



## **Arabic Calligraphy as a Pedagogical Tool in Increasing Aesthetic Appreciation of Arabic Language Education Study Program Students**

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### **Abstract**

This study aims to analyze the utilization of Arabic calligraphy as a pedagogical tool to enhance aesthetic appreciation among students in the Arabic Language Education Program. Employing a descriptive qualitative approach, the research explores the implementation of calligraphy-based learning, its impact on students' aesthetic sensitivity, and the supporting and inhibiting factors influencing its effectiveness in higher education settings. The findings reveal that Arabic calligraphy plays a significant role in enriching aesthetic understanding through learning activities that integrate visual, linguistic, and spiritual dimensions. Students engaged in calligraphy practice demonstrate improved accuracy, creativity, and a deeper appreciation of the artistic qualities inherent in Arabic script. Supporting factors identified include cultural relevance, lecturer competence, and students' intrinsic interest, while key obstacles involve limited facilities, restricted instructional time, and the tendency to rely on instant digital methods. Overall, the study highlights the importance of integrating calligraphy into the Arabic language education curriculum to foster aesthetic competence and strengthen students' professional character in the modern era.

**Keywords:** *Arabic Calligraphy, Pedagogy, Aesthetics, Arabic-Language Education, Students.*

### **Abstrak**

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis pemanfaatan kaligrafi Arab sebagai alat pedagogis dalam meningkatkan apresiasi estetika mahasiswa Program Studi Pendidikan Bahasa Arab. Dengan menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif deskriptif, penelitian ini mengeksplorasi praktik pembelajaran kaligrafi, dampaknya terhadap kepekaan estetis mahasiswa, serta faktor pendukung dan penghambat implementasinya di lingkungan perguruan tinggi. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa kaligrafi berperan signifikan dalam memperkuat pemahaman estetika melalui proses pembelajaran yang memadukan aspek visual, linguistik, dan spiritual. Mahasiswa yang terlibat dalam latihan kaligrafi menunjukkan peningkatan ketelitian, kreativitas, serta kemampuan mengapresiasi keindahan huruf Arab secara lebih mendalam. Faktor pendukung yang ditemukan meliputi relevansi budaya Islam, kompetensi dosen, dan minat mahasiswa, sedangkan hambatan utama mencakup keterbatasan sarana, waktu pembelajaran, dan kecenderungan penggunaan metode digital instan. Temuan penelitian ini menegaskan pentingnya integrasi kaligrafi dalam kurikulum pendidikan bahasa Arab untuk mendukung pengembangan kompetensi estetika dan karakter profesional mahasiswa di era modern.

**Kata Kunci:** *Kaligrafi Arab, Pedagogis, Estetika, Pendidikan Bahasa-Arab, Mahasiswa.*

## Introduction

The use of Arabic calligraphy as a pedagogical tool in the context of the *Khat li al-Mutawassitin* course in the Arabic Language Education Study Program has a strong urgency, because this course not only aims to equip students with aesthetically pleasing letter writing skills, but also instill a deep appreciation of the values of art and culture that are the identity of Arab-Islamic civilization.<sup>1</sup> Through writing practice activities, calligraphy style analysis, and understanding of calligraphy aesthetic principles, students gain an integrative learning experience between theoretical and artistic aspects; Research shows that there is a positive relationship between calligraphy interest and students' Arabic writing skills. The calligraphy-based pedagogical approach allows students to explore meticulousness, precision, and creativity, thereby enhancing aesthetic sensitivity while strengthening their understanding of the structure of letters and the visual beauty of the Arabic language. Thus, the application of calligraphy as a learning medium in this course not only enriches students' academic and artistic skills, but also fosters an appreciation of aesthetics that is more reflective and relevant to the competence of prospective Arabic educators.

Arabic calligraphy in Indonesia has been widely known, especially in the pesantren environment, both modern and traditional as well as in various Islamic universities. Nonetheless, the application of calligraphy learning at the university level has not been even because only a few specific faculties, such as Arabic Language Education and other study programs related to Islamic studies, make it part of the curriculum.<sup>2</sup> Along with the times, the practice of writing calligraphy has also undergone a transformation. Media that originally used date or stone fronds has now shifted to paper and is applied to the walls of mosques and mushalas as an aesthetic element. This change reflects the development and innovation in the calligraphy tradition that continues to adapt to today's aesthetic and technological needs.<sup>3</sup>

As happened in the Arabic Language Education Study Program of UIN K.H. Abdurrhman Wahid Pekalongan has included calligraphy (*khat*) courses in the curriculum,

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<sup>1</sup> Nurul Ma'wa, Dina Indriana, and Ubaidillah Ubaidillah, "Pengaruh Penggunaan Aplikasi Flashcard Terhadap Hasil Belajar Mufrodlat Bahasa Arab," *Al-Ittihad* 16, no. 1 (2024): 106–118.

