Reading Motivations and Its Relationship with The Readability of Arabic Reference Books at The Malaysian Institute of Teacher Education

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ABSTRACT:

Reading motivation is usually associated with an understanding of the reading material being read. Readability, on the other hand, involves the level of difficulty or ease of a reading material according to the suitability of the reader. As Arabic is included in the category of foreign languages in the context of language learning in Malaysia, issues related to the readability of Arabic reference books are often highlighted. This research intended to identify the level of reading motivation among trainee teachers of the Institute of Teacher Education (IPG) and its relationship with the readability of Arabic reference books. This quantitative study in the form of a survey adopted cloze tests and questionnaires adapted from *Reading Motivation for Foreign Language Scale-Setsuko Mori* to determine the level of reading motivation of trainee teachers. The study sample was a sum of 302 trainee teachers in the field of Arabic Language and Islamic Education who are studying at the Institute of Campus Teacher Education nationwide. Descriptive and inferential analysis was used to analyse the study data. The conclusions of the study confirmed that the level of reading motivation of trainee teachers was at a moderate level. Furthermore, the level of readability of trainee teachers was disappointing. The findings also recorded that there was a moderate positive relationship between the level of reading motivation and the readability of Arabic reference books (r = 0.324; p <0.05). Based on the outcomes of the study, it could be concluded that there was a moderate positive relationship between reading motivation and readability of Arabic books. This study implied that several strategies must be administered to boost the motivation to read Arabic among trainee teachers to increase the level of readability of Arabic books.

INTRODUCTION

Training students to interact productively with reading materials is one of the principal intentions of learning. It is because the capacity to read and understand the text read allows one to participate in the current culture, politics and economy (Organization for Economic Co-Operation and Development 2003). In earlier studies linked to reading comprehension, reading motivation is a quintessential factor contributing to the positive development of reading skills (Guthrie et al. 1999; Petscher 2010). A literature review discovered that students' reading motivation holds the potential to reflect reading behaviour and drive the development of their reading skills (Akbari et al. 2019). Besides, there are also studies confirming that there is a relationship between reading motivation, reading behaviour and reading skills

(Schaffner et al. 2016). Reading activities also include reading material or text being read. Useful reading material is reading material that owns the right level of readability and is suitable for use by readers according to their level. Furthermore, the valuable measurement of reading material also includes the quality of the material that is straightforward to understand and easy to read by the target group (Solnyshkina et al. 2020; Maluleke et al., 2019; David & Grobler, 2019; Basilgan & Akman, 2019). It is incredibly essential, including reading materials used by students at the primary level as well as students at the tertiary level.

Various factors affect the level of readability. Scholars concentrate on two chief factors, particularly the reader factor and the reading text factor. There are even scholars who

address aspects of environmental factors as one of the factors that contribute to the readability of reading material. Reader factors involve several other subfactors, including motivation, interest, knowledge of the reader, and the background of the reader (Harrison 1980). In comparison, the subfactors of the text that are often studied by researchers are words, sentences and content (Kamarulzaman 2010; Zulazhan 2012; Ahmad Sabri 2013).

DEFINITION AND DIMENSION OF READING MOTIVATION

Motivation is regularly associated with an individual's belief in what he or she is doing. Graham & Weiner (1996) defined motivation as human belief in their abilities and think positively of that belief. Also, reading owns a comprehensive meaning and changes according to the context and involves complex cognitive processes. Some scholars defined reading as a process of interpreting meaning accurately according to the actual meaning required involving the accuracy of identifying symbols, letters and illustrations as well as understanding them (Borst et al. 2016).

Reading motivation, on the other hand, is the intensive variety and efforts made by readers to be interested and pay attention to reading activities (Ellen Schaffner et al. 2013). Besides, reading motivation also refers to reading habits consistently resulting from the seriousness and effort of reading (Ellen Schaffner & Schiefele 2016). Intensive and such activities are done either by the inner will of the reader or by external stimuli.

In general, reading motivation is divided into two dimensions, namely intrinsic motivation and extrinsic motivation. However, the development of research related to reading motivation has further enhanced research into several other dimensions including (1) dimension of reader's curiosity, (2) dimension of reading engagement, (3) dimension of reading proficiency, (4) dimension of reading challenge, and (5)

dimension of social recognition (Wigfield & Guthrie 1995; Schaffner & Schiefele 2016).

