

Predicting Arabic Literacy Achievement: The Synergy of Integrative Motivation and Global Career Perspectives

Reza Revaldi¹, MHM. Majid²

¹ Universitas Islam Negeri Raden Intan Lampung, Indonesia

² South Eastern University of Sri Lanka, Sri Lanka

Abstract

Arabic literacy in Indonesia is increasingly important not only for religious and academic purposes but also for future professional opportunities in Islamic education, translation, Hajj and Umrah services, pesantren, Islamic institutions, and digital da'wah. This study aims to explore how integrative motivation and Indonesian career perspectives interact in shaping learners' Arabic literacy achievement. Employing a qualitative case study design, data were collected through semi-structured interviews and classroom observation involving Indonesian learners with formal experience in Arabic learning. The data were analyzed thematically by identifying patterns related to religious-integrative motivation, career awareness, literacy engagement, supporting factors, and learning barriers. The findings reveal that learners' Arabic literacy engagement is strengthened when Arabic is perceived as both religious-intellectual capital and professional capital. Religious-integrative motivation encourages learners to engage with Arabic for understanding the Qur'an, worship practices, Islamic texts, and scholarly traditions, while career perspectives reinforce the practical relevance of Arabic for future employment. However, learners still face barriers related to limited vocabulary, difficulty reading unvowelled texts, weak sentence-structure comprehension, nahwu-sharaf challenges, fear of making mistakes, and low confidence. This study implies that Arabic literacy instruction should integrate religious meaning, career relevance, and structured pedagogical scaffolding so that learners can perceive Arabic not merely as a compulsory subject but as a meaningful competence for identity formation, knowledge access, and future professional development.

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CORRESPONDING AUTHOR

*Reza Revaldi, Universitas Islam Negeri Raden Intan Lampung, Indonesia. Email: rezarivaldi2105@gmail.com

Introduction

Arabic literacy occupies a distinctive position in Indonesian education because it is simultaneously connected to religious knowledge, academic competence, cultural identity, and emerging professional opportunities. In Islamic educational contexts, Arabic is not merely treated as a foreign language but also as a medium for accessing the Qur'an, hadith, classical Islamic scholarship, and broader intellectual traditions of Muslim societies (Ahmadi & Saad, 2024; Hamid et al., 2022; Hidayah et al., 2023). Arabic literacy therefore extends beyond the mechanical ability to read Arabic script; it involves vocabulary mastery, grammatical awareness, textual comprehension, interpretation, and the ability to connect written texts with religious, cultural, academic, and social meanings (Hamid et al., 2022; Hidayah et al., 2023; Maghfurin et al., 2025). For Indonesian learners, the mastery of Arabic literacy is highly relevant because Arabic learning is embedded in madrasahs, pesantren, Islamic higher education, Qur'anic studies, and various forms of Islamic communication that require the ability to understand and interpret Arabic texts meaningfully (Jumhana et al., 2025; M. I. S. Pratama et al., 2025; Rahman et al., 2025).

Despite its importance, Arabic literacy achievement remains a complex issue because learners often face linguistic, motivational, and contextual challenges. Arabic is frequently perceived as difficult due to its unfamiliar script, morphological system, syntactic structure, vocabulary load, and limited use in students' everyday communication outside the classroom (Kirom et al., 2025; Nurisnaini et al., 2025; Zakiyah et al., 2025). These difficulties may reduce learners' confidence, persistence, and willingness to engage deeply with Arabic texts, especially when Arabic learning is positioned only as a compulsory subject or examination requirement (Hikmah et al., 2025; Yasin et al., 2025; Zakiyah et al., 2025). Consequently, Arabic literacy achievement cannot be explained solely through instructional strategies or linguistic ability; it must also be understood through learners' motivation, identity orientation, perceived usefulness, and future aspirations (Kirom et al., 2025; Nurisnaini et al., 2025; Rahman et al., 2025).

Motivation has long been regarded as a central factor in second and foreign language learning because it influences learners' effort, persistence, learning strategies, and willingness to overcome difficulty (Alamer, 2022; Calafato, 2023; Calafato & Tang, 2019; Mendoza & Phung, 2019; Papi & Hiver, 2020a). Integrative motivation refers to learners' desire to understand, connect with, or participate in the cultural and communicative world associated with the target language (Azizah et al., 2024; Rozak et al., 2023; Salma et al., 2024; Zurqoni et al., 2020)). In the context of Arabic learning in Indonesia, integrative motivation requires contextual interpretation because students may not only seek interaction with Arabic-speaking communities but also aim to access Islamic civilization, understand religious texts, appreciate Arab-Islamic culture, and develop a stronger intellectual connection with Muslim scholarly traditions (Akhirudin et al., 2025; Anwar et al., 2025; Batmang et al., 2023). Learners who possess strong integrative motivation may perceive Arabic as meaningful for identity formation, religious understanding, and intellectual development, which can strengthen their engagement in reading, interpreting, and using Arabic texts (Gardner, 2010; Lamb, 2017; Norton, 2013).

