



The Role of Arabic Calligraphy in Shaping the Religious Character Students: A Literature Review of Islamic Education

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ABSTRACT

This study analyzes the role of Arabic calligraphy in shaping the religious character of students in Islamic education. However, schools still face many challenges in implementing it. These include a lack of learning media that evenly touch on cognitive, affective, and psychomotor aspects. One very beneficial option is the use of Arabic calligraphy as an educational tool. The purpose of this study is to evaluate the role of Arabic calligraphy in shaping students religious character. A literature review method was used to collect data from various relevant scientific sources, including books, journals, and previous research results. The results showed that through the process of writing, decorating, and appreciating verses from the Qur'an, Arabic calligraphy plays a strategic role in enhancing religious values. This process involves cognitive, affective, and psychomotor aspects simultaneously. This study found that the use of local arts and culture, especially Arabic calligraphy, can be a useful and contextual alternative method to strengthen the formation of students religious character.

1. Introduction

Religious character education is one of the main pillars in shaping individuals with noble character and strong faith in Indonesia. Religious character is a comprehensive identity that exists in all human beings from birth. Religious identity will continue to develop in line with the stages of psychological development in humans. Religious identity will also develop in line with social movements and relationships with other communities (Andrianie et al., 2019) However, in practice, there are still many challenges in instilling religious values in students, such as low religious awareness, lack of parental involvement, and minimal integration of

religious values in daily life. Nowadays, there are many problems occurring in society. This is largely due to the lack of character in students in elementary, junior high, and high schools. Students should have good character, because in essence, '*al adabu fauqo-l ilmi*', which means that morals are more important than knowledge. A knowledgeable person may not necessarily have good morals, but a person with good morals will definitely be knowledgeable. Amidst these challenges, local arts and culture, especially calligraphy, offer great potential as an alternative medium for shaping religious character (Mazid & Nurmawati, 2024).

One art form that is closely related to religious activities is calligraphy, which can be used as a medium for shaping students character. Calligraphy can strengthen the social relationship between Allah and humans *hablumnimallah wa habluminannas* as should be done by a believer (Hamidah et al., 2023). Arabic calligraphy, as a visual art rich in spiritual meaning, not only functions as decoration but also as a bridge between artistic expression and religious appreciation. In the context of education, Arabic calligraphy can help students understand and appreciate Islamic values through the process of writing and decorating the holy verses of the Qur'an, thereby fostering a sense of love and affection for religious teachings. This process indirectly shapes a deeper and more sustainable religious character (Azizah & Maulani, 2024). Arabic calligraphy can be a creative solution to overcome the problem of low understanding and application of religious values among students, especially in areas with a Malay cultural background. Therefore, it is important to analyze in depth how these two media can be used effectively in the process of shaping the religious character of students.

Although religious character education has become a major focus in national education policy, its implementation in the field still faces various obstacles. Many schools still apply conventional approaches such as lectures, memorization, and assignments without actively involving students, so that learning tends to focus only on cognitive aspects. In fact, effective character education requires a holistic approach that includes habituation, role modeling, emotional experiences, and active student involvement in meaningful activities. This is in line with findings that the implementation of religious character in schools often only emphasizes religious knowledge, without facilitating affective and psychomotor experiences such as worship practices, recitation, and consistent internalization of religious values (Rahimatunnisya et al., 2025).

In addition, the involvement of parents and the community in religious character education is still minimal, even though collaboration between schools, families, and the social environment is very important to create an ecosystem conducive to the development of students religious character. Limited supporting facilities, such as art rooms, libraries, and relevant extracurricular facilities, also hinder schools in providing media for expression and internalization of religious values, including through arts and culture, which have great potential to strengthen the character building of students. These shortcomings indicate the need for innovation and alternative approaches, such as the utilization of local arts and culture, to strengthen

the formation of students religious character more comprehensively and contextually.

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This study aims to analyze the role of calligraphy in shaping the religious character of students through a literature review, which covers the concepts of spiritual values in calligraphy, the forms of internalization of these values in the context of education, and the relevance of calligraphy as a medium for strengthening religious character based on previous research findings. There is a need for learning media that focuses more deeply on spiritual aspects due to the phenomenon of declining religious sensitivity among students in today's digital age. Despite its potential to instill piety, discipline, and respect for the Qur'an, Arabic calligraphy is being marginalized in Islamic education. Teacher limitations and the lack of integration of Islamic art into the curriculum reinforce the problem of underutilization of calligraphy in schools.

