



The Implementation of English Fun Day Program to Motivate Islamic Senior High School Students to Learn English

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Article Info	Abstract
Received: 2026-06-12 Revised: 2026-06-24 Accepted: 2026-09-21 Keywords: ARCS model; English Fun Day; Islamic senior high school; learning motivation; mixed-methods DOI: 10.24256/ideas.v14i2.11207 Corresponding Author: A. Aulia Nur Fatihah aulia88c@gmail.com Institut Agama Islam Negeri Bone	<i>Although English Fun Day (EFD) programs are increasingly adopted to foster English learning motivation, empirical studies examining EFD as a structured, program-based intervention within Islamic senior high schools remain scarce, leaving its motivational impact in this specific context insufficiently understood. To address this gap, this research investigates the implementation of the English Fun Day program in motivating Islamic senior high school students to learn English. The research employed an explanatory sequential mixed-methods design. The quantitative participants consisted of 20 students selected through total sampling, while the qualitative participants were selected using purposive sampling, involving one English teacher and four students. Quantitative data were collected through a questionnaire based on Keller's ARCS model (Attention, Relevance, Confidence, and Satisfaction), followed by qualitative data from semi-structured interviews to support the findings. The quantitative results show that students' overall motivation was high ($M = 3.89$), with all four ARCS dimensions also falling within the high category. Among these, Satisfaction was the highest, while Confidence was the lowest, indicating that students easily experienced enjoyment, but confidence in using English still needs further development. The qualitative findings support these results by highlighting that interactive and fun activities, such as games and group tasks, increased student engagement, created a comfortable learning atmosphere, and encouraged active participation. However, students' confidence in speaking English was found to require more continuous practice. These findings offer practical guidance for English teachers in Islamic schools seeking to design structured, enjoyable English programs while embedding sustained speaking practice to strengthen learners' confidence. The integration of both data sets indicates that the English Fun Day program effectively enhances students' motivation through engaging, meaningful, and supportive learning experiences. In conclusion, the program is a valuable strategy for improving students' motivation in learning English, although sustained practice is needed to further strengthen their confidence in language use.</i>

1. Introduction

English, as an international language, plays a vital role in education, technology, business, and diplomacy. In Indonesia, English is taught as a foreign language from elementary to senior high school level, and proficiency in English is crucial not only for academic success but also as a key skill for future global opportunities (Muhammad Farras Fadhil et al., 2025). However, many students, particularly those in Islamic Senior High Schools (Sekolah Menengah Atas Islam Terpadu/SMA IT), exhibit consistently low motivation and limited engagement in English learning (Farid et al., 2023). They tend to perceive English as a difficult subject dominated by grammar memorization and rigid classroom routines, which lack meaningful and enjoyable experiences.

Motivation is a crucial element in the process of learning a foreign language. According to Karimah (2023), motivation is an internal drive that encourages learners to engage persistently with learning tasks. Without adequate motivation, students tend to view English as a burdensome subject, particularly when instructional approaches rely heavily on traditional, teacher-centered methods (Wulandari, 2021). Low motivation significantly affects students' participation, engagement, and academic achievement (Gao & Liu, 2022). The phenomenon in various Islamic senior high schools reveals that students tend to be passive during English lessons, lacking confidence in speaking, showing little enthusiasm, and participating minimally in class activities (Farid et al., 2023). Teachers also struggle to foster student motivation through conventional teaching methods (Mauliana et al., 2022).

To address this challenge, schools have begun implementing innovative programs aimed at promoting enjoyable and interactive English learning. One such initiative is the English Fun Day (EFD) program—an innovative educational intervention that uses game-based learning approaches and engaging media to create a dynamic learning environment (Kadek Artini et al., 2024). The EFD program seeks to create a relaxed yet meaningful English learning atmosphere through games, competitions, role plays, storytelling, and presentations, all conducted in English, thereby fostering students' confidence and motivation (Salihoglu, 2024). In Islamic educational contexts, where formal curricula tend to be rigid and exam-oriented, programs like English Fun Day offer a refreshing alternative that aligns with students' social and affective needs.