<sup>2</sup> Mansya'ul Fitriyah, Subhan Subhan, and Nurhamim Nurhamim, "PowerPoint Slide-Based Instruction for Shorof: Development and Classroom Trial in Islamic Junior High School," *Lingua: Jurnal Keilmuan dan Kependidikan Babasa Arab* 11, no. 1 (June 30, 2025): 31–41, <https://ftk.uinbanten.ac.id/journals/index.php/lingua/article/view/12109>.

<sup>3</sup> Hamidah Hartono et al., "Analisis Kemampuan Ilmu Kaligrafi Mahasiswa Jurusan Pendidikan Bahasa Arab Fakultas Ilmu Tarbiyah Dan Keguruan Universitas Islam Negeri Sumatera Utara," *Jurnal Pendidikan Tambusai* 8 (2024): 32181–32189.

consisting of *Khat li al-Mubtadi'in* and *Khat li al-Mutawasitin*. This course plays an important role in improving the Arabic writing skills of students who still often face difficulties in writing Arabic letters correctly. However, the existence of this course does not automatically guarantee that all students master calligraphy techniques adequately. Differences in educational backgrounds, interest levels, and art experience are factors that affect their learning process<sup>4</sup>.

Based on this description, learning for students of the Arabic Language Education study program needs to pay attention to visual aspects that have aesthetic value,<sup>5</sup> one of which is through the application of Arabic calligraphy. The beauty of the Arabic language is not only reflected in literary works or verses of the Qur'an, but also in its visual representation through the art of calligraphy that contains spiritual, cultural, and educational values. Therefore, the art of calligraphy has the potential to not only be an artistic activity, but also an effective pedagogical medium in increasing the appreciation of student aesthetics. This phenomenon confirms two main problems: first, there is still a low appreciation of aesthetics in learning Arabic so that the learning process tends to be monotonous and does not touch the affective aspects of students; Second, the potential of calligraphy art has not been optimally utilized in educational activities, even though this art is able to integrate cognitive, affective, and psychomotor aspects simultaneously.

Calligraphy is an Arabic writing art with the name *khat* which refers to the art of writing Arabic letters with a proportional arrangement and a beautiful appearance. Calligraphy comes from the Greek, which is *kallos* which means beauty and *graphein* which means writing or drawing. Calligraphy can be interpreted as the art of writing that highlights the element of beauty. Arabic calligraphy not only displays visual beauty, but also contains philosophical and spiritual messages, both in the form of Qur'anic verses and other expressions. With these values, calligraphy has an important position in the cultural and spiritual treasures of Islam.<sup>6</sup> According to Salim 'Afifi, Arabic calligraphy is a medium of conveying information as well as part of culture with aesthetic value.<sup>7</sup> As an information

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<sup>4</sup> Beby Khairani and Sayed Muhammad Ichsan, "Analisa Kemampuan Kaligrafi Mahasiswa Jurusan Pendidikan Bahasa Arab Fakultas Ilmu Tarbiyah Dan Keguruan Universitas Islam Negeri Sumatera Utara," *Alhamra Jurnal Studi Islam* 4, no. 1 (2023): 83.

<sup>5</sup> Fitriyah, Subhan, and Nurhamim, "PowerPoint Slide-Based Instruction for Shorof: Development and Classroom Trial in Islamic Junior High School."

<sup>6</sup> Habibah Khairani et al., "Analisis Hubungan Antara Minat Kaligrafi Dengan Keterampilan Menulis Arab Mahasiswa Pendidikan Bahasa Arab UIN Sumatera Utara," *TADRIS AL-ARABIYAT: Jurnal Kajian Ilmu Pendidikan Bahasa Arab* 4, no. 1 (2024): 47-57.

<sup>7</sup> Fauzi Salim Afifi, *Cara Mengajar Kaligrafi Pedoman Guru*, (Jakarta: Darul Ulum Press, 2002).

medium, calligraphy conveys religious and cultural messages. In the realm of aesthetics, calligraphy reflects creativity in expressing beauty through ink strokes, paints, or other media. Arabic letters have very different characteristics from Latin letters because Arabic calligraphy writing must follow strict *khattiyah* rules, and mastering them requires intensive practice and a long time.<sup>8</sup>

Arabic calligraphy has an important role as a pedagogical tool that not only improves Arabic writing skills, but also fosters students' aesthetic appreciation.<sup>9</sup> Although not all students come from pesantren educational backgrounds, intensive calligraphy learning can help them improve their letter form, neatness of writing, and Arabic writing proficiency.<sup>10</sup> In addition, the high interest and interest in calligraphy encourages students to practice more consistently so that technical skills and artistic expression can develop simultaneously.<sup>11</sup> These findings show a close relationship between learning interest, the process of learning calligraphy, and the increase in maharah *al-kitabah*.<sup>12</sup> Therefore, Arabic calligraphy can be positioned as an effective pedagogical instrument in Arabic language education because it is able to combine linguistic and aesthetic dimensions in a balanced manner.<sup>13</sup> Learning calligraphy not only trains Arabic writing skills correctly, but also fosters aesthetic awareness that plays a role in shaping students' personalities and cultural sensitivities<sup>14</sup>.

