Interdisciplinary Social Studies
E-ISSN: 2808-5051
Vol. 6, No. 1, October 2026, pp 18-26
https://doi.org/10.55324/iss.v6i1.1214

The Influence of Students' Perceptions on Arabic Language Learning at SMK Muhammadiyah 01 Purbalingga

Nuruliyatun*, Hawin Fitriyani, M. Abdun Jamil
Sekolah Tinggi Ilmu Tarbiyah Bustanul 'Ulum, Indonesia
Email: nurulliyatun37@gmail.com*

Keywords:
Student Perception, Arabic Language Learning, Education

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Abstract

Arabic language learning in vocational schools requires attention to students' perceptions because learners differ in their understanding, interest, concentration, and comfort in the classroom. This study aimed to examine the relationship between students' perceptions and Arabic language learning at SMK Muhammadiyah 01 Purbalingga. A quantitative descriptive approach was employed during the 2025–2026 academic year. The population comprised 485 students, of whom 100 respondents were selected using simple random sampling. Data were collected using Likert-scale questionnaires containing 10 items for each variable. Data analysis included descriptive statistics, validity and reliability tests, simple linear regression, a t-test, and the coefficient of determination. All questionnaire items met the reported validity criteria. Cronbach's alpha coefficients were 0.921 for students' perceptions and 0.939 for Arabic language learning. Students' perceptions were positively and significantly associated with Arabic language learning, with $t = 26.702$ and a reported $p = 0.001$. The regression model explained 87.9% of the variance in Arabic language learning scores. These findings suggest that favorable student perceptions were associated with better reported learning experiences and abilities, although questionnaire-based data cannot establish causality or independently measure Arabic language proficiency. The study concludes that teachers should consider students' perceptions when developing interactive, communicative, and contextual Arabic language instruction that is responsive to vocational students' needs and varying levels of prior knowledge.

INTRODUCTION

Education is a fundamental process in developing high-quality and competitive human resources (Ponomarenko et al., 2022). In the context of national education, learning functions not only as a means of transferring knowledge but also as a means of developing students' character, skills, and attitudes (Aminah et al., 2022). This is consistent with the mandate of Law of the Republic of Indonesia Number 20 of 2003 concerning the National Education System, which emphasizes the importance of developing students' potential holistically across cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains. Therefore, education needs to be designed systematically and sustainably to develop both students' academic abilities and character (Baena-Morales et al., 2023; Hanafiah et al., 2024; Park et al., 2022).

Arabic occupies an important position in Islamic-based education, including at Muhammadiyah vocational schools. Arabic is studied not only as a foreign language but also as the language of the Qur'an and an important means of accessing Islamic teachings (Ridwan, 2023). Mastery of Arabic also provides broader access to classical and modern Islamic literature, much of which is written in Arabic (Dodego, 2022). Thus, Arabic language learning encompasses linguistic, religious, academic, and practical dimensions that need to be

developed in a balanced manner. In practice, however, Arabic language learning continues to face several challenges. Students may perceive Arabic as a difficult, less engaging, and tedious subject (Kasan et al., 2025). These challenges may be associated with conventional teaching methods, limited variation in instructional media, insufficiently contextualized approaches, and the complexity of grammatical structures, including nahwu and sharaf. Less interactive and communicative instruction may also cause students to become more passive and less motivated to participate actively in the learning process.

Students' perceptions constitute an important aspect of the learning process. Positive perceptions may be associated with greater motivation, interest, concentration, and student engagement, whereas negative perceptions may be associated with decreased enthusiasm for learning (Anjeli et al., 2025). Perceptions are shaped by learning experiences, including interactions with teachers, exposure to instructional materials and methods, and experiences within the learning environment. Therefore, understanding students' perceptions can provide a basis for developing learning processes that are more responsive to their needs.

This issue is particularly relevant to vocational school students, whose education is strongly oriented toward vocational skills. These students tend to require learning that is relevant to practical needs and the world of work. Saifudin and Alwi (2025) emphasized the importance of teachers' creative strategies in fostering students' interest in learning Arabic, while Pujiartha and Firdaus (2025) highlighted the importance of Arabic for specific purposes in response to changing learning needs. Contextual and practical approaches can help students recognize the relevance of Arabic to their communication needs and fields of study.

At SMK Muhammadiyah 01 Purbalingga, Arabic is included in the curriculum. Based on preliminary observations conducted as part of this research, some students experienced difficulty understanding the material, participated less actively, and demonstrated limited motivation to engage in Arabic language learning. Differences in students' prior knowledge and abilities may also affect their levels of understanding and engagement in the learning process. These conditions highlight the importance of examining students' perceptions and their relationship with Arabic language learning at the vocational school level.