Despite growing recognition of English as a global language and the crucial role of motivation in successful language learning, most existing studies in Indonesian senior high school contexts have focused on formal classroom strategies or isolated motivational techniques without integrating systematic, program-based approaches. A closer comparison of prior EFD research reveals this gap more clearly: Iksan et al. (2022) examined EFD through a single-skill, weekly program in a pesantren setting, Meilana (2023) focused narrowly on speaking activities in a junior high school without measuring motivation systematically, and Supraba et al. (2024) relied solely on students' perceptions as a single data source.

Collectively, these studies suggest that EFD has rarely been investigated as an integrated, structured, multi-dimensional motivational program substantiated by both quantitative and qualitative evidence, particularly within Islamic senior high schools. Empirical evidence investigating EFD as a structured program-based initiative, particularly within Islamic Senior High Schools, remains limited.

This gap is theoretically significant because Keller's (2010) ARCS Model conceptualizes motivation as a multi-dimensional construct, in which Attention, Relevance, Confidence, and Satisfaction interact dynamically to determine learners' persistence and engagement; consequently, a program-based intervention such as EFD needs to be examined across all four dimensions simultaneously rather than through isolated motivational techniques, as the ARCS framework assumes that addressing only one

dimension is insufficient to sustain long-term language learning motivation.

Pre-observation at SMA IT Andalan Bone revealed low student motivation to learn English, characterized by minimal participation in discussions, hesitation to respond to questions, and a lack of confidence in using English, findings corroborated through interviews with the school's English teacher. The present study therefore addresses three research questions: (1) To what extent does the English Fun Day program motivate Islamic senior high school students to learn English? (2) What activities are implemented in the program? (3) How is the program implemented to motivate students? The study offers novelty by empirically examining EFD as a structured, program-based motivational strategy within an Islamic senior high school context, using Keller's (2010) ARCS Model of Motivation as the theoretical framework.

Unlike previous EFD studies, which examined a single skill, relied on a single data source, or were situated in pesantren and junior high school settings, this study distinguishes itself by measuring all four ARCS dimensions simultaneously through a mixed-methods design and by situating EFD within an Islamic senior high school context, thereby providing a more comprehensive and methodologically robust account of how a structured EFD program motivates learners.

2. Method

This study employed an explanatory sequential mixed-methods design, in which quantitative data collection and analysis were conducted in the first phase, followed by qualitative inquiry in the second phase to explain and elaborate upon the quantitative findings (Ivankova et al., 2006; Creswell et al., 2003). This design was selected because the study required not only statistical measurement of students' motivational levels but also an in-depth exploration of contextual factors and participant experiences that shape those outcomes. The research was conducted at SMA IT Andalan Bone, an Islamic integrated boarding school in Bone Regency, South Sulawesi, which had already implemented the English Fun Day program.

In the quantitative phase, 20 eleventh-grade students who participated in the EFD program served as respondents via total sampling, as the entire student population involved in the program was included (Jailani et al., 2022). This relatively small, single-school sample is acknowledged as a limitation that constrains the generalizability of the quantitative findings to other Islamic senior high school contexts. Quantitative data were collected using a 20-item Likert-scale questionnaire (1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree) adapted from Keller's (1987) ARCS Motivation Model, measuring four dimensions: Attention (Q1–Q5), Relevance (Q6–Q10), Confidence (Q11–Q15), and Satisfaction (Q16–Q20). The questionnaire was administered after the completion of the three-day EFD camp program.

Content validity was established through expert validation, in which lecturers with expertise in English language teaching and research methodology reviewed each item for clarity, relevance, and alignment with the four ARCS constructs; their feedback was used to revise the wording of several items before a pilot test was conducted to further refine the instrument. Internal consistency was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha, yielding a value of $\alpha = 0.942$, indicating excellent reliability. Descriptive statistics (means and standard deviations) were computed for each ARCS dimension and overall motivation. Mean scores were interpreted using a five-level scale adapted from Kurniawan et al. (2025): Very Low (1.00–1.80), Low (1.81–2.60), Moderate (2.61–3.40), High (3.41–4.20), and Very High (4.21–5.00).