In addition, reading motivation studies have also been developed into reading motivation studies in the context of second and foreign languages. Dimensions examined in this type of study include (1) the intrinsic value of reading, (2) the utility's extrinsic value of reading, (3) the importance of reading, and (4) reading proficiency (Mori 2002). Therefore, research on reading motivation continues to grow according to current developments.

READABILITY DEFINITION

There are various definitions have been put forward by scholars to give the true meaning of the term readability or '*maqruiyyah /inqiraiyyah*' in Arabic term. These definitions are related to each other. Nevertheless, the concept of readability discussed refers to three elements, namely specific written material, a specific group of readers and its relationship with the reader's level of understanding of the material.

Dale and Chall (1948) maintained that readability is a combination of elements in reading material that influences the comprehension of a group of readers. The measure of success in understanding the reading material is that the desired group of readers can easily understand the reading material read. This view was accepted by McLaughlin (1969), who also defined readability as to the extent to which the text used could be understood and enjoyable by a given group of texts.

In addition, Marohaini (1999) established readability as a concept that refers to the degree of difficulty or ease of reading material. At the same time, Pikulski (2002) defined readability as a level of ease of a text that can be understood by a group of readers with a specific purpose. DuBay (2007), on the other hand, presented the measure of readability is a thing that makes a text easier to read and understand than other texts.

The definition of readability in the context of Arabic language studies has also evolved.

Scholars who studied Arabic readability agreed to accept the definitions that had been put forward by most western scholars. Tuaymah (1985) viewed readability as a measure of the ease of reading a text in transferring meaning to the reader. Furthermore, Zulazhan (2012) described readability as the level of reading material, whether difficult or easy, that can affect the reader's comprehension. Therefore, the definition of readability for the study of readability in Arabic is also in line with the definitions that were suggested by other languages.

READING MOTIVATION AND BOOK READING ABILITY

Studies related to the relationship between motivation and reading comprehension was long being conducted by scholars. The motivation study was further developed by focusing on reading motivation specifically (Mori 2002). Even Mori (2002) attempted to explore reading motivation variables in the context of second and foreign languages in more depth. Most researchers discovered a positive relationship between motivation and reading comprehension (Kamarulzaman, 2011; Namaziandost et al. 2019). The findings also reinforce the view of Irwin (1991), who believed that motivation and other reader factor elements help each other to drive the reader's understanding. Therefore, studies related to reading motivation are essential to track its relationship with aspects of understanding of reading material.

Moreover, studies related to the level of readability of Arabic reading materials have also begun to attract the interest of many researchers (Zamri et al. 2013). Research in this field is vital because readability is one of the factors that affect reading skills (Dahlia & Wray 2014). A review of the literature found that the study identifying the level of readability of Arabic language books in Malaysia has begun to attract researchers as early as 2009 until today such as the study of Kamarulzaman et al. (2009; 2010; 2011; 2013; 2017; 2018), Zulazhan (2012; 2017), Zamri et al. (2012; 2014), Noorazi (2015), Maimun Aqsha Lubis and Aisyah (2016) as well as other researchers. Most studies have focused on the level of readability of Arabic textbooks, especially at the secondary school level. Therefore, a study on the readability of Arabic books at the tertiary level is essential as an extension of the secondary school level study. Additionally, research related to the level of readability and its relationship to other factors is needed.

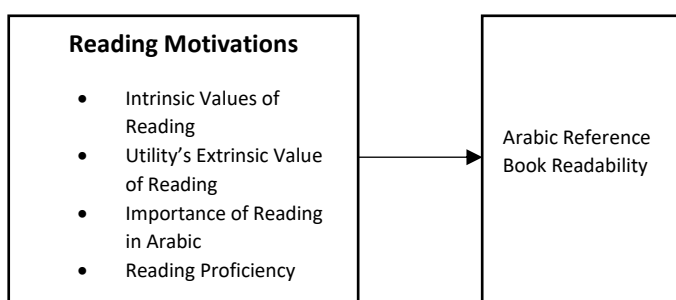Based on the literature review, the study model used is shown in Figure 1.

FIGURE 1: Study Model

METHODOLOGY

This research was a quantitative study using survey design that proposed to measure the level of reading motivation among trainee teachers of the Institute of Teacher Education and its relationship with the readability of Arabic reference books. The types of surveys applied were cross-sectional surveys and used questionnaires and cloze tests as research instruments to obtain data (Creswell (2009).