Research by H. Khairani et al. (2024)<sup>15</sup> shows that students' interest in the art of calligraphy has a significant relationship with Arabic writing skills. These results confirm that learning calligraphy not only contributes to strengthening technical aspects of writing, such as the accuracy and accuracy of letter shapes, but also plays a role in increasing student

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<sup>8</sup> Waluyo Erry Wahyudi, "Pembelajaran Seni Kaligrafi Islam (Khat) Untuk Meningkatkan Maharah Al-Kitabah (Keterampilan Menulis)," *TEACHING: Jurnal Inovasi Keguruan dan Ilmu Pendidikan*, no. 4 (2024): 313.

<sup>9</sup> Muhammad Fauzi and Muhammad Thohir, "Pembelajaran Kaligrafi Arab untuk meningkatkan maharah al-kitabah," *El-Ibtikar: Jurnal Pendidikan Bahasa Arab* 9, no. 2 (2020): 226–40,

<sup>10</sup> Dedi Mustofa, "Pembelajaran Kaligrafi Dasar Untuk Melatih Kemahiran Menulis Bahasa Arab Bagi Siswa Maderasah Ibtidaiyah," *Dimar: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam* 2, no. 1 (2020): 66–76, <https://ejournal.stit-almubarak.ac.id/index.php/DIMAR/article/view/30>.

<sup>11</sup> Asna Ainun Ni'ma, "Penggunaan Seni Kaligrafi Dalam Pembelajaran Keterampilan Menulis (Maharah Kitabah)," *Tifani: Jurnal Penelitian dan Pengabdian kepada Masyarakat* 2, no. 3 (2022), <https://tifani.org/index.php/tifani/article/view/19>.

<sup>12</sup> Nurul Huda, "Implementasi jenis khat naskhi dalam pembelajaran bahasa arab," *Al Mahāra: Jurnal Pendidikan Bahasa Arab* 3, no. 2 (2017): 287–312, <https://ejournal.uin-suka.ac.id/tarbiyah/almahara/article/view/2017.032-06>.

<sup>13</sup> Gigih Hadi Nugroho Said and Hilalludin Hilalludin, "Estetika Puisi Arab Klasik Analisis Stilistika atas Karya alMutanabbi," *Qawa'id: Jurnal Bahasa dan Sastra Arab* 1, no. 01 (2025): 13–24, <https://risetkendikia.com/index.php/jurnal-qowaid/article/view/25>.

<sup>14</sup> Khairani et al., "Analisis Hubungan Antara Minat Kaligrafi Dengan Keterampilan Menulis Arab Mahasiswa Pendidikan Bahasa Arab UIN Sumatera Utara."

<sup>15</sup> Khairani et al., "Analisis Hubungan Antara Minat Kaligrafi Dengan Keterampilan Menulis Arab Mahasiswa Pendidikan Bahasa Arab UIN Sumatera Utara"

learning motivation. Substantially, the study has a compatibility with this study because it both places calligraphy as a means of learning Arabic. However, there are differences in the focus of the study. Previous research focused more on the relationship between calligraphy interest and Arabic writing skills, while this study focused on the use of Arabic calligraphy as a pedagogical medium in increasing aesthetic appreciation, artistic sensitivity, and students' appreciation of the value of art in Arabic calligraphy. Research on the use of calligraphy activities as a learning medium shows that the practice of handwriting has a great influence on the understanding of letter shapes and strengthening the learning process. Longcamp, Zerbato-Poudou, and Velay found that preschoolers who learned through handwriting had better ability to recognize letters than those who learned through typing.<sup>16</sup> Corresponding, James and Engelhardt explain that handwriting experiences can activate areas of the brain associated with visual symbol recognition and letter learning.<sup>17</sup> While these foundational studies primarily observe cognitive-motor integration in early childhood, the underlying neurological mechanism—where physical touch and spatial precision activate deeper cognitive and emotional rewards—remains highly relevant for adult learners. In higher education, this haptic engagement is no longer just about recognizing letter shapes, but rather about internalizing the visual rhythm and cultivating advanced aesthetic judgments. Kersey and James also assert that learning the form through hands-on practice is more effective than passive observation.<sup>18</sup> Meanwhile, Bara et al. found that the ability to write letters helps the learning process of reading because students better understand the form and structure of the script.<sup>19</sup>

In a broader perspective, Mangen and Velay emphasized that handwriting (calligraphy) has a haptic dimension or tactile experience that is irreplaceable by digital media.<sup>20</sup> Writing involves coordinating movement, feeling, rhythm, and visual attention

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<sup>16</sup> Marie Longcamp, Marie-Thérèse Zerbato-Poudou, dan Jean-Luc Velay, "The Influence of Writing Practice on Letter Recognition in Preschool Children: A Comparison between Handwriting and Typing," *Acta Psychologica* 119, no. 1 (2005): 67–79, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.actpsy.2004.10.019>.