However, integrative motivation alone may not fully explain Arabic literacy engagement among contemporary Indonesian learners. In the current educational and employment landscape, students increasingly evaluate learning based on its relevance to future work, employability, professional mobility, and social contribution (A. W. Pratama et al., 2024; Wicaksono et al., 2023). Indonesian career perspectives are therefore important because Arabic competence may support various professional pathways, including Islamic education, translation, Hajj and Umrah services, halal industry, Islamic banking, religious tourism, digital da'wah, media communication, diplomacy, and international cooperation (Akhirudin et al., 2025; Rozak et al., 2023; Salma et al., 2024). When learners recognize that Arabic literacy has practical value for future employment, they may become more willing to invest time and effort in vocabulary learning, reading comprehension, grammatical accuracy, and text interpretation (Alamer, 2022; A. W. Pratama et al., 2024; Zurqoni et al., 2020)). In this sense, career perspectives can function as a future-oriented motivational force that complements integrative motivation and transforms Arabic from a classroom subject into a meaningful professional resource (Azizah et al., 2024; Mendoza & Phung, 2019; Wicaksono et al., 2023).

The relationship between language learning, motivation, and future orientation can also be understood through the concept of language investment. Learners invest in language learning when they believe that the target language can provide access to symbolic resources, cultural capital, social recognition, and future opportunities (Alhamami & Almosa, 2023; Calafato, 2020; Golfetto, 2020)).

In Arabic literacy learning, investment may occur when students perceive Arabic as both religious-intellectual capital and professional capital. Religious-intellectual capital refers to the value of Arabic for understanding Islamic texts, traditions, and knowledge systems, while professional capital refers to the value of Arabic for future careers and social participation in Arabic-related fields (Hasyim et al., 2025; Nasution et al., 2025; Yusuf et al., 2020). When these two forms of value interact, learners may develop stronger literacy engagement because Arabic becomes meaningful for both personal identity and future career preparation (Hasyim et al., 2025; Wardhana et al., 2025).

Previous studies have discussed language motivation, learner identity, autonomy, and motivational strategies in second and foreign language learning (Benson, 2011; Dörnyei, 2005; Lamb, 2017). Other studies have examined integrative motivation, language attitudes, and the socio-educational dimension of language acquisition (Golfetto, 2020; Hasyim et al., 2025; Yusuf et al., 2020). Research related to Arabic learning has also addressed demotivation, classroom challenges, teacher practices, and learners' difficulties in acquiring Arabic as an additional language (Erlina et al., 2025; Fauzi & Anindiati, 2021; Wardhana et al., 2025). Nevertheless, much of the existing literature still tends to examine motivation, literacy skills, teaching methods, or learner difficulties separately, while limited attention has been given to how integrative motivation and Indonesian career perspectives work together in shaping Arabic literacy achievement. This gap is significant because Arabic literacy in Indonesia is increasingly positioned not only as a religious-academic competence but also as a future-oriented skill that may support learners' participation in diverse professional sectors.

Based on this gap, the present study aims to explore how integrative motivation and Indonesian career perspectives interact in shaping learners' Arabic literacy achievement. Specifically, this study seeks to understand how Indonesian learners perceive the relevance of Arabic literacy for their future careers, how integrative motivation influences their engagement with Arabic literacy practices, and how the synergy between cultural-religious meaning and career-oriented perspectives supports their efforts to improve Arabic literacy. By addressing these aims, this study contributes to Arabic education research by offering a qualitative explanation of Arabic literacy achievement as a product of motivational meaning, identity orientation, and future professional imagination.

Method

This study employed a qualitative case study design to explore how integrative motivation and Indonesian career perspectives shape learners' Arabic literacy achievement. A qualitative design was considered appropriate because the study sought to understand learners' meanings, experiences, perceptions, and future-oriented interpretations rather than to measure statistical relationships among variables. Although the term "predicting" is used in the title, it is interpreted in an explanatory and interpretive sense, referring to the ways in which motivational meanings and career perspectives may direct, strengthen, or anticipate learners' engagement with Arabic literacy. The case study approach was selected because the phenomenon was examined within a bounded educational context in which Arabic is formally taught and learners are positioned within specific religious, academic, and career-related expectations (Al-Hoorie, 2018; Campbell et al., 2020; Castleberry & Nolen, 2018; Daher, 2023).

The participants of this study were Indonesian learners who had experience learning Arabic in a formal educational setting. Participants were selected through purposive sampling because they were expected to provide rich and relevant information related to Arabic learning motivation, literacy practices, and career expectations. The inclusion criteria consisted of learners who had studied Arabic for at least one academic year, had participated in Arabic literacy activities such as reading, vocabulary learning, translation, or text interpretation, and were able to reflect on the relevance of Arabic for their future academic or professional pathways. The number of participants was determined based on the adequacy of information and the principle of data saturation, namely the point at which additional data no longer produced substantially new themes. To protect participants' confidentiality, all participants were identified using anonymous codes such as INF-01, INF-02, and so forth (Alshammari, Shaalan, & Al-Onazi, 2024; Harrison et al., 2021; Papi & Hiver, 2020b).

Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, classroom observation, and document analysis. Semi-structured interviews were used as the primary source of data because they allowed participants to explain their personal motivations, religious-intellectual interests, learning experiences, perceived difficulties, and views on Arabic-related career opportunities in Indonesia. The interview questions focused on several areas: learners' reasons for studying Arabic, their interest in Arabic-speaking culture and Islamic intellectual traditions, their perceived usefulness of Arabic literacy, their awareness of professional fields requiring Arabic competence, and their experiences in developing reading comprehension, vocabulary mastery, grammatical understanding, and text interpretation. Classroom observation was conducted to examine learners' engagement during Arabic learning activities, including their participation, persistence, interaction with peers, response to religious or career-related explanations, and observable difficulties in reading and understanding Arabic texts. Document analysis was used to support the interview and observation data by examining relevant learning evidence, such as Arabic reading assignments, vocabulary exercises, translation tasks, learning portfolios, teacher notes, and literacy assessment records (Archibald et al., 2019; Nowell et al., 2017; Yan et al., 2023).

The data were analyzed using thematic analysis. The analytical process began with repeated reading of interview transcripts, observation notes, and relevant documents to gain a holistic understanding of the data. Initial coding was then conducted by identifying meaningful units related to integrative motivation, religious-intellectual orientation, career awareness, perceived usefulness of Arabic, literacy practices, learning persistence, vocabulary difficulties, grammatical challenges, and confidence in reading Arabic texts. These initial codes were subsequently grouped into broader categories and developed into major themes that represented the relationship between learners' motivational meanings, career perspectives, and Arabic literacy achievement. The emerging themes were reviewed by comparing data across participants and sources to ensure that the interpretation was grounded in the evidence rather than based on isolated statements. The final themes were organized narratively to explain how Arabic was perceived as religious-intellectual capital, professional capital, and literacy competence (Archibald et al., 2019; Hiver et al., 2021; Levitt et al., 2018).

To strengthen the trustworthiness of the study, several validation strategies were applied. Source triangulation was conducted by comparing responses from different participants, while technique triangulation was carried out by comparing data obtained from interviews, observations,

and documents. Member checking was used to confirm whether the researcher’s interpretation accurately represented the participants’ intended meanings. An audit trail was also maintained by documenting the stages of data collection, coding, theme construction, and interpretation. These procedures were intended to enhance the credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability of the findings (Alshammari, Shaalan, & Al-Onazi, 2024; Archibald et al., 2019; Papi & Hiver, 2020b).

Ethical considerations were carefully maintained throughout the study. Participants were informed about the purpose of the research, the voluntary nature of their participation, and their right to withdraw from the study at any stage. The researcher ensured that all participant identities remained confidential by using anonymous codes in the presentation of data. Interview excerpts and observation notes were reported without revealing personally identifiable information. The collected data were used only for academic purposes, and all interpretations were presented in a way that respected participants’ voices, experiences, and educational contexts.

Result and Discussion

Result

Participant Profile

This study involved six Indonesian learners who had formal experience in Arabic learning. The participants consisted of three students from Arabic Education and three students from Islamic Education. Their Arabic learning experience ranged from three to eight years, indicating that the participants had sufficient exposure to reflect on Arabic learning motivation, literacy practices, learning barriers, and career expectations. The variation in study program, semester, and learning duration provided a relevant basis for exploring how Arabic literacy achievement was shaped by both integrative motivation and Indonesian career perspectives.

Table 1. Participant Profile

Informant Code	Gender	Age	Level/Semester	Study Program	Duration of Arabic Learning
INF-01	Female	20 years	Semester 4	Arabic Education	6 years
INF-02	Male	21 years	Semester 6	Arabic Education	7 years
INF-03	Female	19 years	Semester 2	Islamic Education	4 years
INF-04	Male	20 years	Semester 4	Islamic Education	5 years
INF-05	Female	22 years	Semester 6	Arabic Education	8 years
INF-06	Male	19 years	Semester 2	Arabic Education	3 years

The table shows that the participants had different levels of Arabic learning experience. Participants with longer exposure to Arabic tended to describe more specific literacy barriers, such as difficulties in nahwu, sharaf, sentence structure, and text comprehension. Meanwhile, participants with shorter learning experience more frequently emphasized vocabulary limitations, low confidence, and dependence on teacher or peer support. This indicates that Arabic literacy achievement is not uniform across learners, but is shaped by learning duration, program background, motivation, and the perceived relevance of Arabic for future goals.

Religious-Integrative Motivation as a Basis for Arabic Literacy Engagement

The first major finding indicates that religious-integrative motivation was a dominant factor in learners' engagement with Arabic literacy. Most informants did not understand Arabic merely as an academic subject. Instead, they associated Arabic with the Qur'an, worship, Islamic knowledge, classical texts, and religious identity. This finding suggests that Arabic literacy achievement was strongly connected to learners' desire to access religious and intellectual sources more directly.