Selection of survey methods was fit for studies, including the collection of information on samples in the population. Also, this method is capable of obtaining much-needed data at one time and is easy to operate (Kerlinger 1973).

POPULATION AND SAMPLE

The population of this study was the trainee teachers in the field of Arabic Language and Islamic Education at the Malaysian Institute of Teacher Education throughout Malaysia, with 1309 people. Based on the sample size determination table of Krejcie Morgan (1970), a total of 302 trainee teachers were selected as the study sample. Three types of probability sampling procedures were used, namely strata random proportions at the zone and state levels, simple random sampling at the campus selection stage and systematic random for the selection of respondents on campus. Based on Table 1, a total of 119 (39.4%) were male respondents, and 183 (60.6%) were female.

TABLE 1. Profile of study respondents

Category	Group	Frequency	Percentage	Total
Gender	Male	119	39.4	
	Female	183	60.6	
		302	100	302

INSTRUMENTS

This investigation employed two instruments, particularly the questionnaire and the cloze test. The questionnaire used was the *Motivation to Read in A Foreign Language Questionnaire* (MRFLQ) developed by Setsuko Mori (2002). MRFLQ was adopted to identify the level of motivation to read a foreign language in general. However, this questionnaire was modified according to the needs of the study of Arabic as a foreign language at the tertiary level. The MRFLQ had 23 items with a 5 point Likert scale to be answered by trainee teachers.

MRFLQ was translated into the Malay language using the translation as proposed by Brislin (1970). After the process was carried out, the validity of the face and the validity of the content were done by several Arabic language education and educational psychology experts who were appointed. The questionnaire was improved on the recommendation of an expert panel. A pilot study was conducted to ensure the reliability and validity of the measurements in the study. According to Fraenkel & Wallen (2013), a pilot study was conducted as an attempt to the actual test to identify the weaknesses of the instrument. In this regard, a total of 35 trainee teachers were selected to answer the pilot questionnaire. The value of Cronbach Alpha coefficient obtained is 0.910. Values above 0.80 have the right internal consistency and stable items to use (Creswell 2012).

While the cloze test instrument of this study was built based on *Gestalt Information Processing Theory* (Solso et al. 2005), it is one of the techniques to measure the level of readability of reading material. This test was performed by dropping words on a certain number in a sentence consistently (Bormuth 1968). This study omitted every seventh word in the sentence. For that purpose, a total of three sets of tests were developed from three books selected as the unit of analysis namely books (1) *Al-Marja' fi Manāhij Ta'lim al-lughah al-'Arabiah li al-Natiqīn bi Lughātin Ukhra,* (2) *Tadris al- Lughah al-'Arabiah Waqfan li Ahdasi al-Tarāiq al-Tarbawiah* and (3) *Turuq al-Tadris al-Lughah al-'Arabiah.* This study used multiple choice answers, and the average test marks would be matched to Rye's (1982) readability level table to determine its readability level.

A process to ensure the validity and reliability of the cloze test have was carried out. Four experts in the field of Arabic linguistics were appointed to evaluate the tests given. The S-CVI test value was 0.92, and this indicated that the cloze test set had excellent content validity. In terms of the reliability of the clove test, this study determined the value of the Facility Index (Facility Index, F) and the Discrimination Index (D) first before looking at the test reliability value using the formula Kuder-Richardson 21 (K-R21) (Macintosh and Morrisson 1969). The overall Kuder-Richardson 21 (K-R21) reliability value was 0.713 (set of clog test 1 = 0.734, clog test 2 = 0.721 and clog test 3 = 0.685). Reliability values above 0.6 are often used in studies as the basis for determining the level of reliability (Mohd. Majid 1993). Hence, the reliability of the MRFLQ questionnaire and the cloze test set was high and deserved to be applied to the actual study.

DATA ANALYSIS METHODS

The data obtained from the study instruments were analysed using the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS version 25.0). Two types of analysis were used, specifically, descriptive analysis and inference. The descriptive analysis used mean values and the standard deviation to determine the level of reading motivation. It too used the mean value of marks matched to the readability table of Rye (1982) to determine the level of readability of Arabic reference books in the Institute of Teacher Education. As for the inference analysis, Pearson correlation was used to identify the relationship between Reading Motivation and Readability Level. This descriptive analysis for Reading motivation uses

five modified levels of mean score interpretation of Nunnally & Bernstein (1994) namely (1.00-1.80) was Very Low, (1.81-2.60) was Low, (2.61-3.40) Moderate level, (3.41- 4.20) was High, and the mean score (4.21-5.00) was Very High level. For the descriptive analysis of the level of readability, the researcher used the table of readability level of Rye (1982) which is Disappointment Level (score 0% -74%), Teaching Level (75% -89%) and Independent Level (90% - 100%).