<sup>17</sup> Karin H. James dan Laura Engelhardt, "The Effects of Handwriting Experience on Functional Brain Development in Pre-Literate Children," *Trends in Neuroscience and Education* 1, no. 1 (2012): 32–42, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tine.2012.08.001>.

<sup>18</sup> Alyssa J. Kersey dan Karin H. James, "Brain Activation Patterns Resulting from Learning Letter Forms through Active Self-Production and Passive Observation in Young Children," *Frontiers in Psychology* 4 (2013): 567, <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2013.00567>.

<sup>19</sup> Florence Bara et al., "Does Knowing How to Write Letters Facilitate Learning to Read? An Investigation in French-Speaking Preschool Children," *Reading and Writing* 24 (2011): 1107–1122, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11145-010-9249-7>.

<sup>20</sup> Anne Mangen dan Jean-Luc Velay, "Digitizing Literacy: Reflections on the Haptics of Writing," *Frontiers in Psychology* 1 (2010): 10, <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2010.00010>.

simultaneously. These findings are relevant to the learning of Arabic calligraphy, as the practice of *kebat* demands precision, balance of form, and high visual awareness. In terms of art-based learning, Burton, Horowitz, and Abeles explained that involvement in art activities can increase students' reflection, expression, and learning engagement.<sup>21</sup> Smithrim and Upitis also found that learning through art makes students more motivated, active, and feel that the learning process is more meaningful.<sup>22</sup> These two studies support the idea that art functions not only as entertainment, but also as a pedagogical tool that develops cognitive, affective, and psychomotor aspects. Leder et al. explained that aesthetic appreciation is formed through several stages, ranging from visual observation, form recognition, meaning, to aesthetic assessment.<sup>23</sup> Chatterjee and Vartanian add that aesthetic experience has to do with perception, emotion, and reward responses in the human brain.<sup>24</sup> In addition, it is easier for a person to feel the beauty of a work of art when he understands the elements of its form, complexity, and meaning. The similarity with this study is that they both see beauty as the result of the interaction between perception, knowledge, and emotions. The difference is that these studies discuss aesthetics in general, while this study applies them to the practice of Arabic calligraphy as part of learning. Therefore, it can be concluded that previous research has proven the importance of writing practices, art-based learning, and aesthetic experiences in the educational process. However, there have not been many studies that specifically examine Arabic calligraphy as a pedagogical medium to increase the appreciation of aesthetics of students of the Arabic Language Education Study Program. This is where the novelty of this research lies, which is to connect the practice of calligraphy with the formation of students' aesthetic sensitivity, as well as to examine the supporting factors and obstacles to its implementation in learning in higher education.

Based on this background, this study aims to examine in depth how Arabic calligraphy can be used as a pedagogical tool to foster aesthetic appreciation in students of the Arabic Language Education Study Program, as well as map the factors that support and hinder its application in the higher education environment. Operationally, this research is directed to answer three main questions: first, how to apply Arabic calligraphy in the Arabic language learning process; second, the

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<sup>21</sup> Judith M. Burton, Robert Horowitz, dan Hal Abeles, "Learning In and Through the Arts: Curriculum Implications," *Studies in Art Education* 41, no. 3 (2000): 228–257, <https://doi.org/10.2307/1320782>.

<sup>22</sup> Kathryn Smithrim dan Rena Upitis, "Learning through the Arts: Lessons of Engagement," *Canadian Journal of Education* 28, no. 1/2 (2005): 109–127, <https://doi.org/10.2307/1602156>.

<sup>23</sup> Helmut Leder et al., "A Model of Aesthetic Appreciation and Aesthetic Judgments," *British Journal of Psychology* 95, no. 4 (2004): 489–508, <https://doi.org/10.1348/0007126042369811>.

<sup>24</sup> Anjan Chatterjee dan Oshin Vartanian, "Neuroaesthetics," *Trends in Cognitive Sciences* 18, no. 7 (2014): 370–375, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tics.2014.03.003>.

extent to which calligraphy activities contribute to building students' appreciation of the beauty of Arabic letters and the art of writing; and third, what factors affect Arabic calligraphy as a learning medium oriented to aesthetic aspects. This focus is expected to fill the gap in research that is still limited, considering that most previous studies have focused more on strengthening writing skills or technical aspects of learning, rather than on the formation of students' aesthetic sensitivity through the practice of calligraphy as a learning medium that integrates the dimensions of art, education, and spirituality. In addition, this study is expected to show the relevance of calligraphy in shaping character and improving the aesthetic competence of students, especially in facing the development and demands of education in the modern era.<sup>25</sup>

## Method

This study uses a qualitative method with a descriptive approach, which aims to describe in depth and systematically the phenomenon studied based on empirical data obtained in the field without manipulating the research variables.<sup>26</sup>

The data sources in this study consist of primary and secondary data. Primary data was obtained from students of the Arabic Language Education Study Program as the main participants and lecturers in charge of the calligraphy course, while secondary data came from RPS (*lesson planning*), teaching materials, as well as student calligraphy works, and research from journal articles and books, which are relevant to the focus of this research.