Previous quantitative research provides evidence that students can respond favorably to Arabic instruction supported by digital learning environments. Shaleh (2021) surveyed 105 seventh-grade students from a population of 142 at SMP Ahmad Dahlan Kota Jambi to investigate their perceptions of Arabic language learning through Google Classroom. The study reported that 21% of respondents had very positive perceptions, 59% had positive perceptions, 17% had moderate perceptions, and 3% had negative perceptions. Thus, approximately four-fifths of the respondents evaluated the learning experience positively or very positively. These findings provide empirical evidence of favorable perceptions in one school setting while also demonstrating that students' responses were not uniform. However, the study primarily described students' perceptions of an e-learning environment and did not establish whether comparable patterns applied to general Arabic language learning among vocational school students.

Qualitative studies further demonstrate how students' perceptions relate to the characteristics of instructional delivery. Fasehah et al. (2023) examined ninth-grade students at Madrasah Tsanawiyah Ma'had Al-Zaytun using interviews, observations, and documentation. Most participants expressed positive perceptions of laptop use in Arabic

lessons, describing the learning process as more enjoyable and reporting easier access to supporting materials through websites. Similarly, Umami and Hikmah (2025) found that students valued relevant and interactive activities, including digital media and educational games, although some continued to experience difficulties because of limited foundational knowledge. Taken together, these findings suggest that students' perceptions encompass both the attractiveness of learning activities and their experiences in understanding the content. They also indicate that favorable responses to instructional media should be interpreted within the specific educational settings and learning conditions investigated.

The studies reviewed above provide useful insights, but their settings and analytical emphases leave a specific question unresolved. Shaleh (2021) focused on perceptions of e-learning, Fasehah et al. (2023) investigated laptop-supported instruction, and Umami and Hikmah (2025) examined learning within a particular curriculum framework. Their participants were drawn from junior secondary schools or equivalent institutions. These studies do not directly establish the statistical relationship between students' perceptions and questionnaire-based measures of Arabic language learning at SMK Muhammadiyah 01 Purbalingga. The research gap addressed in the present study is therefore both contextual and analytical: empirical evidence is needed regarding this relationship within the vocational school under investigation. This gap does not imply that students' perceptions have never been examined in vocational education; rather, it identifies a specific question that remains unanswered by the literature reviewed.

At SMK Muhammadiyah 01 Purbalingga, the preliminary observations reported in this research identified students who experienced difficulty understanding Arabic materials, participated less actively, or demonstrated limited motivation during lessons. The study also identified differences in students' prior abilities as a relevant classroom condition. These observations establish a local rationale for further investigation, although they do not indicate the prevalence of each difficulty across the school. The study population comprised 485 students in the 2025–2026 academic year, of whom 100 respondents were included in the questionnaire survey. Within this vocational setting, examining students' perceptions can clarify how students evaluate Arabic language learning alongside their broader educational priorities. The urgency of this research lies in providing systematic local evidence to inform instructional decisions rather than relying solely on informal observations of student participation.

Against this background, the novelty of the present study lies in its context-specific examination of the association between multidimensional student perceptions and reported Arabic language learning at a Muhammadiyah vocational school. Rather than restricting the investigation to a single technological tool or curriculum arrangement, this study considers students' perceptions of the broader learning experience. It relates these perceptions to questionnaire indicators covering vocabulary comprehension and the four language skills of reading, writing, listening, and speaking. The intended contribution of this study is empirical: it extends the discussion represented by previous studies to a different educational setting and provides a quantitative estimate of the relationship between the measured variables. This contribution remains bounded by the single-school design and the use of self-reported data, which support an assessment of association without independently demonstrating changes in Arabic language proficiency.

The purpose of this research is to examine the relationship between students' perceptions and Arabic language learning at SMK Muhammadiyah 01 Purbalingga during the 2025–2026 academic year. Specifically, the study seeks to describe the measured perception and learning variables, determine whether students' perception scores are significantly associated with their Arabic language learning scores, and estimate the proportion of variance in the learning variable explained by the regression model. A quantitative questionnaire-based approach, supported by descriptive analysis and simple linear regression, provides an appropriate means of addressing these objectives. The investigation thereby connects the identified classroom concerns with an explicit and measurable research question. Consistent with its observational design, the analysis treats students' perceptions as a statistical predictor and interprets the findings as an association rather than conclusive evidence of a causal effect.