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION
ARABIC READING MOTIVATION

Overall, the mean Arabic reading motivation for trainee teachers at IPG was 3.39, and the SP was 0.370. It indicated that the level of motivation to read Arabic for trainee teachers at IPG is at a moderate level. A comparison of the mean of the four subconstructs that form the motivation to read Arabic is shown in Table 2. Based on the table, it was found that one subconstruct was at a high level with a mean value of 3.80, which was subconstructs of the Importance of Reading in Arabic. At the same time, the other three subcontractors were at a moderate level with a mean value between 3.15 to 3.39. It illustrated that IPG trainee teachers had high reading motivation from the aspect of awareness of the importance of reading in Arabic and moderate reading motivation from three other aspects namely intrinsic values of reading, utility's extrinsic value of reading and reading proficiency. These verdicts confirmed that the level of reading motivation of trainee teachers in IPG was excellent and moderate but needed to be further improved.

TABLE 2: Mean score and standard deviation of reading motivation level of IPG trainee teachers based on subconstruct

Reading Motivations	Min	SP	Level
The Intrinsic Values of Reading	3.39	.403	Moderate
The Utility's Extrinsic Values of Reading	3.29	.411	Moderate
The Importance of Reading in Arabic	3.80	.649	High
Reading Competence	3.15	.592	Moderate

Total	3.39	.370	Moderate

This level of reading motivation driven by the awareness of the importance of reading in Arabic revealed that trainee teachers had a high awareness of the benefits they get through reading Arabic reading materials. The most dominant dimension of awareness related to these interests was that they could master various fields and disciplines of knowledge and examine various branches of information. As a result, trainee teachers would be able to provide quality and practical ideas based on various perspectives and perspectives.

As for the aspects of the intrinsic values of reading, the utility's extrinsic value of reading and reading proficiency was at a moderate level. At the same time, the level of reading motivation of trainee teachers as a whole was also moderate. This moderate level provided the impression that trainee teachers already had the motivation to read, but still not enough for them to remain motivated in reading the reference books used.

The conclusions of this study were comparable to the findings of Frijters et al. (2019), who found that adult women have moderate reading motivation. However, the findings of the study gave the impression that trainee teachers had the motivation to read but still need to be given attention and added value. It intended to ensure that this aspect can balance the contributing factors to other readability. Moreover, these findings supported the suggestion

of Mori (2002), who considered reading motivation to be an essential factor in the success of reading programs.

Furthermore, the findings of this study were not in line with the outcomes of studies motivating students and students on learning Arabic as a foreign language, especially in Malaysia. It was in accordance with the study of Kamarulzaman (2010), Mohd Hazli and Maimun Aqsha (2018) who found that students' motivation towards Arabic is high. Therefore, it could be assumed that students who had gone through the process of learning and learning (T&L) of Arabic as a highly motivated foreign language were not a guarantee for them to maintain that level of motivation to higher education. Other factors determine their motivation.

READABILITY OF ARABIC REFERENCE BOOK

The level of readability of Arabic reference books at IPG as a whole was disappointing. The books used as the analysis unit in this study consisted of three main reference books namely: (1) *Al-Marjac fi Manāhij Taclim al-lughah al-cArabiah li al-Natiqīn bi Lughātin Ukhra*, (2) *Tadris al-Lughah al-cArabiah Waqfan li Ahdasi al-Tarāiq al-Tarbawiah,* and (3) *Turuq al-Tadris al-Lughah al-cArabiah.* Table 3 shows Mean test scores and readability levels.

