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THE IMPACT OF LANGUAGE ENVIRONMENT AND LEARNING MOTIVATION ON ENGLISH LEARNING OUTCOMES IN INDONESIAN ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY

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Abstract: In response to the growing demand for transformative English education in Islamic higher education, this study investigates the interplay among language environment, school background, and learning motivation in shaping English learning outcomes in Islamic higher education. Employing a quantitative research design with path analysis, the study examines both the direct and indirect effects of these variables on students' English proficiency. Data were collected from 77 undergraduate students at State Islamic Institution of Sultan Amai Gorontalo through objective English proficiency tests and structured questionnaires. The findings reveal that learning motivation plays a pivotal mediating role, accounting for 27.98% of the variance in English learning outcomes. Although the language

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environment exerts a significant indirect effect through motivation (1.60%), its direct influence on learning outcomes is minimal (0.31%). Likewise, school background shows no significant direct effect on English achievement, suggesting a "transitional reset effect" as students adjust to the higher education context. These results challenge traditional assumptions regarding the roles of prior schooling and learning environment, emphasizing motivation as a central factor in English learning. The study contributes to second language acquisition theory by integrating institutional and psychological perspectives within Islamic higher education and highlights the need for motivation-driven, culturally responsive instructional strategies.

Keywords: *language environment, learning motivation, school background, English learning outcomes, Islamic higher education*

INTRODUCTION

The globalization of higher education has significantly increased the demand for English language proficiency, especially in non-English speaking countries like Indonesia (Deng et al., 2023). English is not only an academic requirement but also a key tool for accessing global knowledge and career opportunities in the interconnected world (Mauliska & D'Angelo, 2024). In Indonesia, English has been emphasized in higher education as a means to bridge local and global academic discourses (Lauder, 2020). However, achieving optimal proficiency in English remains a challenge, particularly in Islamic higher education institutions, where students must also navigate additional linguistic demands, including Arabic (Al-Manduriy, 2018). Despite the integration of English in the national education system, only 50% of Indonesian university students reach the expected proficiency levels, revealing a significant gap between policy goals and learning outcomes (Hidayat et al., 2020). This issue is even more pronounced in Islamic higher education, where students must balance

religious and linguistic studies, further complicating their language acquisition process (Angraeni et al., 2024).

Recent literature on second language acquisition emphasizes the critical role of motivation in language proficiency (Hamimed, 2024); (Apoko & Chong, 2024), with motivated learners consistently outperforming their peers (Singh, 2011). However, sustaining motivation in linguistically and culturally complex contexts like Islamic higher education requires tailored strategies addressing environmental, psychological, and institutional factors (Handayani, & Muhtar, 2022). Another word, need more strategies in creating the basic motivational condition (Umam et al., 2023). While many studies examine motivation and language environments independently, little research explores how these factors interact, particularly in relation to school backgrounds and institutional policies (Nawaz et al., 2024).

Empirical studies that specifically focus on the context of Islamic higher education remain limited, creating a significant gap in research. One of the key areas that have been underexplored is the influence of students' school backgrounds on their English learning outcomes within Islamic settings. This gap is important to address because students from different educational backgrounds may approach language learning with varying levels of prior knowledge, motivation, and attitudes, which could significantly affect their success in acquiring English skills. Another area that requires further investigation is the interplay of environmental and psychological factors in language acquisition. These factors are crucial because the environment in which students learn, along with their psychological state, can greatly influence their ability to absorb and retain a second language. Moreover, there is a lack of empirical evidence regarding the effectiveness of integrated language learning environments in Islamic higher education contexts (Angraeni et al., 2024) ; (Nawaz et al., 2024). This is essential to explore because such environments, which blend linguistic, cultural, and contextual elements, could potentially offer more holistic approaches to language acquisition, contributing to better learning outcomes for students. Addressing these gaps in research is not only important for understanding language learning in Islamic

higher education but also vital for developing effective educational strategies that are tailored to the specific needs of these students.