The anticipated benefits of this study encompass teaching practice, school planning, and future research. For Arabic language teachers, the findings may provide a basis for reflecting on students' interest, concentration, comfort, and perceptions of instructional methods when designing classroom activities. For school leaders, the findings may inform discussions regarding learning resources, teacher professional development, and support for students with varying levels of prior knowledge. For students, instructional responses informed by their reported experiences may help make Arabic lessons more accessible and relevant, although any resulting improvements would require subsequent evaluation. Academically, this study can provide a local reference for future investigations incorporating additional explanatory variables, independently assessed Arabic language proficiency, or longitudinal research designs. Through these contributions, the research aims to support evidence-informed Arabic language instruction that responds to the characteristics and needs of vocational school students.

METHOD

This study employed a quantitative descriptive approach and was conducted at SMK Muhammadiyah 01 Purbalingga during the 2025–2026 academic year. The study population comprised 485 students, from whom 100 respondents were selected using simple random sampling. Primary data were collected using Likert-scale questionnaires consisting of 10 items measuring Arabic language learning and 10 items measuring students' perceptions. Supporting data were obtained through a literature review and documentation. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, validity and reliability tests, simple linear regression, a t-test, and the coefficient of determination (R^2). Instrument validity was assessed using Pearson's product-moment correlation, while reliability was evaluated using Cronbach's alpha with a minimum acceptable coefficient of 0.70, following Hair et al. (2022). Simple linear regression and the t-test were used to examine the relationship between students' perceptions and Arabic language learning and to determine its statistical significance, while R^2 was used to assess the proportion of variance in Arabic language learning explained by the model.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Respondent Characteristics

Respondent characteristics showed that 84% of respondents were female and 16% were male. Based on age, 17-year-old respondents were the largest group with a percentage of 67%,

followed by 16-year-olds at 21% and 18-year-olds at 12%. The composition illustrates that the research respondents are dominated by female students and the 17-year-old age group.

Validity Test

Table 1. Test the Validity of Arabic Language Learning

No	r Count	r Table	Sig	Remarks
1.	0.771	0.196	0.001	Valid
2.	0.825	0.196	0.001	Valid
3.	0.848	0.196	0.001	Valid
4.	0.775	0.196	0.001	Valid
5.	0.788	0.196	0.001	Valid
6.	0.788	0.196	0.001	Valid
7.	0.781	0.196	0.001	Valid
8.	0.809	0.196	0.001	Valid
9.	0.835	0.196	0.001	Valid
10.	0.812	0.196	0.001	Valid

Source: Primary Data Processed, 2026

Table 2. Test the Validity of Arabic Language Learning

No	r Count	r Table	Sig	Remarks
1.	0.811	0.196	0.001	Valid
2.	0.825	0.196	0.001	Valid
3.	0.828	0.196	0.001	Valid
4.	0.802	0.196	0.001	Valid
5.	0.820	0.196	0.001	Valid
6.	0.723	0.196	0.001	Valid
7.	0.675	0.196	0.001	Valid
8.	0.756	0.196	0.001	Valid
9.	0.697	0.196	0.001	Valid
10.	0.732	0.196	0.001	Valid

Source: Primary Data Processed, 2026

The results of the validity test showed that all items in both variables met the validity criteria. In the Arabic Language Learning variable, the r-value of 10 items was in the range of 0.771-0.848, while in the Student Perception variable it was in the range of 0.675-0.828. All of these values were greater than the r of the table 0.196 and had a significance of 0.001.

Reliability Test

Table 3. Reliability Test

Variabel	Cronbach's Alpha
Arabic Language Learning	0.939
Students' Perceptions	0.921

Source: Primary Data Processed, 2026

The reliability test showed a Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.939 for Arabic Language Learning and 0.921 for Learner Perception. Both values were above the minimum limit of 0.70 so that the instrument was declared reliable. These results showed that the items in each variable had sufficient internal consistency to be used in the research analysis.

Table 4. T Test

Variabel	t Count	t Table	Sig	Remarks
Students' Perceptions	26.702	1.984	0.001	Influential

Source: Primary Data Processed, 2026

Based on the results of the t-test, the t-value of the variable of Student Perception was obtained of 26.702, while the t-value of the table at the significance level of 5% with the degree of freedom (df) = 98 was 1.984. In addition, a significance value of 0.001 was obtained which was smaller than 0.05. Based on the t-value of calculation (26.702) which is greater than the t table (1.984) and the significance value is less than 0.05, it can be concluded that Student Perception has a positive and significant effect on Arabic Language Learning at SMK Muhammadiyah 01 Purbalingga. This result shows that the more positive the students' perception of the learning process, the better the implementation and results of Arabic learning felt by the students.