Table 2. Religious-Integrative Motivation in Arabic Learning

Informant Code	Core Interview Excerpt	Sub-theme
INF-01	"I learn Arabic because I want to understand the Qur'an and the meaning of recitations in worship more easily. Reading only the translation does not feel sufficient."	Desire to understand the Qur'an
INF-02	"Arabic is important because many sources of Islamic knowledge use Arabic. If I can understand Arabic texts, I feel closer to religious knowledge."	Access to Islamic knowledge
INF-03	"At first, I learned Arabic because it was a compulsory course, but over time I felt that Arabic helped me understand religious terms."	Shift from obligation to awareness
INF-04	"I feel that Arabic is not only a lesson, but a way to understand Islamic teachings more deeply."	Religious meaning of learning
INF-05	"When I read Arabic texts and begin to understand their meaning, I feel more confident and more motivated to learn."	Confidence through text comprehension
INF-06	"My motivation to learn Arabic is that I want to read classical Islamic books and understand religious messages directly."	Orientation toward religious texts

The interview data reveal that Arabic literacy was interpreted as a meaningful pathway to religious understanding. INF-01 emphasized the need to understand the Qur'an and worship recitations beyond translation, while INF-02 linked Arabic literacy to access to Islamic knowledge. INF-04 and INF-06 also positioned Arabic as a medium for understanding Islamic teachings and classical texts. These responses show that integrative motivation in this context was not limited to interest in Arabic-speaking communities, but was closely related to learners' religious-intellectual attachment to Arabic as the language of Islamic sources.

The observation data strengthened this pattern. Learners showed higher attention, stronger participation, and more active responses when Arabic vocabulary and texts were connected to the Qur'an, prayers, Islamic books, and religious terminology. The classroom observation also showed that religious-integrative motivation was one of the most visible motivational forms during learning. Therefore, Arabic literacy engagement was not only driven by academic obligation, but also by learners' desire to understand religious meaning, Islamic knowledge, and Arabic textual traditions.

Indonesian Career Perspectives as a Future-Oriented Motivation

The second finding shows that learners perceived Arabic as a competence with practical value for future employment in Indonesia. All informants mentioned career opportunities that could be supported by Arabic proficiency, including Arabic teaching, translation, Hajj and Umrah services, Islamic education institutions, pesantren, Islamic schools, and digital da'wah media. This finding

indicates that Arabic literacy was not only understood as religious-intellectual capital, but also as professional capital.

Table 3. Learners’ Perceptions of Arabic-Related Career Opportunities in Indonesia

Informant Code	Core Interview Excerpt	Careers Mentioned
INF-01	“In my opinion, Arabic has job opportunities, for example becoming an Arabic teacher or a Hajj and Umrah guide.”	Arabic teacher, Hajj/Umrah guide
INF-02	“Many jobs now require Arabic, especially in Islamic education, translation, and religious institutions.”	Educator, translator, Islamic institution staff
INF-03	“I see Arabic as useful for working in Islamic schools, pesantren, or digital da’wah institutions.”	Teacher, pesantren staff, digital da’wah media
INF-04	“If we master Arabic, the opportunity is not only teaching, but also working in Hajj and Umrah travel services.”	Hajj and Umrah travel services
INF-05	“I want to work in education or translation. Therefore, the ability to read and understand Arabic texts is very important.”	Education, translation
INF-06	“Arabic can be an added value when applying for jobs, especially in Islamic institutions or religion-based schools.”	Islamic schools, religious institutions

The data show that learners’ Indonesian career perspectives were relatively broad. Arabic was not only associated with the teaching profession, but also with translation, religious institutions, Hajj and Umrah services, pesantren, Islamic schools, and digital da’wah. INF-04 emphasized the relevance of Arabic for Hajj and Umrah travel services, while INF-05 connected Arabic literacy with future work in education and translation. This suggests that learners who understood the practical relevance of Arabic were more likely to consider Arabic literacy as an investment for future professional development.

The observation results confirmed this interview pattern. Students showed more interest when the lecturer explained that Arabic could support future careers such as Arabic teacher, translator, religious guide, Hajj and Umrah officer, Islamic institution staff, pesantren educator, and digital Islamic content creator. This indicates that career awareness may strengthen learning engagement because students begin to see Arabic as a competence that has direct relevance to future employment opportunities in Indonesia.

Arabic Literacy Achievement: Strengths, Barriers, and Supporting Factors

The third finding concerns the development of learners’ Arabic literacy achievement. The data show that students demonstrated several literacy strengths, particularly in recognizing familiar vocabulary, understanding the general meaning of simple Arabic texts, and writing short phrases or simple sentences. However, the data also show that Arabic literacy achievement was still constrained by several barriers, including limited vocabulary mastery, difficulty reading unvowelled Arabic texts,

weak sentence-structure comprehension, difficulty in nahwu and sharaf, fear of making mistakes, and low self-confidence.

