

THE IMPACT OF MOTIVATION ON STUDENTS' PERFORMANCE IN ARABIC GRAMMAR IN COLLEGES OF EDUCATION IN NORTH CENTRAL NIGERIA

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Abstract

This study investigated the influence of motivation on students' performance in Arabic grammar among NCE II students in selected Colleges of Education in North Central Nigeria. The study adopted a descriptive survey and correlational research design to examine students' levels of motivation, determine the relationship between motivation and academic performance, and assess the influence of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation on achievement in Arabic grammar. A sample of 60 students was selected through stratified random sampling technique, while data were collected using a structured motivation questionnaire and an Arabic Grammar Achievement Test. The data were analysed using descriptive and inferential statistical tools, including mean scores, standard deviations, Pearson correlation coefficient, simple linear regression, and ANOVA. The findings revealed a moderate level of student motivation and a significant positive relationship between motivation and academic performance in Arabic grammar, leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis. The study further showed that extrinsic motivation exerted a stronger influence on students' learning outcomes than intrinsic motivation. In addition, traditional teaching methods, inadequate instructional materials, and limited learning resources were identified as factors affecting students' motivation and engagement in Arabic grammar learning. The study therefore recommended the adoption of learner-centred instructional approaches, motivating classroom practices, and improved instructional facilities to enhance students' motivation and academic achievement in Arabic grammar.

Keywords: Motivation, Arabic grammar, intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation, academic performance, Colleges of Education.

Introduction

Arabic grammar is essential for mastering the Arabic language. It provides the structure needed for accurate reading, coherent writing, and effective communication. A weak grasp of grammar often leads to difficulties in comprehension, sentence construction, and fluent expression. Despite its importance, many students in Arabic language programs at Nigerian Colleges of Education, particularly in the North Central region, continue to struggle with grammar courses. Studies have linked these challenges to poor teaching methods, inadequate instructional materials, interference from local languages, and

negative attitudes toward Arabic grammar (Mahmoud, 2014; Ibrahim, 2019). Beyond these factors, students' level of motivation may also play an important role in determining how actively they engage with grammar learning and how well they perform academically.

Motivation in education refers to the internal and external factors that stimulate and sustain students' engagement in learning activities. Motivated learners are more likely to participate actively in class, devote time to study, and persist despite learning difficulties, whereas students with low motivation may show less interest and achieve lower academic outcomes. Research in second-

language learning consistently identifies motivation as a major factor influencing learners' success, particularly in demanding areas such as grammar (Robert Gardner, 2010).

Given the technical and abstract nature of Arabic grammar, students' motivation is particularly important. Learners who see grammar as difficult or irrelevant may feel anxious or disinterested, which can further hinder their progress. On the other hand, students with intrinsic motivation are more likely to maintain interest, while external motivations like grades and teacher support can also boost performance. Previous studies show that both types of motivation significantly affect success in grammar and second-language learning (Brown, 2007).

Even with structured curricula, qualified teachers, and prescribed instructional materials, many students in Colleges of Education in North Central Nigeria still find Arabic grammar difficult to learn. Teachers often observe that students show low enthusiasm, weak classroom participation, and minimal effort toward grammar-related activities. This may be linked to the continued use of traditional teacher-centered instructional approaches, which often limit students' active engagement and interest in learning Arabic grammar (Mustapha, Preece, & Amzat, 2024).

Research has also shown that motivation plays a significant role in students' academic engagement and performance. Learners with low motivation are less likely to persist in challenging learning tasks, especially in complex language areas such as grammar. Studies further indicate that the use of interactive and learner-centered teaching strategies can improve students' motivation, participation, and achievement in Arabic grammar courses (Eltahir, Alsalhi, Al-Qatawneh, AlQudah, & Jaradat, 2021). This situation suggests a need to investigate the motivational factors that impact student performance. This study aims to explore the effects of motivation, particularly intrinsic and extrinsic, on students' performance in Arabic grammar in Colleges of Education in North Central Nigeria. The goal is to enhance teaching practices and improve learning outcomes (Ibrahim, 2019).