In the qualitative phase, criterion-based purposive sampling was employed to select four students representing different motivational levels (low, moderate, high, and very high) as identified from questionnaire scores, along with the English teacher responsible for implementing the program (Palinkas et al., 2015). Semi-structured interviews were

conducted in Bahasa Indonesia to facilitate participant expression, recorded, transcribed verbatim, and analyzed thematically according to the four ARCS dimensions following Miles and Huberman's (1984) procedures of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification.

Specifically, all interview transcripts were read repeatedly and coded line-by-line against the four predefined ARCS dimensions; statements reflecting attention, relevance, confidence, or satisfaction were tagged accordingly, and recurring codes within each dimension were grouped into sub-themes (such as game-based engagement and challenging exploration under Attention, vocabulary and expression-based usefulness under Relevance, gradual speaking practice and peer support under Confidence, and experiential enjoyment and reward recognition under Satisfaction) before being synthesized into the broader thematic narrative reported in the Findings section.

Themes were then cross-checked against the corresponding quantitative item scores to ensure interpretive consistency. Documentation (specifically the program syllabus and activity schedule) was collected to triangulate findings. Integration of quantitative and qualitative data occurred at the interpretation stage, where qualitative themes were cross-validated against quantitative patterns to produce comprehensive and well-substantiated conclusions.

3. Result

3.1 Students' Motivation Based on the ARCS Model

Table 1 presents the summary of students' motivation scores across the four ARCS dimensions after participating in the English Fun Day program. The overall motivation was categorized as high ($M = 3.89$, $SD = 1.00$), indicating that the program effectively enhanced students' motivation to learn English.

Table 1. Summary of Students' Motivation Across ARCS Dimensions ($N = 20$)

Dimension	Mean (M)	Std. Deviation	Category
Attention	3.94	1.12	High
Relevance	3.96	0.94	High
Confidence	3.64	0.90	High
Satisfaction	4.02	1.03	High
Overall Motivation	3.89	1.00	High

3.2 Attention Dimension

The Attention dimension ($M = 3.94$, $SD = 1.12$) indicates that the program successfully attracted and maintained students' interest. Table 2 presents item-level scores for this dimension.

Table 2. Item-Level Scores: Attention Dimension

Statement	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	Category
The games and activities made the lessons exciting	20	4.25	1.118	Very High
The program made learning English more enjoyable	20	4.10	1.119	High
Materials and instructions kept me focused	20	3.85	1.226	High
I was curious to learn more during the program	20	3.80	1.105	High
English Fun Day activities captured my interest	20	3.70	1.031	High

Statement	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	Category
Dimension Mean	20	3.94	1.12	High

The highest item mean was 'The games and activities made the lessons exciting' (M = 4.25, Very High), followed by 'The program made learning English more enjoyable' (M = 4.10). Items related to sustained focus (M = 3.85) and curiosity (M = 3.80) also fell within the high category, though slightly lower than enjoyment-related items, suggesting that while the program effectively generated excitement, fostering sustained curiosity warrants additional emphasis.

3.3 Relevance Dimension

The Relevance dimension (M = 3.96, SD = 0.94) indicates that the students perceived the materials as useful and meaningful for their learning. Table 3 presents item-level scores for this dimension.

Table 3. Item-Level Scores: Relevance Dimension

Statement	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	Category
The activities were useful for improving my English skills	20	4.50	0.688	Very High
The program related to my daily experiences, such as school or hobbies	20	3.30	0.979	Moderate
The program helped me see the importance of English	20	4.20	1.056	High
The content matched what I want to achieve in learning English	20	3.95	0.999	High
The activities were meaningful for my learning	20	3.85	0.988	High
Dimension Mean	20	3.96	0.94	High

'The activities were useful for improving my English skills' received the highest score (M = 4.50, Very High), and 'The program helped me see the importance of English' scored M = 4.20. However, 'The program related to my daily experiences' obtained the lowest score within this dimension (M = 3.30, Moderate), suggesting that while functional relevance was strong, the contextual connection to students' personal everyday lives could be further strengthened.

3.4 Confidence Dimension

The Confidence was the lowest ARCS dimension (M = 3.64, SD = 0.90), though still classified as high. Table 4 presents item-level scores for this dimension.