Table 4. Supporting and Inhibiting Factors in Arabic Literacy Development

Informant Code	Supporting Factors	Inhibiting Factors
INF-01	Teacher/lecturer support, Arabic reading practice, motivation to understand the Qur'an	Difficulty understanding sentence structure and new vocabulary
INF-02	Previous madrasah experience, habit of reading Arabic texts, peer discussion	Limited speaking practice and limited learning time
INF-03	Learning materials connected to daily life	Fear of making mistakes when reading or translating Arabic texts
INF-04	Religious learning environment and peer support	Difficulty reading unvowelled Arabic texts
INF-05	Career goal as educator/translator and habit of memorizing vocabulary	Difficulty with nahwu and sharaf
INF-06	Motivation to understand classical Islamic texts and reading assignments	Limited vocabulary mastery and low self-confidence

The table indicates that Arabic literacy development was supported by both internal and external factors. Internal supporting factors included religious motivation, career goals, confidence gained through text comprehension, and the desire to understand Islamic texts. External supporting factors included lecturer support, previous madrasah experience, peer discussion, religious learning environment, and reading assignments. These factors helped learners maintain persistence even when they encountered linguistic difficulties.

However, the barriers were also substantial. INF-01 and INF-06 identified vocabulary limitations as a major obstacle, while INF-05 emphasized difficulties in nahwu and sharaf. INF-04 reported difficulty reading unvowelled Arabic texts, and INF-03 showed affective barriers in the form of fear of making mistakes when reading or translating Arabic. The observation data also confirmed that sentence-structure comprehension was the weakest observed indicator. Students could generally identify familiar vocabulary and explain the general message of a simple text, but many still struggled with word functions, sentence patterns, and grammatical relationships. This means that Arabic literacy achievement was developing, but it remained uneven across vocabulary comprehension, reading fluency, grammatical understanding, and text interpretation.

Observation-Based Evidence of Learning Engagement

The observation data were organized into twenty indicators that covered readiness, attention, learning interest, integrative motivation, cultural interest, career orientation, active participation, independent learning, reading ability, vocabulary comprehension, sentence-structure comprehension, text comprehension, writing ability, persistence, peer interaction, learning barriers, teaching strategies, and literacy achievement. Nineteen indicators were marked as present, while one indicator, namely sentence-structure comprehension, was marked as not fully achieved.

Table 5. Summary of Observation Findings

Observation Dimension	Status	Main Evidence
Learning readiness and attention	Present	Students attended the lesson, prepared books or notes, and paid attention when Arabic was connected with religious and career meanings.
Religious-integrative motivation	Present	Students associated Arabic vocabulary and texts with the Qur'an, prayers, Islamic books, and religious terminology.
Cultural interest	Present but limited	Students showed limited interest in Arabic expressions and daily communication, but the dominant focus remained religious and academic.
Career orientation	Present	Students responded positively when Arabic was connected with teaching, translation, Hajj/Umrah services, Islamic institutions, pesantren, and digital da'wah.
Active participation and peer interaction	Present	Students answered vocabulary questions, discussed text meaning, corrected peers' reading, and helped one another understand Arabic words.
Vocabulary and text comprehension	Present	Students identified familiar vocabulary and explained the general meaning of simple Arabic texts.
Sentence-structure comprehension	Not fully achieved	Students still struggled with word functions, Arabic sentence patterns, and nahwu-sharaf rules.
Writing ability	Present but developing	Students could write short Arabic phrases or simple sentences, although some errors in structure and vocabulary selection remained.
Learning persistence	Present	Students continued reading, asked peers or the lecturer for help, and recorded new vocabulary when facing difficulty.
Arabic literacy achievement	Developing	Students showed progress in reading, vocabulary recognition, text interpretation, and simple writing, but still needed support in unvowelled texts and grammar.

The observation results show that learners' engagement increased when Arabic learning was linked to religious meaning and career relevance. The strongest observed indicators were religious-integrative motivation, responsiveness to career-related explanations, peer interaction, persistence, and general text comprehension. In contrast, the weakest indicator was sentence-structure comprehension. This finding is consistent with interview data showing that learners experienced difficulties in vocabulary mastery, unvowelled Arabic texts, nahwu, sharaf, and confidence in reading or translating Arabic. Thus, observation evidence supports the conclusion that motivation and career orientation encouraged engagement, but linguistic barriers continued to limit literacy achievement.

Integration of Interview and Observation Findings

The integration of interview and observation data shows that Arabic literacy achievement was shaped by the interaction between religious-integrative motivation, Indonesian career perspectives,

and literacy barriers. Interview data revealed what learners thought and felt about Arabic, while observation data showed how these meanings appeared in learning activities. The two data sources produced a consistent pattern: learners were more engaged when Arabic was presented as both meaningful for religious understanding and useful for future careers.