This study aims to address these gaps by examining the interplay between school background, motivation, and environmental factors in shaping English language learning outcomes in Islamic higher education. By integrating institutional and psychological factors in a multilingual context, the study contributes both to theory and practice. Theoretically, it extends second language acquisition models by incorporating insights from Islamic higher education contexts that are often overlooked in existing research. Practically, the study provides evidence-based recommendations for creating culturally sensitive language learning environments that enhance student motivation. The research also holds policy implications, particularly for developing language programs and resource allocation in Islamic higher education institutions.

The study hypothesizes that the school background and language environment directly affect learning motivation, which in turn has both direct and indirect effects on English learning outcomes. Furthermore, it argues that motivation plays a crucial mediating role in the relationship between language environment, school background, and language proficiency.

METHOD

Research Design

This study employed a quantitative methodology using path analysis to examine the direct and indirect effects of school background (X_1), language environment (X_2), and learning motivation (X_3) as an intervening variable on English learning outcomes (Y) as the dependent variable. This design is particularly suitable for educational studies where ethical and practical constraints prevent direct manipulation of variables, making it an effective approach for understanding relationships between students' backgrounds and their learning outcomes (Fraenkel et al., 2019).

Path analysis, a specialized form of multiple regression analysis, was utilized to test the hypothesized relationships between

independent, intervening, and dependent variables. This technique helps in identifying causal pathways and estimating the magnitude of direct and indirect effects (Hair et al., 2019). Figure 1 is a conceptual model illustrating the relationships analyzed in this study.

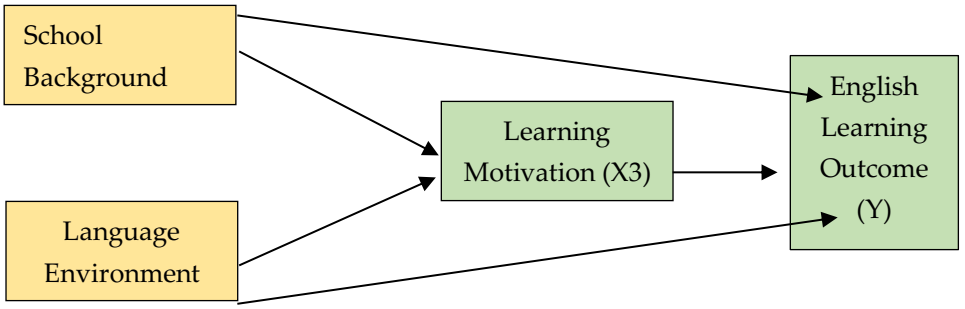


Figure 1. *A conceptual model illustrating the relationships analyzed in this study*

Participants

The target population for this study consisted of 155 undergraduate students enrolled in the English Education Department at State Islamic Institution of Sultan Amai Gorontalo during the 2023/2024 academic year. Inclusion criteria required participants to be fully enrolled as full-time students and actively participating in English courses. Exchange students and part-time students were excluded from the study to maintain consistency in the academic context and experiences of the participants. A sample of 77 students, representing 48.4% of the total population, was selected using random sampling. To determine the sample size, a power analysis was conducted using G*Power 3.1 software, which achieved a power level of 0.85 at a significance level of $\alpha = 0.05$. This sampling procedure made it possible to include a demographically balanced group of participants, reflecting variations in language environment, previous school background and learning motivation. Such diversity facilitated a comprehensive exploration of how school background, language environment and motivation influenced their English learning outcomes.

Table 1.
Demographic Profile

Characteristics		F	%
Department	English	77	100
Gender	Male	17	22.08
	Female	60	77.92
Class Participation	Active	77	100
Age	Inactive	0	0
	18-21	77	100

Research Instruments

This study used several instruments to measure the variables studied, namely English learning outcomes (Y), school background (X1), language environment (X2), and learning motivation (X3). The instruments used consisted of objective tests to measure learning outcomes and questionnaires to measure other variables.

English Learning Outcomes (Y)

English learning outcomes in this context are defined as the level of reading competence achieved by students, as measured through an objective test designed to assess reading comprehension. The test consists of 20 questions, which include three reading texts with five comprehension questions each, along with five additional questions that address general aspects of reading comprehension.