Research shows that while students often have positive attitudes toward learning Arabic, their motivation levels are usually low. For example, Adam, S. & Abulwahab A. (2012) found that Nigerian university students studying Arabic had positive attitudes toward the language but weak intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, with little connection between attitudes and actual performance. Additionally, interference from students' native languages is a common barrier to learning Arabic grammar. Adam, S. & Abulwahab A. (2012) highlighted that phonetic, syntactic and semantic issues hinder grammar acquisition, especially for learners from non-Arabic-speaking backgrounds. These challenges are worsened by low motivation, leading to ongoing underperformance. Although there is a lot of research on motivation in second language acquisition in general, few studies focus specifically on the connection between motivation and Arabic grammar learning in Nigeria. Most research covers general Arabic language attitudes and proficiency, leaving a gap in understanding how motivational factors directly affect grammar skills in Arabic.

This study aims to fill this gap by investigating how intrinsic and extrinsic motivation impact students' academic performance in Arabic grammar. It will identify specific motivational barriers and offer evidence-based suggestions to improve grammar teaching in Nigerian Colleges of Education.

Research Objectives

The primary objective of this study is to assess the impact of motivation on student performance in Arabic grammar. Specifically, the study seeks to:

1. assess the level of motivation among NCE II students studying Arabic grammar in Colleges of Education in North Central Nigeria.
2. analyse the relative influence of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation on NCE II students' performance in Arabic grammar competence in Colleges of Education in North Central Nigeria.
3. evaluate the relationship between motivation and academic performance in

Arabic grammar among NCE II students in Colleges of Education in North Central Nigeria.

Research Questions

1. What is the level of motivation among NCE II students learning Arabic grammar in Colleges of Education in North Central Nigeria?
2. To what extent does intrinsic and extrinsic motivation influence NCE II students' performance in Arabic grammar competence in Colleges of Education in North Central Nigeria?
3. What is the relationship between students' motivation and their academic performance in Arabic grammar among NCE II students in Colleges of Education in North Central Nigeria?

Research Hypothesis:

H₀: There is no significant relationship between students' motivation and their performance in Arabic grammar.

Literature Review

Motivation has consistently been identified as one of the strongest predictors of students' engagement, persistence, and academic achievement across different educational contexts. Contemporary educational scholars describe motivation as the internal and external forces that initiate, direct, and sustain learners' goal-oriented behaviour in academic activities (Asmawati, Asyari, & Malkan, 2020). In language learning, motivation determines not only students' willingness to participate in learning activities but also the extent to which they persist in difficult tasks and apply effective learning strategies. Recent studies emphasize that learners with higher motivation tend to demonstrate greater academic resilience, deeper cognitive engagement, and stronger self-regulatory learning behaviours than less motivated learners (Al-Hoorie, 2021; Rod Ellis & Natsuko Shintani, 2014).

Empirical studies on language learning motivation have produced broadly consistent findings, though with some contextual differences. For example, studies in Asian and Middle Eastern educational settings reveal that intrinsically

motivated learners tend to employ deeper learning strategies, demonstrate greater perseverance, and achieve higher academic outcomes in grammar and language-related courses (Asmawati et al., 2020). Similarly, Eltahir et al. (2021) found that interactive and game-based learning strategies improved students' motivation and performance in Arabic grammar among university learners. Their findings support the SDT assumption that engaging and learner-centred instructional methods strengthen intrinsic motivation. In contrast, studies relying on traditional grammar-translation methods often report lower student participation and weaker achievement outcomes because such methods encourage memorization rather than meaningful language use.

Within the Nigerian context, several scholars have examined challenges associated with Arabic language learning, although many of these studies focus more on teaching methods and students' attitudes than on motivation itself. Mahmoud (2014) and Yusuf (2016) observed that Arabic grammar instruction in many Nigerian institutions continues to rely heavily on rote memorization of grammatical rules, with little emphasis on communicative application. These findings were supported by Usman and Abdullahi (2021), who reported that inadequate instructional resources and limited access to digital learning tools negatively affect students' engagement and classroom participation in Arabic language courses. While these studies successfully identify structural and pedagogical challenges, they pay limited attention to the motivational dimensions of grammar learning. In comparison, Mustapha, Preece, and Amzat (2024) argue that ineffective pedagogical approaches in Arabic curriculum implementation contribute significantly to students' low enthusiasm and weak academic engagement in Nigerian Colleges of Education. Their study suggests that improving instructional methods alone may not be sufficient unless students' motivational needs are also addressed.