This descriptive qualitative research determined informants to use criterion-based purposive sampling, which is the deliberate selection of participants because they best understand the phenomenon being studied<sup>27</sup>. The main informants consist of: (1) as many as 28 PBA students who are/have taken calligraphy courses and are involved in practice and assessment of works, and (2) 1 lecturer who teach calligraphy as key informants because they have knowledge about RPS, learning strategies, assessments, and implementation constraints. The location of this research was carried out in the Arabic Language Education study program of UIN K.H. Abdurrhman Wahid Pekalongan, Indonesia.

This research instrument is in the form of semi-structured interview guidelines, participatory observation guidelines (field notes), and documentation instruments (checklists/document review) on RPS/lesson planning, teaching materials, lecture notes, and

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<sup>25</sup> Abdul Muiz, "Peran Khat Kaligrafi Dalam Meningkatkan Estetika Dan Pemahaman," *Asian Journal of Multidisciplinary Research* 1, no. 2 (2024): 74–79.

<sup>26</sup> Agus Rustamana and Dkk, "Konsep Proposal Penelitian Dengan Jenis Penelitian Kualitatif Pendekatan Deskriptif," *Sindoro: Cendikia Pendidikan* 5, no. 5 (2025): 2–6.

<sup>27</sup> Michael Quinn Patton, *Qualitative Research & Evaluation Methods*, 4th ed. (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, 2015).

student portfolios/calligraphy works. The interview was directed at indicators: (1) how to apply calligraphy learning in lectures (writing practice, analysis of style/type of calligraphy and its aesthetic characteristics, teaching and assessment strategies), (2) students/lecturers' views and experiences about the impact of calligraphy learning on aesthetic sensitivity and appreciation and (3) supporting and inhibiting factors. Meanwhile, the observation focused on the dynamics of the learning process in the classroom, lecturer-student interaction, student involvement/participation during calligraphy practice, how calligraphy is used as a pedagogical medium in learning activities, the use of facilities and the allocation of practical time, as well as learning behaviors that appear to be related to aesthetics such as: concentration, neatness, perseverance, and the process of preparing writing compositions.

Data collection techniques in this study include semi-structured interviews, participatory observations, and documentation studies. Semi-structured interviews were conducted to dig into information in depth regarding students' views, experiences, and aesthetic perceptions of learning Arabic calligraphy.<sup>28</sup> Furthermore, participatory observation is used to directly observe learning dynamics, interaction between lecturers and students, and the application of calligraphy as a pedagogical medium in the classroom.<sup>29</sup> The documentation study was carried out by examining various supporting materials, such as RPS (Lesson planning), lecture notes, and student calligraphy works, in order to strengthen the validity and enrich the results of field findings.<sup>30</sup> The validity of the data is maintained through the application of source triangulation techniques, member checking, and trail audits to ensure consistency, credibility, and transparency of research results. Through this approach, the researcher seeks to present an in-depth and contextual understanding of the phenomenon of learning Arabic calligraphy in accordance with the empirical reality in the field.<sup>31</sup>

The collected data was analyzed using content analysis through an inductive approach. The analysis process is carried out in stages, starting from open coding to identify the initial meaning of the data, then continued with grouping into categories, until the main

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<sup>28</sup> Al Ghifari, Fahmul Hikam, and Muhammad Ulul Albab. "Kaligrafi Sebagai Jalan Prestasi: Studi Inovasi Pembelajaran Seni Islam Di MI Al Fatah Sukorejo Gresik." *Tadrisuna: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam dan Kajian Keislaman* 7.1 (2024): 27-38.

<sup>29</sup> Sugiyono, *Metode Penelitian Kuantitatif, Kualitatif, Dan R&D* (Bandung: Alfabeta, 2019).

<sup>30</sup> M Taufik, Aisyah Sri, and Khusairi Abdullah, "Belajar Asyik Dengan Kaligrafi : Mengasah Minat Keterampilan Menulis Bahasa Arab," *JMPAI: Jurnal Manajemen dan Pendidikan Agama Islam* 2, no. 4 (2024): 13–27.

<sup>31</sup> Sugiyono, *Metode Penelitian Kuantitatif, Kualitatif, Dan R&D*, (Bandung: Alfabeta, 2013).

themes related to aesthetic appreciation, learning motivation, and the effectiveness of calligraphy as a learning medium are obtained.