The instrument used for this study includes a variety of reading texts, each designed to assess different aspects of reading comprehension. The first text, titled *The Communicative Approach in Language Learning*, consists of five questions that aim to evaluate students' understanding of this specific language teaching methodology, focusing on its principles and application in educational settings. The second text, *Bali: A Global Tourism Destination*, also features five questions, which assess students' ability to comprehend information about Bali's significance in global tourism, touching on topics such as cultural, economic, and social impacts. The third text, *The Importance of 21st Century Skills in Education*, presents another five items designed to explore students' grasp of modern educational needs, particularly the skills required for success in the rapidly

evolving 21st-century landscape. Finally, there is a set of five general reading comprehension questions that are more broadly focused on testing students' ability to understand and analyze reading materials, ensuring they have a solid foundation in general reading skills. Each section is carefully crafted to cover a distinct thematic area, allowing for a comprehensive evaluation of students' reading comprehension abilities across different contexts.

School Background Questionnaire (X1)

The concept of school background refers to the characteristics of the school where students learned English prior to entering college. It is operationally defined as the students' perceptions and responses to various aspects of their previous school environment that influenced their English learning experience. This includes factors such as the teaching methods used, the number of class hours dedicated to English instruction, and the type of school they attended. The questionnaire aims to capture a comprehensive understanding of how the school environment impacts students' English learning outcomes. In assessing this, a questionnaire has been developed with 15 statement items, designed to measure these three key indicators, as outlined in Table 2. Responses were measured using a five-point Likert scale ranging from *strongly disagree* (1) to *strongly agree* (5).

Table 2.
Item Distribution of School Background Questionnaire

Indicators	N Item
Type of School	5
Number of English Lesson Hours	5
Learning Methods	5
Total	15

Language Environment Scale (X2)

The concept of language environment refers to the conditions that allow learners to receive language input through various forms of interaction, including academic, social, and digital contexts. Operationally, language environment is assessed based on students' perceptions of their exposure to English in these three key areas. This

instrument aims to provide insights into how different aspects of the language environment contribute to students' English learning. To empirically capture this construct, a self-report questionnaire was developed comprising 25 statement items measured using a five-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). The academic environment indicator (7 items) assesses exposure to English through classroom instruction, learning materials, and academic discourse. The social environment indicator (6 items) examines informal interactions with peers, lecturers, and the wider community, representing socially mediated language use as emphasized in Sociocultural Theory. Meanwhile, the digital environment indicator (7 items) measures learners' engagement with English through online media, social networks, learning applications, and digital communication, capturing the role of technology-enhanced input and interaction as conceptualized in Digital SLA.

Table 3.
Item Distribution of Language Environment Scale

Indicators	N Item
Exposure to English in an academic environment	7
Exposure to English in a social environment	6
Exposure to English in a digital environment	7
Total	25

Di Learning Motivation Inventory (X3)

Learning motivation is an internal drive that compels students to engage in their studies with dedication and focus, aiming to achieve optimal English learning outcomes. Operationally, learning motivation is assessed by observing the actions and activities students consistently perform with high intensity, demonstrating their commitment to reaching the desired learning results. This approach helps measure how motivated students are to put in the effort necessary for their academic success in English.

The instrument consists of 25 closed-ended statement items, developed based on Thornburg's motivation framework, which conceptualizes motivation as a multidimensional construct comprising

five key aspects: drive, direction, intensity of action, selectivity, and satisfaction. Each indicator is equally represented by five items to ensure balanced construct coverage. Responses are measured using a a five-point Likert-type scale ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5), allowing students to indicate their level of agreement with each statement.