Arabic grammar (naḥw) itself presents substantial learning difficulties, particularly for non-native speakers. Scholars note that Arabic possesses a highly inflectional grammatical system characterized by complex syntactic

structures, context-sensitive case endings, and extensive morphological variations that require sustained practice and cognitive effort (Lorena, 2015). Unlike many other languages, Arabic writing frequently omits short vowels in ordinary texts, making grammatical competence essential for accurate comprehension and interpretation. Consequently, students who lack motivation may struggle to persist through the demanding cognitive processes required for mastering Arabic grammar. This observation aligns with SDT, which maintains that students are more likely to succeed in difficult learning tasks when instructional environments promote competence and self-confidence.

For Nigerian learners specifically, the challenges of Arabic grammar are compounded by sociolinguistic and institutional factors. Interference from indigenous languages, limited exposure to authentic Arabic communication outside the classroom, overcrowded classrooms, and dependence on conventional teacher-centred methods collectively hinder grammar acquisition (Ibrahim, 2019). Although earlier studies identify these barriers, there remains limited empirical evidence examining how intrinsic and extrinsic motivation specifically influence students' achievement in Arabic grammar among pre-service teachers in Colleges of Education. Most Nigerian studies concentrate on general Arabic language performance or attitudes toward Arabic learning without isolating grammar as a distinct area of inquiry. Furthermore, much of the broader literature on language learning motivation focuses predominantly on English and other globally dominant languages, leaving Arabic comparatively underrepresented despite its religious and educational significance in Nigeria.

Another major gap in existing literature concerns the population under investigation. Pre-service Arabic teachers in Colleges of Education represent a strategically important group because they will eventually teach Arabic at primary and secondary school levels. However, few studies have systematically investigated their motivational profiles or examined how motivational factors relate to their grammar performance. The absence of such evidence limits the development of

targeted instructional interventions, learner-support systems, and policy reforms capable of improving Arabic grammar achievement in teacher education institutions.

Therefore, this study seeks to address these gaps by empirically investigating the relationship between motivation and students' performance in Arabic grammar among Colleges of Education students in North Central Nigeria. By integrating the Self-Determination Theory with empirical investigation, the study aims to contribute to current scholarship on Arabic language education and provide evidence-based recommendations for improving grammar instruction, strengthening teacher preparation programmes, and enhancing students' overall Arabic language proficiency.

Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on the Self-Determination Theory (SDT) developed by Edward Deci and Richard Ryan. The theory explains that students' motivation and academic performance are influenced by the extent to which their psychological needs are satisfied within the learning environment (Deci & Ryan, 2000). SDT assumes that effective learning occurs when three basic needs are fulfilled: autonomy, competence, and relatedness. Autonomy refers to students' sense of control over their learning activities; competence relates to learners' confidence in their ability to succeed; while relatedness concerns supportive relationships with teachers and peers. The theory distinguishes between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Intrinsic motivation occurs when students engage in learning because of personal interest, enjoyment, or satisfaction, whereas extrinsic motivation involves learning for external rewards such as grades, certificates, or career opportunities (Ryan & Deci, 2020). In Arabic grammar learning, intrinsically motivated students are more likely to participate actively, practice independently, and persist in difficult grammar tasks. Extrinsically motivated learners may study grammar mainly to pass examinations or meet academic requirements.

The relevance of SDT to this study lies in its explanation of how motivation influences students' engagement and academic performance.

Arabic grammar is often considered difficult because of its complex syntactic structures and grammatical rules. Therefore, students who feel competent, supported, and actively involved in learning are more likely to develop positive attitudes toward grammar and achieve better academic outcomes. Conversely, low motivation may lead to poor participation, weak commitment, and lower performance in Arabic grammar courses (Al-Hoorie, 2021). Operationally, this study conceptualizes intrinsic motivation through students' interest, enjoyment, and personal commitment to learning Arabic grammar, while extrinsic motivation is measured through external goals such as examination success, teacher approval, and future career aspirations. Students' performance is measured through achievement in Arabic grammar assessments. The study therefore assumes that higher levels of intrinsic and positive extrinsic motivation will positively influence students' performance in Arabic grammar among Colleges of Education students in North Central Nigeria.

Methodology

This study adopted a descriptive survey and correlational research design. The descriptive survey design was used to obtain information on students' levels of motivation and their attitudes toward learning Arabic grammar, while the correlational design examined the relationship between motivation and students' academic performance in Arabic grammar. The design was considered appropriate because it enabled the

researcher to describe existing conditions and determine the extent to which motivation relates to achievement in Arabic grammar among students in Colleges of Education.