TABLE 3: Mean test marks and readability level

Matter	Mean Test Marks	Readability Level
Kloz Test 1 (Book 1)	52	Disappointing
Kloz Test 2 (Book 2)	51	Disappointing
Kloz Test 3 (Book 3)	42	Disappointing

Based on table 3, *Al-Marjac fi Manāhij Taclim al-lughah al-cArabiah li al-Natiqīn bi*

Lughātin Ukhra written by Rusydi Ahmad Tuaymah, cAli Ahmad Madkur and Iman Ahmad

Huraidi got the highest mean score compared to the other two books with a mean value of 52 per cent which is at the level of Disappointment. The book *Turuq al-Tadris al-Lughah al-ᶜArabiah* written by ᶜAli Ahmad Madkur was the lowest mean value of 42 per cent was also at the level of Disappointment. The book *Tadris al-Lughah al-ᶜArabiah Waqfan li Ahdasi al-Tarāiq al-Tarbawiah* compiled by ᶜAlawi Abdullah Tāhir recorded a mean score of 51 per cent. The mean score was also at the level of Disappointment. If the three mean scores for the tests were averaged, then the average value was 48.33 per cent. The value indicated that the readability level of the three books was at the Disappointment level.

This level indicated that the book is challenging for trainee teachers to understand. Marohaini (1999) is of the view that the level of frustration is due to the reader not being able to understand the content of the reading material. In fact, the characteristics of reading material at this stage reflect the trainee teacher's understanding of the reference book is weak, the reading speed of the book is slow and blocked, and many words found in the book need to be analysed to improve comprehension (Gillet et al. 2016). On the other hand, if viewed from the aspect of reading form, the books show that there was no suitable content from the books can be used as assignment material. In addition, reading the reference books is suitable for diagnostic purposes only, and reading is one's own choice and requires high interest.

The findings of this study were almost the same as the findings of other studies that study the level of readability of Arabic books in Malaysia. Among the studies that were conducted at the secondary school level is the study of Kamarulzaman (2010), Kamarulzaman et al. (2013, 2014), Maimon Aqsha et al. (2016), Youssif Alsalhin (2019) and Zulazhan (2012). Kamarulzaman's (2010) study on Form Four High-Level Arabic textbooks in Religious High School (SMKA) has shown that Ministry of Education (KPM)'s High-Level Arabic textbooks are at a disappointing level. Similarly, Zulazhan (2012) study in State Religious schools showed that the level of textbooks used as an analysis unit is also at the level of frustration. Similar findings were also obtained by Youssif Alsalhin (2019) who measured the level of readability of science textbooks for Libyan secondary school students in Malaysia. Therefore, the conclusions of this study are vital because it can present empirical information related to the actual position of the level of readability of Arabic reference books at the tertiary level in Malaysia.

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN READING MOTIVATION AND READABILITY

Pearson correlation test was used to examine the relationship between reading motivation and the level of readability of Arabic reference books in IPG. After all the pre-requirements for the Pearson correlation test were met, the test results found that there was a significant relationship between reading motivation and the level of readability of Arabic language reference books at the Malaysian Institute of Teacher Education (IPGM) with a value of r = 0.324 (p <0.05). The relationship strength was moderately positive. This simple positive relationship reflected the higher the motivation of trainee teachers to read, the higher the level of readability. It indicated that trainee teachers who had a high level of reading motivation would potentially be able to understand the contents of the Arabic reference books read and vice versa.

TABLE 4: Pearson Correlation Findings correlate reading motivation with readability levels

Relationship	Readability Level		Interpretation
	r	Sig.	
Reading	0.324	0.000	Moderate

Based on the literature review, the readability of reading material was closely related to the reader's understanding of the reading text. It also needed to be balanced with the target reader. Thus, the findings of this study supported the guidance of Dornyei (1994), who placed motivation as a determining factor in achievement for the second language. Since indicators of reading comprehension could be referred to the level of readability as one of the components of reading skills, then reading motivation had a positive relationship that helped to increase the level of readability of reading material especially in the context of a foreign or second language.

The conclusions of this correlation test also tried to explain further the Self-Determination Theory (SDT) developed by Edward and Ryan (1985). Among the principles given attention, in theory, was the need for individuals to feel that they have good abilities, feel appropriate and autonomous. Therefore, having the right reading motivation with a combination of internal and external elements was processed to understand the content of the material read. These findings have the potential to further explain the Self-Determination Theory (SDT) (Edward and Ryan 1985) in the context of Arabic as a foreign language.