2. Methodology

This study uses a qualitative approach with library research. Library research is conducted by reviewing, examining, and analyzing various scientific sources such as books, journals, scientific articles, research reports, and relevant documents to gain an in-depth understanding of a topic (Zed, 2004). Literature research aims to compile and present a comprehensive understanding of a particular topic by summarizing, synthesizing, and evaluating findings from existing literature sources. This research method uses data sources in the form of existing literature, such as books, journals, and articles (Sari et al., 2025). The collected data were analyzed using content analysis, with the stages of identifying key concepts, classifying findings, synthesizing, and interpreting meanings to obtain relevant conclusions about the role of Arabic calligraphy in shaping students religious character.

3. Results and Discussion

Arabic Calligraphy in the Perspective of Islamic Education

The word calligraphy comes from the simplified English word calligraphy. It is derived from the Latin words *kalios*, meaning beautiful, and *graph*, meaning writing or letters. The meaning of the word calligraphy is the art of beautiful writing. In Arabic, it is usually called *khath*, which means line or beautiful writing. The word *Khat*, found in the word *Khatulistiwa*, is taken from the Arabic word *Khath Al-Istiwa*, which means two beautiful lines that divide the earth into two beautiful parts (Sirojuddin, 2016). In the context of Islam, Arabic calligraphy is not only a medium of artistic expression but also a means of conveying religious values and the beauty of the words of Allah SWT. Calligraphy is a magnificent Islamic art that was born and developed in the world of architecture. This is evident in the calligraphic decorations that adorn mosques, which are inscribed with verses from the Holy Qur'an. In this case, the art of calligraphy has developed in line with the revelation of the Qur'an because pieces of verses from the Qur'an are not only displayed in homes or mosques, but calligraphy is also often found in the form of key chains, glasses, bags, and other forms (Fazira & S, 2023).

According to Sheikh Syam Al-Din Al-Afghani, calligraphy is a science that introduces the forms of individual letters, their layout, and how to arrange them to form a neatly arranged writing on a line, as well as how to know what to write and what not to write, how to change spellings that need to be changed, and how to change them (Musri, 2023). It can be concluded that calligraphy is a science that teaches how to write beautifully and neatly. The command to read and write was the first command revealed to the Prophet Muhammad SAW at the beginning of his prophethood. In QS. Al-Alaq, Allah explains, "Read in the name of your Lord who created, He created man from a clot of blood. Read, and your Lord is the Most Generous, Who taught (man) by means of the pen, He taught man what he did not know." In this case, the Qalam or pen is closely related to calligraphy. If the Qalam is referred to as a tool to support knowledge, then the Qalam is a means for the Creator to give guidance to humans (Sirojuddin, 2016).

Habibullah Fada'ili, in his book *Athlas Al-Khath wa al al-Khututh* (A. R., 2020), explains that there were six periods of significant growth in calligraphy after the revelation of the Qur'an: the beginning period, the period of universal growth, the period of refinement of letter anatomy by Ibn Muqlah, the period of development of *khath* patterns, the period of dissection and processing of styles, the establishment of *Al-Aqlam As-Sittah*, and the period of the emergence of three *khat* styles: *Taliq*, *Nasta'liq*, and *Shikasteh*. Ibn Muqlah, one of the leading figures in calligraphy, designed calligraphy into a highly geometric form, where letters are given thick and thin, long and short sizes, and are given clear, curved strokes. Ibn Muqlah's formula is called *Khath Al-Mansub*, which consists of several components, namely *alif*, diamond split points, and standard circles. According to Ibn Muqlah, the form of writing is considered correct if it meets the following five criteria: *Taufiyah* (accurate), *itmam* (complete), *ikmal* (perfect), *isyba'* (compact), and *irsal* (smooth) (As-Sahbuny, 2016).

In its development, calligraphy has played a very important role in the context of religious culture in Indonesia, not only as a decorative element but also as a medium

that enriches religious experience (Azizah & Maulani, 2024). Therefore, in the Islamic world, calligraphy is highly respected and is the most valued form of art. This is because calligraphy has very strong spiritual values, symbolizes the Qur'an, and is a rich cultural heritage (Ufairo et al., 2024). Calligraphy plays a crucial role in Islamic education, as it originates from Kalamullah, because the Qur'an is the main source of Islamic education and the foundation of all creation. The art of calligraphy can shape students personalities and overall harmony, covering aspects of logic, morality, aesthetics, and art (Nazira Aprilia, 2025).