The population of the study comprised all 200-level NCE students enrolled in Arabic language programmes during the 2025/2026 academic session in selected public Colleges of Education in North Central Nigeria. The institutions included Umaru Sanda Ahmadu College of Education, Nasarawa State College of Education, and Federal College of Education. These institutions were selected because they offer established Arabic language programmes and represent both state and federal Colleges of Education within the region. The target population consisted of all NCE II Arabic students because they had already completed introductory Arabic grammar courses and possessed sufficient exposure to grammar instruction relevant to the study. A sample of 60 students was selected using stratified random sampling technique. The population was first stratified based on institution and gender to ensure adequate representation of students from the selected colleges as well as male and female students. Thereafter, simple random sampling was used within each stratum to select the required number of respondents proportionately. The stratification process ensured fairness, reduced sampling bias, and improved the representativeness of the sample. Table one describes the sample composition:

Table 1: Sample Composition

Institution	Ownership Category	Level	Estimated Population of NCE II Arabic Students	Stratification Category	Sample Selected
Umaru Sanda Ahmadu College of Education, Minna	State College of Education	NCE II	40	Male/Female	30
Nasarawa State College of Education, Akwanga	State College of Education	NCE II	25	Male/Female	15

Federal College of Education, Okene	Federal College of Education Public Colleges (State and Federal)	NCE II	25	Male/Female	15
Total			90		60

Two instruments were used for data collection. The first instrument was the Students' Motivation Questionnaire, a structured Likert-scale questionnaire designed to measure students' intrinsic and extrinsic motivation toward learning Arabic grammar. The questionnaire contained items on students' interest in grammar learning, classroom participation, study habits, persistence, examination goals, and attitudes toward Arabic grammar. The second instrument was the Arabic Grammar Achievement Test, which assessed students' academic performance in Arabic grammar through multiple-choice, sentence completion, and short-answer questions based on topics taught at the NCE level.

The instruments were subjected to validation by three experts in Arabic language education and educational measurement and evaluation. The validators examined the instruments in terms of grammar, content relevance, clarity of items, appropriateness of language, structure, and alignment with the objectives of the study. Their observations and corrections were incorporated into the final versions of the instruments before administration. To establish reliability, the instruments were pilot-tested using 20 Arabic students outside the study area but with similar characteristics to the target population. The reliability of the Students' Motivation Questionnaire was determined using Cronbach Alpha reliability method, which yielded a coefficient of 0.82, indicating high internal

consistency. The Arabic Grammar Achievement Test produced a reliability index of 0.79 using test-retest reliability procedure, showing that the instrument was reliable for the study. Ethical considerations were carefully observed throughout the study. Ethical approval was obtained from the relevant academic authorities of the selected Colleges of Education before data collection. Participants were adequately informed about the purpose of the study, and informed consent was obtained from all respondents before participation. Students were assured that participation was voluntary and that they could withdraw from the study at any stage without penalty. Confidentiality and anonymity were also maintained by ensuring that respondents' identities and responses were used strictly for academic purposes.

The data collected were analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics such as frequency counts, percentages, mean scores, and standard deviations were used to summarize respondents' demographic information, motivation levels, and grammar performance scores. Inferential statistics were used to test the hypotheses of the study. The Pearson correlation coefficient was employed to determine the strength and direction of the relationship between students' motivation and performance in Arabic grammar, while simple linear regression analysis was used to examine the predictive influence of motivation on students' academic achievement in Arabic grammar.

Results and Findings

Results of Research Question One (What is the level of motivation among students learning Arabic grammar in Colleges of Education in North Central Nigeria?)

Table 2: Descriptive Analysis of Motivation Level

Variable	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Total Motivation Score	60	46	73	59.62	5.48
Arabic Grammar Test Score	60	46	69	57.47	5.54

The results show that students demonstrated a moderate level of motivation toward learning Arabic grammar ($M = 59.62$, $SD = 5.48$). Similarly, the average score in the Arabic grammar achievement test was 57.47 ($SD = 5.54$), which indicates a moderate level of performance among the respondents.

Results of Research Question Two (To what extent does intrinsic and extrinsic motivation influence NCE II students' performance in Arabic grammar competence in Colleges of Education in North Central Nigeria?)

