabic.

The results of the statistical analysis show that the significance value for the normality test shows that the data is normally distributed, the linearity test produces a significance value that indicates a linear relationship between the variables, the Pearson correlation test shows a weak but statistically significant relationship between the pedagogical skills of Arabic teachers and students' interest in learning Arabic, with a significance value (Sig. 2-tailed) less than 0.05.

Thus, the better the teacher's pedagogical competence, although on the scale of a not-so-strong relationship, can contribute to an increase in students' interest in learning Arabic. The pedagogical competence in question includes understanding the characteristics of students, planning and implementing learning, evaluating learning outcomes, and developing student potential.

The student interest factor it self is influenced by internal and external aspects. From the internal side, such as motivation and readiness to learn, while from the external side including the way the teacher teaches, the classroom atmosphere, and the learning approach used.

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