Table 4. Item-Level Scores: Confidence Dimension

Statement	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	Category
I felt more confident speaking English after the program	20	3.35	0.933	Moderate
After joining English Fun Day, I believe I can improve my English if I try hard	20	4.05	0.999	High
The program gave me opportunities to practice English without fear	20	3.75	0.851	High
I was sure I could complete the activities successfully	20	3.55	0.887	High

Statement	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	Category
The teachers' feedback made me feel more capable	20	3.50	0.827	High
Dimension Mean	20	3.96	0.90	High

The item 'I believe I can improve my English if I try hard' received the highest score within this dimension ($M = 4.05$), while the items concerning actual speaking performance and teacher feedback scored lower ($M = 3.35$ and 3.50 , respectively). This pattern suggests that the program successfully strengthened students' belief in their long-term capacity to improve (a growth mindset), but had a comparatively smaller effect on their in-the-moment confidence when actually speaking English, indicating that growth-mindset beliefs and performance-based confidence develop at different rates and require distinct pedagogical attention.

3.5 Satisfaction Dimension

The Satisfaction dimension achieved the highest mean ($M = 4.02$, $SD = 1.03$), reflecting students' strong sense of enjoyment and sense of achievement. Table 5 presents item-level scores for this dimension.

Table 5. Item-Level Scores: Satisfaction Dimension

Statement	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	Category
I was satisfied with my participation in the program	20	3.80	1.056	High
I enjoyed the activities in English Fun Day	20	4.10	1.119	High
I felt proud of my achievements in the program	20	3.85	1.040	High
I would like to join similar programs again	20	3.95	1.050	High
The program made learning English feel worthwhile and enjoyable	20	4.40	0.995	Very High
Dimension Mean	20	4.02	1.03	High

The program made learning English feel worthwhile and enjoyable' achieved the highest score across all 20 questionnaire items ($M = 4.40$, Very High), followed by 'I enjoyed the activities in English Fun Day' ($M = 4.10$). Table 3 presents the highest- and lowest-scoring items across all four dimensions for comparison.

Table 6. Notable High and Low Scoring Items Across ARCS Dimensions

Statement	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	Category
The program made learning English worthwhile and enjoyable	20	4.40	0.995	Very High
The activities were useful for improving my English skills	20	4.50	0.688	Very High
I enjoyed the activities in English Fun Day	20	4.10	1.119	High
The program helped me see the importance of English	20	4.20	1.056	High
I believe I can improve my English if I try hard	20	4.05	0.999	High
I felt more confident speaking English after the program	20	3.35	0.933	Moderate

3.6 Types of Activities in the English Fun Day Program

Documentation and interview data identified nine core activity categories implemented over the three-day program. First, vocabulary building and memorization sessions covered themes such as self-introduction, describing people, and hometown, providing foundational linguistic input. As the teacher explained: "Students can't speak English if they don't have vocabulary, so they have to master vocabulary first" (Teacher interview, 5 March 2026). Second, guided speaking and conversation practice engaged students in pair and group conversations using structured expressions. One student reflected: "The activity that boosted my confidence was conversation... we talked with our teachers and friends in English, and we're not afraid to make mistakes because they'll be corrected properly" (S-01, 5 February 2026). S-01's testimony is noteworthy because it links confidence-building specifically to the assurance of being corrected without judgment; this suggests that what raised confidence was not exposure to speaking practice alone, but the psychologically safe correction routine embedded within the conversation activity, a nuance that helps explain why the Confidence dimension still lagged behind the others despite frequent speaking opportunities.

Third, self-introduction and personal expression activities (including an 'I am, I have, I can' drawing task) enabled students to connect language use with personal identity. Fourth, game-based activities such as Human Motion Matrix reinforced vocabulary in a playful context. One student noted: "My favorite activity is playing games, because it helps me stay motivated while learning" (S-02, 5 February 2026). Fifth, Movie Time integrated listening comprehension, vocabulary acquisition, and oral retelling. Sixth and seventh, contextual speaking tasks on hometown description and describing people connected English to students' real-world knowledge. Eighth, reflective discussions on learning difficulties facilitated metacognitive awareness.