## **Result and Discussion**

### **The Utilization of Arabic Calligraphy as a Pedagogical Tool in Learning**

Calligraphy in Arabic is known as *kebat* which means line or writing, while in English it is called calligraphy and comes from the Greek language, which is *kalios* which means beautiful and graph which means writing. Based on its origin, calligraphy can be interpreted as the art of writing letters beautifully and regularly according to certain rules. In the context of Arabic letters, calligraphy is an aesthetically pleasing hijaiyah writing skill that requires an understanding of letter shapes, connection rules, placement of letters above or below the line, and the rules of proportion in writing. Therefore, writing calligraphy is not done carelessly, but must follow the rules that have been set. If all these rules are applied well through consistent practice, then the resulting writing is not only correct in terms of language structure, but also produces beautiful works.<sup>32</sup>

In terms of terminology conveyed by Shaykh Syamsuddin Al-Akfani in the book *Irsyād al-Qāṣid*, calligraphy is defined as the science that studies the form of Arabic letters, the rules of their writing, and how to string these letters into a complete and harmonious writing. This definition shows that calligraphy is not just a writing activity, but a discipline that has rules regarding the proportions of letters, joining and separating, as well as certain aesthetic techniques so that the resulting writing has visual beauty.<sup>33</sup> Thus, according to Al-Akfani, the essence of calligraphy lies in the ability to arrange letters with the right composition so as to produce writing that has artistic value while still following the correct writing rules. Meanwhile, according to Dr. Sirojuddin AR, calligraphy is a science that studies the basic form of Arabic letters, the placement or position of the letters, as well as how to arrange and combine them into a series of writings that are well arranged and have the correct structure.<sup>34</sup>

In the context of learning in the Arabic Language Education Study Program, calligraphy occupies a strategic position as part of the learning process. This role is even more

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<sup>32</sup> Muti Husnul Khotimah, "Sejarah Seni Kaligrafi Dalam Islam dan Perkembangannya Di Indonesia," *Jurnal Ekonomi, Syariah Dan Studi Islam* 1, no. 2 (2023): 1–14.

<sup>33</sup> Ardea Pramesti and Khairunnisa Maisyarah, "Sejarah Ilmu Kaligrafi Dalam Dunia Islam," *Sbaf: Jurnal Sejarah, Pemikiran, Dan Tasawuf* 1, no. 1 (2023): 11–23.

<sup>34</sup> Dwi Nur Indah Sari et al., "Nilai-Nilai Pendidikan Islam Dalam Karya Seni Kaligrafi," *Al-Diyas : Jurnal Inovasi Dan Pengabdian Kepada Masyarakat* 2 (2023): 74–85.

significant when calligraphy is used as a pedagogical tool, namely when the function of calligraphy is not only understood as a work of visual art, but as a learning medium that can support a more comprehensive understanding of Arabic. The use of calligraphy is not only effective in universities, but also in schools, where calligraphy is used to teach Asmaul Husna's material in Islamic Religious Education lessons. This media has been proven to be able to increase student interest and involvement because learning becomes more interesting, varied, and in accordance with various learning styles, both visual, auditory, and kinesthetic. In the context of Islamic Religious Education, calligraphy is not only aesthetically valuable, but also helps to strengthen the understanding of religious concepts through a visual approach. In addition, calligraphy writing activities train students' precision, patience, and concentration and create a more fun and less monotonous learning atmosphere.<sup>35</sup>

The Arabic Language Education Study Program at the State Islamic University of K.H. Abdurrahman Wahid Pekalongan has integrated calligraphy as course. However, student responses to the implementation of this course are diverse. Based on the results of the interviews, some students gave positive responses because they assessed that learning calligraphy not only focused on aesthetic elements, but also trained cognitive, affective, and psychomotor skills in writing Arabic. On the other hand, there are students who do not agree that calligraphy should be made a compulsory course, on the grounds that the campus has provided calligraphy UKM so that according to them the learning should not need to be included in the official curriculum.<sup>36</sup>

The use of calligraphy in the learning process in the Arabic Language Education Study Program received quite positive responses from students. Based on the results of the interviews, most of the students considered that calligraphy has been used as a means to improve Arabic writing skills as well as a form of preserving the art of calligraphy, as seen from the beginning of attention to the aesthetic aspect in the practice of kitabah by lecturers and students. Crucially, this technical improvement in writing proficiency serves as a gateway to deeper affective engagement. As students transition from struggling with basic stroke mechanics to mastering proportion and balance, their perception shifts from seeing Arabic script merely as a linguistic tool to appreciating it as a high visual art form, thereby elevating

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<sup>35</sup> Nailatur Rizqiyah and Zainuddin Syarif, "Pemanfaatan Media Kaligrafi Pada Mata Pelajaran PAI Materi Asmaul Husna Untuk Meningkatkan Minat Belajar Siswa Sekolah Dasar," *KARTIKA: Jurnal Studi Keislaman* 5, no. 2 (2025): 1003–1017.