Table 5.
Item Distribution

Indicators	N Item
Drive	5
Direction	5
Intensity of action	5
Selectivity	5
Satisfaction	5
Total	25

Data Collection

There were two stages of data collection. In the first stage, the questionnaire was tested on 35 non-sample students. Then, the instrument was revised based on the test results. The second stage was to select the sample using random sampling technique. Create a WhatsApp group for all the selected samples. Administering the questionnaire to all samples through the Google Form application in three days. The first day, school background and learning motivation questionnaire. The second day, language environment questionnaire. Finally, the researcher administered the reading comprehension test to all samples. The completion time of the questionnaire and test was 45 minutes. Quality control measures in this study included standardized testing conditions across all sessions, double data entry to ensure accuracy, regular consistency checks during data collection, and secure data storage using encrypted files. From an ethical perspective, this study has obtained institutional approval from the Ethics Committee of IAIN Sultan Amai Gorontalo. The informed consent process was conducted through written consent in Indonesian, with an explanation of the participant's right to withdraw and assurance of confidentiality. Data protection is guaranteed by a participant identification system

through codes, secure storage of physical documents, and password-protected digital files.

WhatsApp and Google Form were chosen for data collection due to their practicality and efficiency. WhatsApp was used for communication, as it is widely accessible and familiar to participants, enabling easy coordination, distribution of instructions, and quick clarification. Creating a WhatsApp group ensured streamlined communication and effective participant management. Google Form was selected for administering the questionnaires and reading comprehension test because it provides a structured format, ensures accurate data entry, and simplifies the process with real-time data collection and automated analysis. Together, these platforms offered a user-friendly, secure, and efficient method for gathering and managing data while adhering to ethical standards, including participant confidentiality and informed consent.

Data Analysis

The data collected in this study were analyzed quantitatively using both descriptive and inferential statistical techniques. The descriptive analysis was conducted to calculate the mean, median, mode, and standard deviation of the dependent variable, which is the students' English learning outcomes (Y). The inferential analysis was conducted using path analysis and multiple regression analysis with two independent variables and one dependent variable. All statistical analyses were carried out using SPSS version 22 for Windows.

The data analysis process consisted of three main stages: data description, assumption testing, and hypothesis testing. First, in the data description stage, the study examined four variables: three independent variables. (1) school background, (2) language environment, and (3) learning motivation and one dependent variable, students' English learning outcomes at IAIN Sultan Amai Gorontalo for the 2023/2024 academic year. The descriptive analysis utilized frequency distribution tables and class intervals to organize the data effectively.

Second, in the assumption testing stage, the study applied several statistical tests to ensure the data met the assumptions for further analysis. The normality test was conducted using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test with a significance level of 5% ($\alpha = 0.05$), where the null hypothesis (H_0) states that the data follow a normal distribution. The homogeneity test was performed using Glejser's test to determine whether the residuals had equal variance. The multicollinearity test was carried out by examining the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF), with a threshold of less than 10 indicating no significant collinearity between independent variables. Lastly, the autocorrelation test was conducted using the Durbin-Watson statistic to assess whether there was serial correlation in the residuals.

In the hypothesis testing stage, the study tested the path coefficients of two models: (1) the effect of school background (X_1) and language environment (X_2) on learning motivation (X_3), and (2) the effect of X_1, X_2, and X_3 on English learning outcomes (Y). The hypotheses tested are as follows.

a. H_0: $p_{31} \leq 0$ vs. H_1: $p_{31} > 0$ – This tests the effect of school background (X_1) on learning motivation (X_3). The null hypothesis suggests no significant effect, while the alternative hypothesis posits a positive influence of school background on learning motivation.
b. H_0: $p_{21} \leq 0$ vs. H_1: $p_{21} > 0$ – This examines the effect of the language environment (X_2) on learning motivation (X_3). The null hypothesis suggests no significant effect, while the alternative posits a positive influence of the language environment on motivation.
c. H_0: $p_{32} \leq 0$ vs. H_1: $p_{32} > 0$ – This tests the effect of language environment (X_2) on English learning outcomes (Y) through learning motivation (X_3). The null hypothesis implies no direct or indirect effect, while the alternative suggests a significant positive influence.
d. H_0: $\rho_{v.12} \leq 0$ vs. H_1: $\rho_{v.12} > 0$ – This examines the correlation between school background (X_1) and language environment (X_2) in influencing learning motivation (X_3). The null hypothesis suggests no significant correlation, while the alternative indicates a positive relationship between X_1 and X_2.