Further, the findings of this test are in line with the findings of the study Dhanapala and Hirakawa (2016) conducted on 406 university students in Sri Lanka to examine the relationship of second language reading motivation (L2) with reading comprehension. These findings also supported the verdicts of Mohd Hazli and Maimun Aqsha Lubis (2018) who found that the intrinsic and extrinsic motivational elements were among the key elements to ensure that the teaching and learning (T&L) was carried out effectively. The conclusions of this study also complemented the explanation of the study of 192 students of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) in Iran by

Akbari et al. (2019) who found that reading motivation construct in learning a second or foreign language was more efficient in predicting reader reading achievement.

Nonetheless, there were also previous studies that are not in line with the findings of this correlation test such as the study of Takase (2007) conducted on 219 female secondary school students in Japan showed no positive relationship between first or mother tongue reading motivation (L1) with second language reading motivation (L2).

Based on the discussion, the findings of this study were notable because it could complete the clues related to the elements of reading motivation in helping to understand the reading material and increase the potential of reading material to be easier to understand.

IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY

As a result of the discussion of the findings of the study, some important points could be presented in this section. The level of reading motivation of trainee teachers was moderate, and the level of readability of Arabic reference books in IPG was at a disappointing level. In this regard, these findings hold vital implications for some parties, whether the trainee teachers or the institution that provided teacher training to them, namely IPG. The findings of this study could guide to other institutions of higher learning, such as public and private universities.

In the context of the level of reading motivation of trainee teachers, the moderate level was a level that is not enough for trainee teachers to have. Therefore, trainee teachers needed to increase their reading motivation to a better level. The elements that need to be improved mainly were the elements of intrinsic values of reading, utility's extrinsic value of reading and reading proficiency. These elements of internal motivation and intrinsic value of reading will have a more

positive effect on the level of reading motivation (Hosseini & Eshkevari 2019). The same situation applied to the utility's extrinsic value of reading and reading proficiency. Therefore, trainee teachers themselves needed to provide opportunities for themselves with a positive environment in order to be more motivated in reading.

Moreover, teachers or lecturers also needed to be supportive agents so that the motivation to read trainee teachers could be improved. Various initiatives, especially from the aspect of utility's extrinsic value of reading could be practised such as recognition and appreciation to the reading achievement of trainee teachers so that their reading motivation could be further enhanced. This initiative was in line with the findings of a study by Mohd Hazli and Maimun Aqsha Lubis (2018) who found that form four students in religious secondary schools in Terengganu are more likely to be more motivated by focusing on getting better grades and recognition as an incentive to read in Arab.

In terms of the level of readability, the level of readability was disappointing to give an unbalanced picture between the need for reading material and the reading ability of trainee teachers. Therefore, trainee teachers needed to increase their level of readability so that the goals of reading could be achieved. For that purpose, the necessary components of reading comprehension needed to be improved by trainee teachers.

Additionally, the institution responsible for the selection of reference books should select books that suit the reading ability of trainee teachers. Among the alternatives that could be suggested is to use reference books that are easier for readers to understand or even by lowering the index of difficulty of reference books. This step was following the recommendations of Ahmad Sabri (2017). In the context of the Arabic language in Malaysia, syllabus drafters could use the Abdul Rahman Vocabulary List (1994) and updated in 2012 as a guide to the selection of more comfortable vocabulary usage.

The implication of the study concerning the positive relationship between reading motivation and readability was that the findings of this study could be further expanded to identify the influence of reading motivation to categorise factors from the aspect of reader factors. With the findings of such a strong influence, the researchers would be able to assume the factors that make the reader the most contributing to the level of readability of Arabic books. Therefore, the attempt to construct an Arabic readability formula as a foreign language would be more comprehensive.

Furthermore, the findings of this study own implications for theories and models that are often used in the study of reading skills such as Rumelhart Interactive Reading Model (1977), and Dahlia Reading Skill Factor Elements (2011). It is because the elements found in reading motivation hold the potential to affect the readability of reading material. Therefore, these elements deserve attention.

CONCLUSION

This study was administered to examine in-depth related to the reading motivation of trainee teachers in IPG and its relationship with the level of readability of Arabic reference books used. Ergo, the conclusion that could be made was that trainee teachers had the motivation to read, but the motivation needed to be further enhanced. Additionally, the level of readability of Arabic language reference books at IPG was difficult. Furthermore, there was a moderate positive relationship between reading motivation and readability levels. Thus, the two aspects studied interacted with each other. This research also explained that it was essential for those involved in the T&L process to take appropriate action so that the quality of learning Arabic at the tertiary level can be further enhanced.

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