<sup>36</sup> Nafidz Nurhanan, Fina Naila Sakinah, *Pemanfaatan Penerapan Kaligrafi dalam Pembelajaran*, Fikri: Interviewer, 2025, Oktober 22.

their overall cultural and aesthetic sensitivity. However, there are still students who give ordinary responses because they consider that the use of calligraphy as a pedagogical tool has not been carried out optimally. According to the students' view, these limitations are caused by a lack of understanding of how to integrate calligraphy appropriately in learning, the assumption that calligraphy is only a category of pure art so that it has not been positioned as part of a pedagogical strategy, as well as technical obstacles such as limited time, facilities, and assistance in the learning process.<sup>37</sup> Thus, although the application of calligraphy in learning has shown progress, its integration as a pedagogical medium still requires reinforcement through more systematic methods and the support of adequate learning facilities.

The results of interviews with lecturers show that Arabic calligraphy is seen as having a strong relevance in the learning process, especially as a pedagogical tool that plays a role in fostering students' appreciation of aesthetics. The activity of writing calligraphy not only trains technical skills in forming Arabic letters, but also demands precision, patience, and concentration. According to the speaker, the beauty in calligraphy works cannot be achieved instantly, but through a repetitive practice process and is influenced by the psychological readiness of students when working. In addition, the integration of calligraphy in learning can be done through the introduction of different types of *kebat* and their aesthetic characteristics. Each writing style has a different visual identity, so it can help students recognize the beauty of the Arabic language more broadly, not only from a linguistic perspective, but also from an artistic perspective. With this application, Arabic writing exercises become more meaningful because they not only pursue the truth of letter forms, but also develop students' aesthetic sensitivity in understanding Arabic.<sup>38</sup>

From the findings, it can be concluded that the application of calligraphy in learning in the Arabic Language Education Study Program generally received a positive response from students. Most students consider that calligraphy courses provide benefits in improving Arabic writing skills while contributing to the preservation of calligraphy art. However, there are different views regarding the obligation of the course because some students think that the existence of the calligraphy Student Activity Unit (UKM) is enough to be a learning forum. In addition, the application of calligraphy as a pedagogical tool is considered to have

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<sup>37</sup> Zayyana Adillah, *Pemanfaatan Penerapan Kaligrafi dalam Pembelajaran*, Ayda: Interviewer, 2025, Oktober 22.

<sup>38</sup> Muhammad Alghiffary, *Pemanfaatan Kaligrafi dalam Pembelajaran*, Arif : Interviewer, 2025, November 28.

not run optimally, which is caused by the limited understanding of the integration of calligraphy in learning, the view that calligraphy is only limited to the art of writing, and technical obstacles such as facilities, mentoring, and allocation of learning time. Thus, optimizing the role of calligraphy in learning still requires the development of more structured methods and strategies in order to make a broader contribution to improving student competence.

*Developing Aesthetic Appreciation of Students of the Arabic Language Education Study Program UIN K.H. Abdurrahman Wahid Pekalongan*

In the context of education, learning Arabic calligraphy provides a number of important benefits. From the aesthetic aspect, this practice trains students' patience, precision, and perseverance in producing visual works that have high beauty value. The art of Arabic calligraphy itself contains aesthetic value that not only serves as a decoration, but also contains a deep spiritual meaning.

#### ***Principles of Aesthetics in Arabic Calligraphy***

The aesthetics in Arabic calligraphy are based on the principles of balance, harmony, and rhythm in the arrangement of the letters. Each shape and strokes are arranged in an orderly and harmonious manner so as to produce a beauty that is universal and can be appreciated by various groups, including students who study it. This makes students know what aspects can be used as a basis for appreciating the aesthetic value of Arabic calligraphy.

#### ***The Use of Arabic Calligraphy in Islamic Art***

Calligraphy is applied to various Islamic art media, such as mosque architecture, interior decoration, carvings, and paintings containing verses of the Qur'an or hadith. This widespread use made calligraphy a visual element that enriched the identity of Islamic art. Calligraphy has a central role in building the aesthetics of Islamic art while deepening the Muslim community's understanding of religious teachings. This art is not only a beautiful form of visual expression, but also contains spiritual and philosophical values that reflect the greatness of Allah SWT. With a variety of styles such as *Kufi*, *Naskhi*, *Tsuluts*, *Pharisees*, and *Dimani*, calligraphy remains an important part of the growing Islamic cultural heritage.

Calligraphy is more than just decoration, it functions as a da'wah medium that conveys Islamic messages through attractive visual forms. Its wide uses, ranging from manuscripts, architecture, paintings to contemporary digital designs, demonstrate its versatility and relevance in various eras.