Table 6. Thematic Integration of Interview and Observation Findings

Major Theme	Interview Evidence	Observation Evidence	Interpretation
Arabic as religious-intellectual capital	Learners associated Arabic with the Qur'an, worship, Islamic books, and religious knowledge.	Students were more engaged when Arabic vocabulary was linked to Islamic texts and religious terminology.	Arabic literacy was meaningful because it enabled learners to access religious and intellectual sources.
Arabic as professional capital	Learners identified careers such as teacher, translator, Hajj/Umrah guide, Islamic institution staff, and digital da'wah worker.	Students responded positively when the lecturer explained Arabic-related career pathways.	Arabic literacy was perceived as useful for future employment and professional development.
Literacy barriers	Learners mentioned vocabulary limitations, unvowelled texts, nahwu-sharaf, fear of mistakes, and low confidence.	Students struggled with sentence structures, grammar, and reading unvowelled Arabic texts.	Literacy achievement was developing but still constrained by linguistic and affective barriers.
Motivation-career synergy	Learners combined religious motivation with practical career expectations.	Students' participation increased when learning materials were connected to religion and future work.	Arabic literacy engagement was strongest when learners saw Arabic as both meaningful and professionally relevant.

The integrated findings indicate that Arabic literacy achievement cannot be explained only by learners’ linguistic ability. Learners’ willingness to read, interpret, and persist in Arabic learning was also shaped by how they interpreted the value of Arabic for their identity, religious understanding, and future work. For some learners, Arabic was meaningful because it enabled them to understand the Qur’an, worship, and Islamic texts. For others, Arabic was useful because it supported future careers in education, translation, religious services, and Islamic institutions. The strongest literacy engagement emerged when learners perceived Arabic as both meaningful and useful.

Proposed Thematic Model of Arabic Literacy Achievement

Based on the interview and observation findings, this study proposes a thematic model of Arabic literacy achievement. The model explains that religious-integrative motivation and Indonesian

career perspectives jointly strengthen Arabic literacy engagement. However, this engagement is moderated by literacy barriers, such as limited vocabulary, unvowelled text difficulty, weak grammar mastery, fear of mistakes, and low confidence.

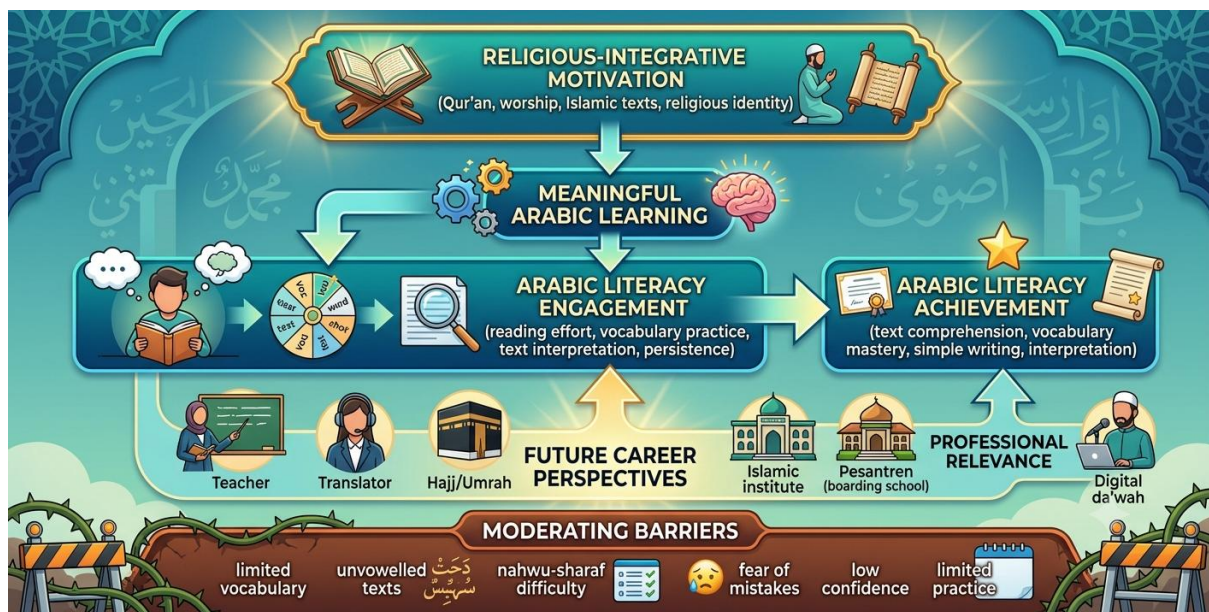


Figure 1. Thematic Model of Arabic Literacy Achievement

The model illustrates that Arabic literacy achievement is supported by two motivational pathways. The first pathway is religious-integrative motivation, which makes Arabic learning meaningful by connecting it with Islamic knowledge, worship, and religious identity. The second pathway is Indonesian career perspectives, which make Arabic learning practically relevant by linking it to future professional opportunities. These two pathways strengthen Arabic literacy engagement, but their influence may be weakened when learners face vocabulary limitations, difficulty reading unvowelled texts, grammatical challenges, and low confidence. Therefore, Arabic literacy development requires both motivational strengthening and pedagogical scaffolding that addresses learners' linguistic difficulties.