These analyses aimed to examine the direct and indirect effects of independent variables on students' learning outcomes. The significance of each hypothesis was determined based on p-values, with a significance level set at 5% ($\alpha = 0.05$).

FINDINGS

In this study, we tested the path coefficients of two models: (1) the effect of school background (X_1) and language environment (X_2) on learning motivation (X_3), and (2) the effect of X_1, X_2, and X_3 on English learning outcomes (Y).

Model 1: The effect of school background and language environment on learning motivation

The result of the effect of school background and language environment on learning motivation illustrated in Figure 2.

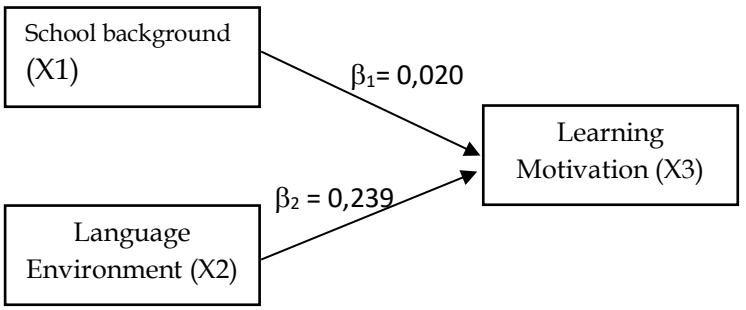


Figure 2. *The effect of X1 and X2 on X3 (model 1)*

Furthermore, the results of the regression analysis are illustrated in Table 6.

Table 6.
Coefficients Value

Model	Unstandardized Coefficient		Standardized Coefficient	t	Sig
	B	Std Error	Beta		
(Constant)	60.184	18.956		3.175	002
School Background	.069	.386	.020	.180	.857
Language Environment	.302	.143	.239	2.109	.038

Based on Table 6, it is known that the t-test value for the school background variable (X1) is 0. 180 with a p-value = 0.857. This p-value result shows a value greater than the significance level (α) which is 5%. This means that it fails to reject H0 or accept H0 and it can be concluded that school background has no effect on learning motivation. However, this result is inversely proportional to the language environment variable, where the p-value = 0.038 which shows a value less than α (5%). Thus, the test results show that language environment has a significant effect on learning motivation.

The amount of influence of school background variables (X1) and language environment (X2) on learning motivation (X3) can be seen from the R-Square value or the coefficient of determination. It is known that the R-Square value = 0.059, which means that the contribution of the influence of school background variables (X1) and language environment (X2) on learning motivation (X3) is 5.9% for the value of $e_1 = \sqrt{1-0,059} = 0,970$

Based on the results of statistical tests and data visualization and research findings that have been described, there are four trends that can be formulated: first, There is no significant effect of school background (X1) on learning motivation (X3). From the t-test results for the school background variable (X1) with a p-value of 0.857, which is greater than the 5% significance level (a = 0.05), it can be concluded that there is no significant influence between school background on learning motivation. This indicates that this variable does not contribute much in explaining the variation of learning motivation in the sample studied. Second, the tendency of significant influence of

language environment (X2) on learning motivation (X3). In contrast, the t-test result for the language environment variable (X2) with a p-value of 0.038 shows a significant influence on learning motivation, as the p-value is smaller than a (5%). This indicates that language environment factors have a greater contribution to learning motivation than school background, and provides important evidence that external factors such as supportive language use can influence student learning outcomes.

Thirdly, the low R-Square (0.059) indicates the limited influence of the variables. The R-Square value of 0.059 indicates that only 5.9% of the variation in learning motivation can be explained by the two independent variables (school background and language environment). This means that there are other factors beyond these two variables that have a stronger influence on learning motivation, and these factors have not been identified in this study. This indicates that although there is a significant relationship, the influence explained by this model is limited. Finally, there is a positive and significant relationship between language environment and learning motivation. Given that the language environment shows a significant relationship with learning motivation, it can be inferred that students who are in a more supportive language environment, such as richer or more communicative language use, are likely to have higher learning motivation. This opens up opportunities to develop educational strategies that take into account language environment factors as a way to increase students' learning motivation.