The most prominent activity was Hunting Treasure, an outdoor, team-based experiential task in which student groups navigated five checkpoints to solve language-based challenges using previously learned material. The teacher described its impact: "After spending three days poring over the material, they got to experience an outdoor activity that was not only fun and challenging but also educational, allowing students to recall what they had learned and apply it in an outdoor setting" (Teacher interview, 5 March 2026). Students consistently identified Hunting Treasure as the most memorable activity: "My favorite activity is the treasure hunt because we face all kinds of challenges. I love a challenge" (S-03, 5 February 2026). Post-activity evaluation and speaking performances concluded the program, with awards for group achievements reinforcing positive affect and extrinsic motivation.

4. Discussion

4.1 Students' Motivation and the ARCS Framework

The high overall motivation ($M = 3.89$) confirms that the English Fun Day program effectively addresses the four components of Keller's (2010) ARCS model. This finding aligns with Agudelo Bedoya and Aguilar-Cruz (2024), who found that English Day programs positively influence EFL learners' motivation, and with Iksan et al. (2022), whose implementation of a fun learning program for pesantren students demonstrated comparable motivational enhancement. The consistency of high scores across all four dimensions suggests that a well-structured, fun-based program can produce a holistic motivational impact that extends beyond any single dimension.

4.2 Attention: Engaging Students Through Interactive Learning

The high Attention score ($M = 3.94$) confirms that game-based, interactive, and varied activities effectively captured and sustained students' interest, consistent with Keller's (2010) assertion that attention is enhanced through variation, curiosity, and enjoyable experiences. The highest item score ('The games and activities made the lessons exciting,' $M = 4.25$) corroborates qualitative evidence of students' enthusiasm, particularly during outdoor and competitive activities. These findings support Deterding et al. (2011) and Hanus and Fox (2015), who found that gamification significantly increases student engagement. The variety of activities from indoor games to the outdoor Hunting Treasure created multiple modalities for curiosity-driven language engagement, preventing the monotony commonly associated with conventional classroom instruction.

4.3 Relevance: Connecting Learning to Students' Real Needs

The Relevance dimension ($M = 3.96$) demonstrates that students strongly recognized the program's practical value. The teacher's approach of co-constructing vocabulary with students from their daily activities prior to the program, translating commonly used expressions from Indonesian to English ensured that content was functionally relevant from the outset. This practice aligns with Deci and Ryan's (2000) self-determination theory, which posits that goal-oriented and meaningful learning enhances intrinsic motivation, and with Richards and Rodgers' (2001) communicative language teaching principles. However, the lower score for contextual connection to daily life ($M = 3.30$, Moderate) suggests room for further strengthening the bridge between classroom English and students' personal lived experiences, a finding also noted by Meilana (2023) in a related Islamic school context.

4.4 Confidence: Building Self-Efficacy Through Supportive Practice

Confidence was the lowest dimension ($M = 3.64$), reflecting the complexity of developing self-efficacy in oral language performance. The relatively higher score for 'I believe I can improve my English if I try hard' ($M = 4.05$) indicates that the program successfully fostered a growth mindset, consistent with Bandura's (1997) self-efficacy theory. The teacher's strategies of personal approaches, gradual scaffolding from pair to group practice, and the English-only zone rule created a psychologically safe environment, as confirmed by student testimonies. This is consistent with Gibson and Ifenthaler (2024), who argue that confidence grows through structured success in low-risk conditions. Nevertheless, the lower score for actual speaking confidence ($M = 3.35$, Moderate) aligns with Horwitz et al. (1986), who noted that reducing foreign language anxiety is a sustained process. Continued speaking practice and systematic formative feedback are thus necessary to consolidate confidence gains.

This apparent contradiction—a positive learning environment coexisting with comparatively low oral confidence—can be explained by the short duration of the program. A three-day intervention is sufficient to lower affective barriers and build belief in long-term improvement, but performance-based confidence in speaking typically develops only through repeated, longitudinal practice rather than a single short, albeit supportive, exposure (Horwitz et al., 1986). In other words, the EFD program appears to have successfully addressed the affective preconditions for confidence (reduced anxiety, psychological safety) without yet providing sufficient cumulative speaking practice to translate those preconditions into stronger self-rated oral performance, a distinction that previous EFD studies (e.g., Iksan et al., 2022; Meilana, 2023) did not examine in depth because they did not disaggregate motivation into separate ARCS dimensions.