Discussion

The findings of this study indicate that Arabic literacy achievement among Indonesian learners is shaped not only by linguistic ability but also by the interaction between religious-integrative motivation and career-oriented perspectives. Learners perceived Arabic as a meaningful language because it enables access to the Qur'an, worship practices, Islamic texts, and religious knowledge. At the same time, they also viewed Arabic as a useful professional competence for future careers in Islamic education, translation, Hajj and Umrah services, pesantren, Islamic institutions, religious schools, and digital da'wah. This dual perception suggests that Arabic literacy develops more strongly when learners understand Arabic as both religious-intellectual capital and professional capital. The observation data supported this pattern by showing that learners became more engaged when Arabic materials were connected with religious meanings and career relevance.

The findings also align with recent studies on future-oriented language motivation, particularly the view that learners' imagined future selves shape their present learning effort and persistence. Learners in this study were more motivated when they perceived Arabic as relevant to

future work, including careers as teachers, translators, Hajj and Umrah guides, staff of Islamic institutions, pesantren educators, and digital da'wah practitioners. This finding is consistent with evidence that the ideal L2 self and learning experience are important predictors of intended effort and language achievement, including in Indonesian language-learning contexts. It also extends research on Arabic learning by showing that students' motivation is strengthened when Arabic is imagined as part of their future professional identity and social mobility. Thus, Arabic literacy is not merely understood as a classroom obligation but as a personally meaningful investment connected to employability, religious service, and professional participation (Al-Hoorie, 2018; Liao et al., 2020; Nizigama et al., 2024).

The results further support contemporary research on language investment, which argues that learners invest in language learning when they perceive the language as providing access to symbolic resources, cultural capital, social recognition, and future opportunities. In this study, learners invested effort in Arabic literacy because Arabic was perceived to offer both symbolic and practical value. Symbolically, Arabic was associated with Islamic knowledge, worship, Qur'anic understanding, and religious identity. Practically, it was associated with professional mobility and employability in Islamic education, translation, religious tourism, pesantren-based work, and digital religious communication. This finding resonates with studies showing that Arabic learning investment is shaped by identity, ideology, symbolic capital, and economic capital, while imagined professional identities can sustain learners' commitment to language learning. The distinctive contribution of this study lies in demonstrating how Arabic literacy becomes an investment when learners see it as a bridge between religious-intellectual identity and future professional participation (Alali & Alruwaili, 2024; Alshammari, Shaalan, & Al-onazi, 2024; Liao et al., 2020).

The findings are also relevant to recent studies on Arabic learning motivation and demotivation, which show that learners may lose motivation when Arabic is perceived as difficult, irrelevant, or disconnected from their immediate needs. The present study confirms that Arabic learning barriers remain significant, particularly in relation to vocabulary limitations, unvowelled texts, sentence-structure comprehension, nahwu-sharaf difficulties, fear of making mistakes, and low confidence. However, this study also shows that religious meaning and career relevance can help learners maintain persistence despite these barriers. Students may continue to engage with Arabic literacy when they believe that the language is meaningful for religious understanding and useful for future work. This finding adds nuance to demotivation studies by showing that perceived relevance can reduce the negative effect of linguistic difficulty and help learners reinterpret Arabic not only as a difficult subject but also as a valuable resource for identity, worship, and professional life (Muassomah, 2023; Razem & Pandor, 2023; Susiawati, 2024).

The study also corresponds with recent research on teacher support, classroom engagement, and autonomy-supportive pedagogy in language learning. Observation data show that students were more attentive and participatory when the lecturer connected Arabic vocabulary and texts with the Qur'an, prayers, Islamic books, career opportunities, and real professional contexts. This confirms that teacher mediation is crucial in helping students recognize the value of Arabic literacy. Rather than treating motivation as a purely internal psychological construct, the findings show that learners' motivation is pedagogically constructed through classroom discourse, contextual examples, feedback, and the way teachers link language materials to learners' religious and professional realities. In this sense, meaningful teacher support can increase engagement, reduce boredom,

strengthen enjoyment, and help learners see Arabic as relevant to their present learning and future participation (Alrabai, 2021; Huang et al., 2024; Zhao & Yang, 2022).

The findings are further comparable to recent studies on learner autonomy and language engagement, which argue that learners become more persistent when they understand the value of learning and are gradually supported to regulate their own literacy practices. The present study found that students demonstrated persistence by rereading texts, asking peers or lecturers for help, recording new vocabulary, and attempting to interpret simple Arabic texts. However, their autonomy remained developing because many still depended on teacher support, peer assistance, and familiar vocabulary. This suggests that Arabic literacy engagement requires both motivational reinforcement and pedagogical scaffolding. Motivation alone is insufficient if learners do not receive structured support in vocabulary development, reading strategies, grammatical understanding, and confidence-building activities. Therefore, Arabic literacy instruction should combine future-oriented motivation, religious relevance, peer collaboration, and scaffolded autonomy so that students can progressively become more independent and resilient Arabic readers (Almelhes, 2025; Alrabai, 2021).