Overall, the findings confirm the importance of language environment in supporting students' learning motivation, although its influence is still limited when only considered together with school background.

Model 2: The direct and indirect effects of school background and language environment on English learning outcomes

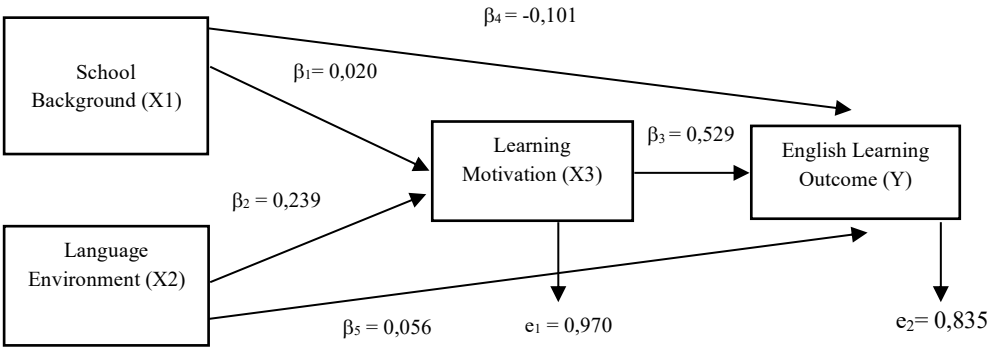


Figure 3. *The results of testing the path coefficients of the model 2 diagram (the effect of X1, X2 and X3 to Y)*

As shown in Figure 3, the direct effect of school background on learning outcomes is -0.101 while the indirect effect of school background through learning motivation on English learning outcomes is $\beta_1 \text{ x } \beta_4 = 0,020 \text{ x } (0,529) = 0,011$. From the calculation results, it is known that the direct effect is -0.101 and the indirect effect is 0.011. This means that the indirect effect is greater than the direct effect. It can be concluded that indirectly school background through learning motivation has a significant effect on English learning outcomes

Furthermore, the direct effect of language environment on learning outcomes is 0.056 while the indirect effect of language environment through learning motivation on English learning outcomes is 0.056. $\beta_2 \text{ x } \beta_5 = 0,302 \text{ x } (0,418) = 0,126$

From the calculation results, it is known that the direct effect is 0.056 and the indirect effect is 0.126. This means that the indirect effect is greater than the direct effect. It can be concluded that indirectly the language environment through learning motivation has a significant effect on English learning outcomes.

Based on the research findings, namely the direct and indirect effects of school background and language environment variables on English learning outcomes through learning motivation, there are four trends. The

four trends are; first, the negative and small direct effect of school background (X1) on English learning outcomes with a value of -0.101. This indicates that differences in school background, be it internal factors such as facilities or school type, do not have a major influence on English learning outcomes directly. Although there is a negative effect, this effect is quite small and insignificant in the context of learning outcomes.

Second, the tendency of the indirect effect of school background through learning motivation is positive and significant of 0.011. Although the direct effect is negative, the indirect effect through learning motivation is positive and greater. This shows that although school background does not directly affect learning outcomes, students' learning motivation influenced by school background can improve their English learning outcomes. Learning motivation becomes a significant intermediary, which explains that external factors such as school environment can affect learning outcomes through psychological aspects such as motivation.

Third, the tendency of positive and small direct effect of language environment (X2) on English learning outcomes is 0.056. This positive effect suggests that although the language environment has a smaller impact, an environment that supports language use (e.g., verbal interaction or exposure to language) can more or less contribute to students' English learning outcomes. However, this direct effect is still relatively small compared to the indirect effect. Fourth, the tendency of the indirect effect of language environment through learning motivation is greater and significant on English learning outcomes through learning motivation of 0.126. which is greater than the direct effect. This suggests that a supportive language environment indirectly affects English learning outcomes through increased student motivation. In other words, a language-rich environment, although the direct effect is small, can increase students' learning motivation which in turn has a positive impact on their learning outcomes.

Overall, although the direct effect of the variables is small, the findings underline the importance of learning motivation in improving English learning outcomes, especially through the influence of a supportive school and language environment.