Thus, Arabic calligraphy in Islamic education is not just a writing skill, but also a medium for shaping religious character that involves cognitive, affective, and psychomotor aspects.ell-prepared tables and or figures must be of significant feature of this section, because they convey the major observations to readers. Any information provided in tables and figures should no longer be repeated in the text, but the text should focus on the importance of the principal findings of the study. In general, journal papers will contain three-seven figures and tables. The same data can not be presented in the form of tables and figures. The results of the study are discussed to address the problem formulated, objectives and research hypotheses. It is highly suggested that discussion be focused on the why and how of the research findings and to extend to which the research findings can be applied to other relevant problems. Through the process of learning calligraphy, students can internalize Islamic values, such as patience, perseverance, and love for the Qur'an, which will ultimately shape them into religious individuals with noble character.

The Concept of Religious Character in Islamic Education

Philosophically, character is related to the traits, behavior, nature, spirit, and morals of students. It can be concluded that character is behavior related to God Almighty, oneself, fellow human beings, the environment, and nationality, which is manifested through thoughts, attitudes, feelings, words, and deeds based on religious norms, laws, manners, culture, and customs (Khoiri et al., 2023). Character or morals in Islam are human behaviors that are manifested in real life, both in relationships with fellow human beings and in relationships with the Creator as servants and creators. According to Hamzah Ya'kub, the formulation of morals emerged as a medium that enables a good relationship between the Creator and His creatures. This is stated in QS. Al Qalam: 4 “Verily, you, Muhammad, have noble character” (Fakhruddin, 2022).

Meanwhile Character refers to a series of attitudes, behaviors, motivations, and skills. Character includes attitudes such as the desire to do something, intellectual capacity, and moral reasoning, as well as interpersonal and emotional skills that enable a person to interact effectively in all circumstances. According to Ki Hadjar Dewantara, character actualization is the result of a combination of biological character and its interaction with the environment. Character formation can be achieved through education, because education is the most effective tool for individuals to realize and become aware of their true selves (Zubaedi, 2011). Religious character is also known as imani character, which comprehensively

covers all aspects of life. The spirit of every activity and the result of every movement and action is called faith. According to Imam Ibnu Hasar's calculations based on Ibnu Hibban's division, there is a very important composition, namely 35% heart deeds, 10% speech, and 55% physical deeds. In accordance with the above composition, the heart is the most important thing because a good heart can guarantee good speech and physical deeds. Meanwhile, speech, which reflects the state of the heart and physical actions, is the result of the condition of the heart being maintained through speech (Khoiriyah et al., 2025).

The Relationship Between Arabic Calligraphy and Religious Character Building

In the world of education, calligraphy plays a very strategic role. Calligraphy is not only a means of introducing various types of Hijaiyah letters and the structure of the language of the Qur'an, but also a tool that can instill a love for the Qur'an. This is because when someone is learning calligraphy, it serves as a bridge between the intellectual and spiritual dimensions of Islamic education. It is not merely writing, but it is part of the process of forming an Islamic (Nur Kholifatun et al., 2025). The process of character education or moral education is seen as a conscious and planned effort. In this case, character education is a sincere effort to understand, shape, and nurture ethical values for oneself and others. As Napoleon Hill said, "Education comes from within you; you get it by struggle, effort, and thought." This means that education comes from within oneself, and it can be obtained through struggle, effort, and thinking (Zubaedi, 2011).

Types of Khat in Arabic Calligraphy

Calligraphy is the art of writing Arabic beautifully, where a series of letters are formed in appropriate proportions, maintaining spacing and accuracy, containing verses from the Qur'an or Hadith (Putra et al., 2021). Arabic calligraphy is considered an art form and a key unifying element in Islamic art. In addition, Islamic architecture also has a symbolic connection to the word of God. The most Appreciated calligraphic works are those containing verses from the Quran and names of God that are common in Islamic culture. The most common motifs in Islamic art are geometric patterns, floral motifs, and human figures (Atika & Br Ginting, 2024). According to Yogo, calligraphy is divided into two types: classical calligraphy and contemporary calligraphy. Classical calligraphy, also known as pure calligraphy, is calligraphy that follows established rules. This means that classical calligraphy does not deviate from the established rules of writing (Tri Budi Arti et al., 2024). Meanwhile, the development of contemporary calligraphy in this digital age reflects broader changes in how we understand and convey art and religious values in modern society. Calligraphy, which may have initially been seen as a static and unchanging art form, is now finding new ways to remain relevant and appealing to a broader audience (Nuha & Sholeh, 2024). To understand the characteristics of calligraphy further, it is necessary to explain the types of khat used in writing practice. Each type of khat has different rules regarding form, letter structure, and visual characteristics, which form the basis for the development of calligraphic styles. Kufi khat is a script that has no dots or lines. There are two

branches of Kufi script: one is written freely, known as the Tahrir style, and the other uses geometry, which involves measurements and degrees of conformity (Amrullah et al., 2021). Figure 1 shows a geometric Kufi script inscription of the word Muhammad.