The novelty of this study lies in its integrated explanation of Arabic literacy achievement through the synergy of integrative motivation and Indonesian career perspectives. Previous studies have often examined Arabic learning motivation, learner difficulties, reading skills, teaching methods, or language attitudes separately. This study offers a more contextual framework by showing that Arabic literacy achievement is shaped by two mutually reinforcing forms of meaning: religious-intellectual meaning and future professional relevance. The study also contributes to Arabic education research by redefining integrative motivation in the Indonesian context. Arabic is not only a language of communication with Arabic-speaking communities but also a language of Islamic knowledge, religious identity, and professional opportunity. This contextualization provides a more relevant way to understand why Indonesian learners continue to invest in Arabic literacy despite linguistic difficulty.

The theoretical implication of this study is that Arabic literacy achievement should be conceptualized as a multidimensional construct involving linguistic competence, motivational meaning, identity orientation, and career imagination. The findings suggest that integrative motivation and career perspectives should not be treated as separate motivational categories. Instead, they interact dynamically in shaping learners' willingness to read, understand, interpret, and use Arabic texts. This integrated perspective enriches language motivation theory by showing that religious identity and employability can operate together in foreign language literacy development, particularly in contexts where the target language has strong religious, cultural, and professional value.

The practical implication is that Arabic teachers, curriculum developers, and Islamic education institutions need to connect Arabic literacy instruction with students' real religious, academic, and career aspirations. Reading materials should not only focus on grammatical accuracy or vocabulary memorization but should also include meaningful texts related to Islamic knowledge, contemporary Muslim life, Hajj and Umrah services, halal industries, translation, Islamic finance, digital da'wah, education, and international communication. Teachers can also introduce career-based Arabic tasks, such as translating short professional texts, reading Hajj and Umrah service documents, analyzing Islamic media content, preparing Arabic teaching materials, or interpreting

simple texts related to Islamic institutions. Such learning designs may increase students' perception that Arabic literacy is relevant to both their identity and future work.

Another practical implication is the need for stronger literacy scaffolding. Although students in this study showed motivation and career awareness, they still experienced difficulties with vocabulary, unvowelled texts, sentence structure, *nahwu*, *sharaf*, and confidence. Therefore, Arabic learning should provide systematic vocabulary enrichment, guided reading strategies, grammar-in-context instruction, repeated exposure to authentic and semi-authentic texts, peer collaboration, and feedback-oriented literacy tasks. Career relevance should be combined with linguistic support so that students are not only motivated to learn Arabic but also equipped with the skills needed to improve their literacy achievement.

Despite its contribution, this study has several limitations. First, the study involved a small number of informants and was conducted within a limited educational context; therefore, the findings cannot be generalized statistically to all Indonesian Arabic learners. Second, the study relied on qualitative interview and observation data, which provide rich interpretive insights but do not measure the statistical strength of the relationship between integrative motivation, career perspectives, and Arabic literacy achievement. Third, the observation data captured learning engagement within a limited period, so it may not fully represent long-term changes in literacy achievement. Fourth, the study focused mainly on learners' perceptions and observed classroom engagement, while more objective literacy evidence, such as standardized reading scores, writing assessment, or longitudinal portfolios, was not yet fully integrated. Future studies should involve larger and more diverse participants from *madrasahs*, *pesantren*, Islamic universities, and public universities; combine qualitative inquiry with quantitative measurement; and examine how integrative motivation and career perspectives influence Arabic literacy development over time.

Conclusion

This study concludes that Arabic literacy achievement among Indonesian learners is shaped by the dynamic synergy between integrative motivation and Indonesian career perspectives. The findings show that learners engage more meaningfully with Arabic when they perceive it as a language of religious-intellectual access, particularly for understanding the Qur'an, worship practices, Islamic texts, and scholarly traditions. At the same time, learners' awareness of Arabic-related career opportunities in education, translation, Hajj and Umrah services, *pesantren*, Islamic institutions, religious schools, and digital *da'wah* strengthens their perception of Arabic as a future-oriented professional competence. The integration of these two orientations transforms Arabic learning from a compulsory academic requirement into a meaningful literacy practice connected to identity, knowledge, and employability. However, learners' Arabic literacy development remains constrained by vocabulary limitations, difficulties in reading unvowelled texts, weak sentence-structure comprehension, *nahwu-sharaf* challenges, fear of making mistakes, and low confidence. Therefore, Arabic literacy instruction should not only emphasize linguistic mastery but also connect learning materials with students' religious meanings, intellectual aspirations, and future career pathways. The study contributes to Arabic education by offering a contextual model that positions Arabic literacy achievement as the result of motivational meaning, career relevance, and pedagogical support. Future research is recommended to involve broader participant groups, integrate longitudinal literacy evidence, and combine qualitative interpretation with quantitative measurement to further

examine how integrative motivation and career perspectives influence Arabic literacy development across different Indonesian educational contexts.

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