Furthermore, the results of the path coefficients of the effects of X1, X2 and X3 on Y are shown in Table 7.

Table 7.
Coefficient Value

Model	Unstandardized Coefficient		Standardized Coefficient	t	Sig
	B	Std Error	Beta		
(Constant)	60.689	13.833		4.387	000
School Background	.270	.264	-.101	-1. 023	.310
Language Environment	.055	.101	.056	549	.585
Learning Motivation	.418	.080	.529	5.251	-000

a. Dependent Variable: English Learning Outcome

Based on Table 7, it is known that the t-test value for the school background variable (X1) is -1.023 with a p-value = 0.310. This p-value result shows a value of more than the significance level (α) which is 0.05%. This means that it fails to reject Ho or accept Ho and it can be concluded that school background has no effect on English learning outcomes. The same result is also obtained on the language environment variable, where the p-value = 0.585 which shows a value that is more than α (5%). However, this result is inversely proportional to the learning motivation variable (X3), where the p-value = 0.000 which shows a value less than α (5%) or indicates that learning motivation affects English learning outcomes. Thus, the test results show that background and environment do not have a significant effect on learning outcomes, while learning motivation has a significant effect on English learning outcomes.

The influence of school background variables (X1), language environment (X2) and learning motivation (X3) on learning outcomes can be seen from the R-Square value or the coefficient of determination. It is known that the value of R-Square = 0.302, which means that the contribution of the influence of school background variables (X1), language environment (X2) and learning motivation (X3) on English learning outcomes is 30.2%.

Overall, learning motivation was the most significant factor in influencing English learning outcomes, while school background and language environment were not shown to have a significant influence. These findings confirm the importance of internal factors, such as student motivation, in academic achievement, particularly in English

subjects. Therefore, increasing learning motivation can be an effective strategy to improve students' English learning outcomes.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study highlight several key insights into the role of motivation in English language learning in Islamic higher education. The study confirms that motivation plays a significant role in shaping English learning outcomes, with a strong direct effect ($\beta = 0.529$, $p < 0.05$), accounting for 27.98% of the variance in language learning success. This aligns with established motivational frameworks such as Dörnyei's L2 Motivational Self System and Gardner's socio-educational model. Additionally, the study demonstrates that motivation acts as a crucial mediator between environmental factors (language environment) and learning outcomes. The study also found that prior educational background (school background) has a minimal direct effect ($\beta = -0.101$) on English learning outcomes, suggesting the importance of motivation and environment in the transition to higher education settings.

The results of the study confirm the hypothesis that motivation significantly influences English language learning outcomes in Islamic higher education contexts, with motivation accounting for a substantial portion of the variance (27.98%). This supports the existing body of literature which emphasizes the central role of motivation in language acquisition, particularly within culturally and linguistically challenging environments (Mercer & Dörnyei, 2020; Ryan & Deci, 2017). Moreover, the study highlights the indirect effect of environmental factors, especially the language environment, on learning outcomes through motivation. This finding aligns with the work of Wigfield et al. (2021), who argue that motivation mediates the relationship between environmental factors and learning outcomes in educational contexts. Additionally, the study challenges the assumption that prior educational experiences directly influence current learning outcomes, as evidenced by the negative direct effect of school background. This suggests that motivational factors play a more significant role in students' transitions to higher education settings,

supporting the claims made by Schladitz et al. (2024) regarding the importance of motivation in overcoming challenges during the transition to university.

The results of this study are particularly relevant in the context of Islamic higher education, where learners encounter distinct cultural, religious, and linguistic challenges. The findings suggest that motivation operates differently in this context compared to traditional educational settings, where prior school background and language environment tend to exert more direct influence (Burns et al., 2020). Specifically, the study highlights the "transitional reset effect," where prior educational experiences, such as school background, lose their significance, and the impact of motivation and the language environment becomes more pronounced as students transition to specialized higher education institutions (Zhou et al., 2024). This observation is particularly pertinent in the context of Islamic higher education, where language learning is shaped not only by academic but also by religious factors (QS. Al-Hujarat:13), creating a unique dynamic for students' language acquisition and motivation (Wahyuni & Bhattacharya, 2021).