4.5 Satisfaction: Creating Rewarding Learning Experiences

Satisfaction was the highest dimension ($M = 4.02$), confirming Keller's (2010) proposition that positive emotional experiences and a sense of accomplishment sustain motivation for continued engagement. The program's reward system (presenting awards for group achievements such as 'most cohesive group' and 'treasure hunt winner') provided extrinsic motivation, consistent with Csikszentmihalyi's (1990) concept of enjoyable and immersive activities leading to intrinsic satisfaction. Fredricks et al. (2004) emphasize that emotional engagement plays a crucial role in sustaining motivation, strongly supported by the high satisfaction scores and qualitative testimonies. All four student participants expressed a desire to join similar programs again, suggesting that satisfaction translated into sustained motivational orientation, extending the findings of Supraba et al. (2024) with quantitative evidence in an Islamic senior high school context.

4.6 Implementation and Pedagogical Implications

The implementation of the English Fun Day program at SMA IT Andalan Bone reflected four pedagogical principles that collectively operationalize the ARCS framework: (1) engagement through varied, interactive, and gamified tasks; (2) relevance through co-constructed, communicatively authentic content; (3) scaffolded confidence-building through gradual exposure and peer collaboration; and (4) affective reinforcement through rewards, outdoor experiential learning, and celebratory closure. These principles demonstrate that effective motivational design in Islamic educational contexts requires not only appropriate activity selection but also intentional pedagogical sequencing from vocabulary input to communicative practice to experiential consolidation that progressively develops students' linguistic resources and psychological readiness to use English. The program's success also highlights the critical role of the teacher as motivational designer, particularly in proactively involving students in content co-construction and in differentiating support for students with varying confidence levels.

4.7 Limitations of the Study

Several limitations should be acknowledged when interpreting these findings. First, the relatively small sample size (20 students from a single school) restricts the statistical generalizability of the quantitative results to other Islamic senior high school contexts. Second, the EFD program lasted only three days; this short duration is sufficient to elevate engagement and reduce affective barriers in the short term, but it does not allow firm conclusions about whether motivational gains, particularly Confidence, are sustained beyond the immediate post-program period. Third, the single-school setting means that contextual factors specific to SMA IT Andalan Bone, such as its boarding-school culture and existing English exposure may have shaped the results in ways that limit transferability to non-boarding or non-Islamic school settings. Future research employing pre-post or longitudinal designs across multiple schools is therefore needed to substantiate the causal and long-term motivational effects suggested by this study.

5. Conclusion

This study investigated the implementation of the English Fun Day program at SMA IT Andalan Bone and its motivational impact on eleventh-grade students using Keller's ARCS Model within an explanatory sequential mixed-methods design. Three principal conclusions are drawn. First, the program produced a high overall motivational level ($M = 3.89$) across all four ARCS dimensions, with Satisfaction being the strongest ($M = 4.02$) and Confidence the lowest ($M = 3.64$), indicating that while the program is highly effective in generating enjoyment and perceived relevance, sustained development of oral confidence requires further attention and dedicated practice.

Second, the program incorporated a systematically structured and diverse set of nine activity categories, vocabulary building, guided conversation practice, self-introduction, game-based learning, movie-based activities, contextual speaking tasks, reflective discussions, experiential outdoor learning (Hunting Treasure), and performance evaluation, that together created a comprehensive, English-rich learning environment. Third, the program's implementation aligned with the principles of communicative language teaching and motivational design by addressing students' attention, relevance, confidence, and satisfaction in an integrated and progressive manner.

For practitioners, the study recommends incorporating more structured speaking activities and continuous formative feedback into future implementations to strengthen Confidence, and enhancing contextual connection between English content and students' daily experiences to strengthen Relevance. For researchers, future studies should employ pre-post designs to establish causal motivational change, involve larger and more diverse samples across multiple Islamic schools, and explore the long-term sustainability of motivation gains. This study is limited by its non-experimental design and single-site context; causal inferences regarding motivational change should therefore be drawn with caution.

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