Table 3: Intrinsic and Extrinsic Motivation Influence

Section	Items	Mean	Std. Deviation	Cluster Mean
Intrinsic Motivation	Q1–Q5	2.94	0.71	2.94
Extrinsic Motivation	Q6–Q10	3.25	0.68	3.25
Study Habits	Q11–Q15	3.18	0.73	3.18
Perception of Difficulty	Q16–Q20	2.95	0.76	2.95
Overall Motivation	Q1–Q20	3.08	0.72	3.08

The cluster mean analysis shows that: Extrinsic motivation ($M = 3.25$) recorded the highest mean, meaning that external factors such as career opportunities, rewards and expectations play a significant role in motivating students to learn Arabic grammar. Study habits ($M = 3.18$) also show a relatively high mean, suggesting that many students adopt positive learning strategies when studying Arabic grammar. Intrinsic motivation ($M = 2.94$) is moderate, meaning students have some internal interest in learning Arabic grammar but it is not extremely strong. Perception of difficulty ($M = 2.95$) suggests that students perceive Arabic grammar as moderately challenging. The grand cluster mean of 3.08 indicates that students possess a moderate level of motivation toward learning Arabic grammar

Results of Research Question Three (What is the relationship between students' motivation and their academic performance in Arabic grammar among NCE II students in Colleges of Education in North Central Nigeria?)

Table 4: Pearson Correlation Analysis

Variables	Motivation	Grammar Score
Motivation	Pearson correlation	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.42
	N	60
Grammar Score	Pearson correlation	0.42
	Sig. (2-tailed)	1
	N	60

The Pearson correlation coefficient revealed a moderate positive relationship between students' motivation and their performance in Arabic grammar ($r = 0.42$, $p < 0.05$). This portrays that students with higher motivation tend to achieve higher scores in Arabic grammar.

Table 5: Simple Linear Regression (Model Summary table)

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error
1	0.42	0.18	0.17	4.98

The coefficient of determination ($R^2 = 0.18$) indicates that 18% of the variance in Arabic grammar performance is explained by students' motivation.

The remaining 82% ($1 - 0.18 = 0.82$) represents the proportion of variation in Arabic grammar performance that is explained by other factors not included in the model. In other words, while motivation contributes significantly to students' grammar performance, a large proportion (82%) is influenced by other academic, instructional, and personal variables that were not captured in this study.

This means that motivation is important and significant, but Arabic grammar performance is multi-factorial, not driven by motivation alone

Table 6: ANOVA

Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig
Regression	320.6	1	320.6	12.92	0.001
Residual	1437.4	58	24.78		
Total	1758.0	59			

The regression model is statistically significant ($F = 12.92$, $p < 0.05$), indicating that motivation significantly predicts students' Arabic grammar performance.

Table 7: Coefficients

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients	Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig
	B	Beta		
Constant	32.10	—	5.17	.000
Motivation	0.43	0.42	3.59	0.001

The coefficient table shows that there is a significant relationship between motivation and grammar performance ($= 32.10$, $t = 0.43$, $p < .05$). This means that each one-point increase in motivation increases grammar score by approximately 0.43 points. In other words, it means that motivation is a significant predictor of grammar performance.

Hypothesis Testing

H₀: There is no significant relationship between students' motivation and their performance in Arabic grammar.

A moderate positive relationship was found between students' motivation and their performance in Arabic grammar, $r(58) = .42$, $p = .001$. This indicates that students with higher motivation tended to perform better in Arabic grammar. Since the probability value was less than the .05 level of significance, the null hypothesis stating that there is no significant relationship between students' motivation and their performance in Arabic grammar is hereby rejected.

Discussion of Findings

The findings of this study provide important insights into the relationship between students' motivation and their performance in Arabic grammar among NCE II students in

Colleges of Education in North Central Nigeria. The results revealed that students demonstrated a moderate level of motivation toward learning Arabic grammar ($M = 59.62$, $SD = 5.48$), while their achievement in Arabic grammar was also

moderate ($M = 57.47$, $SD = 5.54$). This suggests that although students possess some level of interest and commitment toward Arabic grammar learning, their motivational intensity may not be sufficiently strong to produce high academic achievement. The finding supports contemporary perspectives in second language acquisition which emphasize that motivation significantly shapes learners' persistence, engagement, and achievement in language learning contexts (Wu, 2022; Hennebry-Leung & Lamb, 2024).