Table 5. R2 Test

Variabel	R Square	Category
Learning	0.879	Strong

Source: Primary Data Processed, 2026

Based on the results of the determination coefficient (R^2) test, an R Square value of 0.879 was obtained. These results showed that the Student Perception variable was able to explain the Arabic Learning variable by 87.9%, while the remaining 12.1% was explained by other factors outside the research model that was not studied. The R Square value of 0.879 is included in the strong category, so it can be interpreted that Student Perception has a very large ability to explain the variations that occur in Arabic Language Learning. Thus, the better the students' perception of learning, the better the Arabic learning felt by students at SMK Muhammadiyah 01 Purbalingga.

The results of the study show that Student Perception has a positive and significant effect on Arabic Language Learning. The t-count value of 26.702 which is greater than the t of table 1.984 and the significance of 0.001 indicates a significant relationship in the research model. These findings are in line with the concept of perception that places students' experiences, attention, interests, and interpretations as important parts in shaping attitudes towards learning objects (Nisa et al., 2023; Sulistiawati, 2023). Students who view learning positively may have a tendency to be more focused, interested, comfortable, and involved in learning activities.

The magnitude of R Square of 0.879 shows that the variation in Arabic Language Learning in this study can be mostly explained by the Students' Perception. The findings need to be read within the limits of the research model, because there are still 12.1% variations that are outside the analyzed variables. Other factors that have not been tested in this study can include learning motivation, teacher competence, learning media, learning environment, and learning methods.

Based on research from Shaleh (2021), it is shown that e-learning-based Arabic learning is perceived quite well because flexibility and the use of technology make learning not monotonous. Research from Hasan & Rido'i (2024) found that phonetic learning helps the pronunciation of Arabic letters and increases student confidence. According to research by

Umami & Hikmah (2025), it shows that students' perceptions are diverse and influenced by learning methods and students' backgrounds. Meanwhile, Fadly & Sari (2022) show that the use of learning media can help increase interest, understanding, and enthusiasm for learning.

The results of this study can also be understood through the characteristics of Arabic learning which include reading, writing, listening, and speaking skills (Nurhikmah et al., 2025). Learning directed at communicative and contextual skills can help students see the usefulness of Arabic more clearly (Tarigan et al., 2022). In the context of vocational schools, practical relevance is also important because students have a vocational orientation. Therefore, the development of learning that is creative, communicative, and according to the needs of students is an important part of efforts to build a positive learning experience (Saifudin & Alwi, 2025).

Overall, the results of the study show that students' perceptions are aspects that need to be considered in the development of Arabic language learning. Innovative, interactive, communicative, and contextual learning strategies can be directed to strengthen students' understanding, interest, focus, positive assessment of methods, and comfort. However, the results of the study do not mean that all variations of Arabic learning are only determined by students' perceptions, because there are still other factors outside the model that have not been analyzed.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that students' perceptions were positively and significantly associated with Arabic language learning at SMK Muhammadiyah 01 Purbalingga. The results of the t-test showed that the calculated t-value of 26.702 was greater than the critical t-value of 1.984, with a reported p-value of 0.001. The coefficient of determination (R^2) was 0.879, indicating that students' perceptions explained 87.9% of the variance in Arabic language learning scores, while the remaining 12.1% was attributable to factors not included in the model. The perception dimensions examined in this study included comprehension, interest, concentration, perceptions of learning methods, and comfort, while Arabic language learning encompassed vocabulary comprehension and the four language skills of reading, writing, listening, and speaking. These findings highlight the importance of considering students' experiences and perceptions when designing Arabic language instruction at the vocational school level. The school is encouraged to improve the quality of Arabic language learning by providing adequate learning facilities and resources, strengthening teacher capacity, and developing engaging instructional programs that are appropriate for the characteristics and needs of vocational school students. Arabic language teachers are also encouraged to implement innovative, interactive, communicative, and contextual instruction to provide students with more relevant learning experiences and foster favorable perceptions of Arabic language learning.

FUNDING

The research and preparation of this article was carried out independently without funding support from external parties.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The author states that there are no conflicts of interest, whether personal, commercial, or financial, that can affect the implementation and results of this study.

AUTHOR'S CONTRIBUTION

Nuruliyatun contributes to research design, data collection and processing, system development, result analysis, and article manuscript preparation.

GENERATIVE ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE USAGE STATEMENT

In the process of compiling this article, the author uses generative artificial intelligence (AI) as a tool in language refinement, writing structure, and grammar improvement. The use of AI is carried out on a limited basis and remains under the supervision of the author. All data, analysis, interpretation, and scientific substance in this article have been checked and verified by the author. The author is solely responsible for the accuracy, authenticity, and final content of the manuscript.

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