Figure 1. Example of Geometric Kufi Script

The dominance of Kufi script in the early days of Islam was followed by the emergence of a new style of writing that was more functional and adaptable to the needs of education and the copying of the Mushaf. Naskhi script is one of the prominent forms in this phase of development. Naskhi script is a type of calligraphy that uses the same letter anatomy as the writing of the Qur'an. Naskhi script means "to erase." The distinctive features of Naskhi script are its flexible letter forms, which are not stacked, not too close together, and have easily readable harakat. Figure 2 shows an example of Naskhi script.

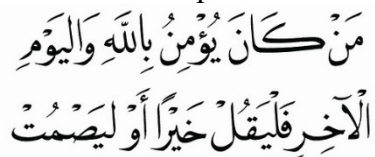


Figure 2. Example of Naskhi script

Third, khat tsuluts. This khat is taken from the word tsuluts, which means one-third. Khat tsuluts is more flexible and plastic. It can be combined with various fields and spaces such as cones, rectangles, squares, rhombuses, circles, or ovals. In writing, the letters can be summarized on a medium that is narrower than the capacity of the written sound with a stacking system (Ahda Sumantri & Proverawati, 2022). Figure 3 is an example of the tsuluts script.



Figure 2. Example of Tsuluts script

The Diwani script originated in the Ottoman Empire. Initially, the diwani script was used for governmental purposes. This script became popular when Constantinople was conquered by Muhammad Al-Fatih in 1453. This script is called diwani because it comes from the Arabic word diwanun, which means office (Muti, 2023). Here is an example of the Diwani script.



Figure 2. Example of Diwani script

Methods and Approaches to Teaching Arabic Calligraphy in Islamic Education

In the process of learning calligraphy, one of the methods used is the Hamidi method, which is a development of the classical (taqlidi) method, an old method used in learning khat. In this method, the end of the learning process is marked by the writing of an official certificate, which is validated in a khat certificate awarding ceremony (Mukminin et al, 2022). Khat learning is a process of interaction between students and educators, and calligraphy learning resources to learn how to write Arabic letters correctly according to the rules and regulations that have been adjusted (Hasibuan, 2024). The interaction between students and educators will make children enthusiastic about learning khat so that they can write beautifully. Students are trained to be patient because writing Arabic letters according to calligraphy rules is not easy. The method often used by educators is practice. The implementation of Arabic calligraphy as a medium for shaping the religious character of students in Islamic educational institutions still faces various significant obstacles and challenges. One of the main obstacles is the limited competence of teachers in mastering Arabic calligraphy techniques and teaching methods. Many teachers do not have a special training background, making it difficult for them to deliver the material effectively and interestingly to students (Julpikar et al., 2024).

4. Conclusion

From the discussion above, it can be concluded that Arabic calligraphy plays a strategic role as a medium for shaping the religious character of students in Islamic education. In the process of learning calligraphy, students not only develop writing

skills but also cultivate spiritual values such as patience, perseverance, and love for the Qur'an. Arabic calligraphy can internalize Islamic values comprehensively, cognitively, affectively, and psychomotorically, thereby shaping religious individuals with noble character. The use of calligraphy as a medium for shaping religious character has a positive impact and can be an alternative, contextual, and effective approach in the context of Islamic education. In addition, the use of Arabic calligraphy in education also serves as a bridge between Islamic cultural heritage and modern educational needs. The integration of calligraphy in learning can create a more meaningful learning environment, as students not only study religious texts theoretically, but also internalize Islamic values through creative and artistic activities. This makes the process of internalizing religious values more profound, natural, and sustainable. However, optimizing calligraphy as a medium for shaping religious character requires support from various parties, such as improving teacher competence, providing adequate learning facilities, and the active involvement of parents and the surrounding environment. This collaboration is important to create an educational ecosystem that is consistent in instilling religious values in students. Thus, it can be emphasized that Arabic calligraphy is not just a beautiful art of writing, but also an effective educational instrument in shaping the religious character of the younger generation. Proper and continuous application will produce students who are not only intellectually intelligent but also have noble character, strong faith, and a deep love for Islamic teachings and religious culture.

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