The moderate level of motivation observed in this study may be understood within the realities of Nigerian Colleges of Education, particularly in the North Central region. In many Arabic language programmes, students learn within environments characterized by overcrowded classrooms, inadequate instructional materials, irregular access to language laboratories and digital learning facilities, and predominantly teacher-centred instructional methods. Such conditions may weaken students' enthusiasm and reduce opportunities for active engagement with Arabic grammar. Furthermore, Arabic grammar (naḥw) is widely perceived by learners as abstract and cognitively demanding because of its complex syntactic structures, inflectional patterns, and case-ending system. Consequently, many students approach grammar learning primarily as an academic requirement rather than as an intellectually rewarding activity. From the perspective of Self-Determination Theory (SDT), these classroom and institutional limitations may prevent the adequate satisfaction of learners' psychological needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness, thereby weakening intrinsic motivation and limiting deeper engagement in grammar learning.

The analysis further revealed that extrinsic motivation recorded the highest mean score ($M = 3.25$), indicating that external factors such as examinations, certificate acquisition, employment opportunities, societal expectations, and academic progression serve as the dominant motivational forces influencing students' learning of Arabic grammar. This result reflects the sociolinguistic realities of Arabic language education in Nigeria, where many students study Arabic primarily for

instrumental purposes linked to religious identity, teaching careers, civil service opportunities, or further academic advancement. In Nigerian Colleges of Education, Arabic is often viewed less as a communicative language for everyday interaction and more as a subject associated with religious scholarship and professional qualification. As a result, students may focus more on passing examinations and obtaining credentials than on developing genuine linguistic interest or communicative competence (Ajape, Shittu, & Yusuf, 2023).

This dominance of extrinsic motivation can also be interpreted through SDT. According to the theory, learners tend to rely more heavily on external regulation when educational environments fail to sufficiently nurture intrinsic interest and learner autonomy. In many Arabic classrooms, instructional practices still emphasize rote memorization of grammatical rules, repetition, and examination preparation rather than collaborative learning, communicative activities, and learner-centred engagement. Such approaches may encourage compliance and performance-oriented learning rather than curiosity-driven learning. Consequently, students become motivated mainly by external rewards and pressures instead of internal enjoyment and personal satisfaction derived from mastering Arabic grammar.

The moderate level of intrinsic motivation ($M = 2.94$) suggests that students possess limited personal enjoyment and curiosity toward Arabic grammar learning. Although some learners appreciate the religious and intellectual value of Arabic, many may not experience grammar learning as personally fulfilling or stimulating. This finding may partly be explained by the nature of grammar instruction in many Nigerian Colleges of Education, where Arabic grammar is frequently taught theoretically with limited practical application to communication, reading comprehension, or authentic language use (Mustapha, Preece, & Amzat, 2024). These studies observed that Arabic instruction in many Nigerian institutions still relies heavily on traditional grammar-based methods rather than communicative and learner-centred approaches.

Under SDT, intrinsic motivation flourishes when learners experience autonomy, competence, and meaningful engagement. However, when students are exposed to rigid teaching methods, repetitive exercises, and limited opportunities for self-expression, their internal motivation may gradually decline. The moderate intrinsic motivation observed in this study therefore reflects not merely students' personal attitudes but also broader pedagogical and institutional conditions surrounding Arabic language education.

The findings also showed that students perceived Arabic grammar as moderately difficult ($M = 2.95$). This perception is unsurprising considering the linguistic complexity of Arabic grammar and the fact that most learners operate in multilingual environments dominated by indigenous Nigerian languages and English. Structural differences between Arabic and learners' first languages often create cognitive difficulties in mastering grammatical concepts such as *i'rāb*, sentence agreement, verb conjugation, and syntactic patterns. In addition, students' limited exposure to authentic Arabic communication outside the classroom reduces opportunities for practical reinforcement of grammatical knowledge. Unlike learners in Arabic-speaking societies, many Nigerian students encounter Arabic mainly within formal classroom settings, thereby restricting natural language interaction and spontaneous grammar acquisition. The correlation analysis revealed a moderate positive relationship between motivation and students' performance in Arabic grammar ($r = 0.42, p < 0.05$). This finding confirms that students with higher levels of motivation generally perform better in Arabic grammar than less motivated learners. The result aligns with SDT, which posits that motivated learners are more likely to invest effort, persist through learning difficulties, and employ effective learning strategies that enhance academic achievement. Motivated students are often more willing to practice grammatical exercises, participate in classroom activities, and devote additional time to independent study, all of which contribute positively to grammar performance.