The findings of this study align with prior research highlighting the pivotal role of motivation in language learning. Zhang and Papi (2021) and Abdullah et al. (2022) also demonstrate that motivation plays a significant role in predicting language learning success. In addition, Aguirre and Vasquez' (2023) meta-analysis further confirms the centrality of motivation as a crucial predictor of language learning outcomes across diverse contexts. However, this study challenges traditional assumptions about the direct influence of school background on language learning outcomes. The negative direct effect of school background observed in this research contrasts with previous findings, suggesting that prior educational experiences may not have as profound an impact in Islamic higher education contexts. This underscores the necessity of considering the specific institutional and cultural settings when applying general theories of language acquisition (Sundqvist, 2024).

Additionally, the study expands on Krashen's Input Hypothesis (2003) by demonstrating that the impact of environmental factors on language learning is mainly mediated through motivational pathways, rather than through direct linguistic input. This finding is consistent with the ecological perspective on language learning proposed by van Lier, (2004), which underscores the role of motivational factors in influencing language acquisition outcomes. Recent studies, support this view by emphasizing that motivation is a key mediator in language learning processes, particularly in complex educational environments (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2021; Mercer & Dörnyei, 2020). This insight highlights the dynamic interaction between environmental and motivational factors, suggesting that enhancing motivation can significantly boost language learning, even in the absence of direct language input from the environment.

Based on the study's findings, several recommendations are proposed to improve English language learning in Islamic higher education institutions: First, Curriculum Design. Educational institutions should focus on integrating motivational strategies within their curricula. This includes incorporating task-based learning activities that connect English with Islamic studies and project-based assignments that emphasize real-world applications. Second, Learning Environment. Institutions should design environments that support and enhance student motivation. This could include creating designated English-speaking zones, language laboratories, and bilingual communication systems that reflect both academic and Islamic contexts. Technological platforms should be incorporated to provide continuous engagement with the language beyond the classroom. Third, Teacher Training. Teachers should be provided with professional development programs focused on motivational strategies. This will enable them to better foster motivation within students and enhance the learning environment.

Fourth, Policy and Resource Allocation. At the policy level, institutions should revise curriculum structures to emphasize motivational elements, and allocate resources to support motivation-enhancing programs and language learning technologies. Fifth, Long-

Term Planning. The implementation of these recommendations should follow a phased approach. Short-term initiatives can include basic motivational strategies and essential language spaces, while medium-term goals should focus on developing comprehensive programs and integrating systems. Long-term sustainability can be achieved through continuous improvement cycles and regular evaluation systems. Sixth, Monitoring and Evaluation. Institutions should establish clear metrics to track language proficiency, motivation levels, and student participation rates. Regular assessments and feedback mechanisms should be in place to ensure the effectiveness of these programs and to make data-driven decisions for improvements.

In conclusion, this study contributes to the field by emphasizing the central role of motivation in language learning outcomes and suggests practical steps to enhance language education in Islamic higher education settings.

CONCLUSION

This study highlights the central role of motivation in language learning within Islamic higher education, demonstrating its significant mediating effect on learning outcomes. While both school background and language environment influence achievement, their effects are indirect, mainly operating through motivation. The findings also introduce the concept of a "transitional reset effect," suggesting that prior educational experiences may have less impact in new academic settings, challenging traditional assumptions about the importance of previous schooling.

Practically, the research underscores the need for Islamic higher education institutions to prioritize motivation and create supportive learning environments. Recommendations include designing motivation-driven curricula, adopting culturally responsive teaching methods, and focusing on managing transitions for students. Although the study's sample and scope are limited, it provides valuable insights and sets the stage for future research to explore further the complex interactions between motivation, environment, and educational background in language learning.

DECLARATION OF AI AND AI-ASSISTED TECHNOLOGIES

During the preparation of this work, the author used DeepL (V.24.4.3) to optimize language and readability. In addition, the author also used AI to improve the coherence of the writing. The author has reviewed and edited the content as needed and takes full responsibility for the content of the publication after the use of this tool/service.

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