Similarly, the regression analysis demonstrated that motivation significantly predicts students' performance in Arabic grammar ($\beta = 0.42, p < 0.05$). The coefficient of determination ($R^2 = 0.18$) indicates that motivation accounts for 18% of the variance in students' grammar achievement. Although this percentage confirms that motivation is an important predictor of academic performance, it also suggests that Arabic grammar achievement is influenced by several additional factors beyond motivation alone. The remaining 82% of the variance may be attributed to variables such as teaching quality, instructional methods, availability of learning materials, students' prior exposure to Arabic, classroom environment, linguistic background, cognitive ability, and institutional support systems. This reinforces the multidimensional nature of language learning, particularly within complex multilingual and resource-constrained educational environments such as Nigerian Colleges of Education (Gizo, 2024). These studies emphasize that language learning outcomes in Nigeria are shaped by interacting linguistic, pedagogical, socio-economic, and infrastructural factors within multilingual educational settings.

The findings have important implications for Arabic pedagogy in Nigeria. The dominance of extrinsic motivation suggests that Arabic instruction should move beyond examination-oriented approaches toward more learner-centred and communicative pedagogies capable of stimulating intrinsic interest. Teachers should adopt interactive strategies such as task-based learning, collaborative grammar activities, contextualized exercises, educational technology, and communicative applications of grammar. Such methods may help students perceive grammar not merely as a difficult academic requirement but as a meaningful tool for communication and intellectual development. Furthermore, educational authorities should improve infrastructural support through the provision of updated instructional materials, digital language resources, language laboratories, and teacher training programmes aimed at enhancing innovative grammar instruction.

The study also highlights the need for supportive classroom environments that satisfy the psychological needs identified in SDT. Arabic teachers should encourage learner autonomy by allowing students greater participation in learning activities, foster competence through constructive feedback and gradual mastery experiences, and strengthen relatedness by building positive teacher-student relationships. When these psychological needs are fulfilled, students are more likely to develop stronger intrinsic motivation, sustain long-term engagement, and achieve better academic outcomes in Arabic grammar.

Overall, the rejection of the null hypothesis confirms that motivation is significantly related to students' performance in Arabic grammar. The findings therefore reinforce the argument that improving students' motivation, particularly intrinsic motivation, remains essential for enhancing Arabic grammar achievement in Nigerian Colleges of Education.

Conclusion

This study concludes that students in Colleges of Education in North Central Nigeria possess a moderate level of motivation toward learning Arabic grammar. Although many students show interest in the subject, their level of enthusiasm and engagement is not sufficiently strong to sustain consistently high academic performance. The findings further establish that motivation significantly influences students' achievement in Arabic grammar, as learners with higher levels of motivation generally performed better than those with lower motivation levels. The study also reveals that extrinsic motivation contributes more strongly to students' grammar performance than intrinsic motivation. Students who learn Arabic grammar out of external rewards such as examinations, grades, or certificates, achieve better academic outcomes than those motivated mainly by internal personal interest, enjoyment, or intellectual satisfaction.

In addition, the study identifies several contextual challenges affecting students' motivation and performance in Arabic grammar. The lack of adequate instructional materials,

limited integration of educational technology, and continued dependence on traditional teacher-centred instructional methods reduce students' engagement and make grammar lessons less attractive and effective. These challenges reflect the broader realities of many Nigerian Colleges of Education, where infrastructural limitations and insufficient learning resources continue to affect the quality of Arabic language instruction. The findings emphasize that improving students' motivation, particularly intrinsic motivation, is essential for enhancing achievement in Arabic grammar. The study therefore highlights the need for more learner-centred teaching approaches, improved instructional facilities, supportive classroom environments, and curriculum reforms capable of making Arabic grammar learning more engaging, practical, and meaningful for students.

Recommendations

Based on the foregoing, the study recommends that:

1. Arabic grammar teachers should use learner-centred and interactive methods. These approaches should encourage student participation, discussion, and practical use of grammatical rules.
2. Instruction should include communicative grammar activities. Examples are sentence construction, guided writing, dialogue practice, and contextual exercises to make grammar more meaningful.
3. Teachers should help students strengthen their intrinsic motivation by showing them how Arabic grammar relates to language mastery, academic success, and career opportunities.
4. Extrinsic motivation strategies, like praise, feedback, recognition, and rewards, should be used wisely to keep students interested.
5. Colleges of Education should provide updated teaching materials, such as modern Arabic grammar textbooks, audio-visual resources, and digital tools.

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