As technology evolves, Arabic calligraphy continues to adapt by utilizing digital techniques without abandoning traditional aesthetic values. This adaptation opens up new creative opportunities for students and artists to produce innovative works, still based on the principles of beauty and spirituality that are the main characters of Islamic calligraphy art.<sup>39</sup> Aesthetics discusses the purpose and value of beauty in a work of art, the quality of which can affect the state of the human psyche because it is rooted in the experience of individual feelings, observations, and thoughts. In the context of Islamic art, the aesthetic value is also related to the spiritual dimension that comes from religious teachings. Thus, the connection between Islamic art and spirituality is inseparable, and through practices such as calligraphy, students can more easily develop an appreciation of aesthetics that at the same time enrich their spiritual understanding.<sup>40</sup>



**Figure 1.** *Student Calligraphy Artwork Images*

Calligraphy as a beautiful writing art plays an effective role in developing writing skills, especially in the ability to convey ideas through visual symbols. The research findings show that calligraphy training not only improves technical skills in writing, but also has a wider positive impact. Students experience development in terms of patience, precision, and appreciation for aesthetic values in Islamic art. In addition, their creativity aspect also developed, as seen in the ability to produce unique calligraphy works by combining traditional techniques and personal interpretations.<sup>41</sup>

The finding that calligraphy improves Arabic writing skills as well as aesthetic appreciation occurs because the practice of calligraphy works through experiential learning

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<sup>39</sup> Muiz, "Peran Khat Kaligrafi Dalam Meningkatkan Estetika Dan Pemahaman."

<sup>40</sup> Euis Fitri Yani, Muhammad Drajat, and Bima Putra, "Estetika Kaligrafi Islam Dan Implikasinya Dengan Ilmu Tasawuf," *SHAF: Jurnal Sejarah, Pemikiran, dan Tasawuf* 2, no. 2 (2025): 114–125.

<sup>41</sup> Muhammad Zaki Aditya, "Peningkatan Keterampilan Menulis Arab Santri Pesantren Darul Arafah Raya Deli Serdang-Sumatera Utara," *Sathar: Jurnal Pendidikan Bahasa Dan Sastra Arab* 2, no. 2 (2024): 32–44, <https://doi.org/10.59548/je.v2i2.192>.

and multimodal learning: students not only "know" the shape of the letters, but also experience the proportions, rhythm of the lines, the balance of composition, and the rules of letter conjunction through repetitive visual-motor coordination. This repetitive process forms meticulousness, patience, and focus; These qualities are in harmony with the character of artistic practice and explain why the affective-psychomotor aspects (motivation, perseverance) are also strengthened. A positive response also emerged because calligraphy has a high cultural-spiritual relevance in the Islamic tradition; This relevance makes learning feel meaningful and increases students' attachment to Arabic as a language, religion and culture. However, implementation is not optimal because there is a "tension" between calligraphy as a pure art and as a pedagogical strategy: when lecturers/students position it only as an artistic work, its integration into the language learning objectives becomes weak (e.g. not connected to the kitabah/imla' in a structured way). Facility constraints, practice time, and lack of mentoring reduce the intensity of training, even though calligraphy is highly dependent on flight hours. Meanwhile, the preference of some students for the digital method shows that there is a "quick results" orientation that reduces the value of the process manual (embodied practice) which is precisely the source of the formation of aesthetic sensitivity.

### **Supporting and Inhibiting Factors of the Use of Arabic Calligraphy in Increasing Students' Aesthetic Appreciation**

One of the important factors that supports the use of Arabic calligraphy in learning is its relationship with Islamic cultural values and aesthetics, which can foster students' motivation to see Arabic more fully. Calligraphy not only serves as an art of writing, but also as a means that combines visual beauty with spiritual meaning. Through their own hands-on practice, students gain an aesthetic experience that helps strengthen their appreciation of the beauty of the Arabic language.<sup>42</sup> The results of this study show that the use of calligraphy-based pedagogical approaches can increase student participation, as they are able to relate the beauty of Arabic writing forms with a broader cultural context, including the heritage of classical Islamic art. This interconnectedness helps students understand aesthetics not only as a visual form, but as part of tradition and history. Thus, this factor contributes to strengthening students' aesthetic appreciation in a more contextual and meaningful way.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> Nurul Hidayah Puji Lestari et al., "Urgensi Seni Rupa Kaligrafi Dalam Pendidikan Islam," *Palapa: Jurnal Studi Keislaman Dan Ilmu Pendidikan* 9, no. 1 (2021): 126–36, <https://ejournal.stitpn.ac.id/index.php/palapa>.

<sup>43</sup> Muhammad Alghiffary, *Pemanfaatan Kaligrafi dalam Pembelajaran*, Arif: Interviewer, 2025, November 28.

Another supporting factor lies in the ability of Arabic calligraphy to cultivate students' practical skills, such as meticulousness, perseverance, tenacity and creativity, all of which play a direct role in deepening their appreciation of aesthetics. Through a repetitive practice process, students begin to recognize and appreciate aesthetic aspects such as the proportions of letter shapes, color harmony, and rhythm in composition. This experience not only broadens their understanding of language, but also increases their confidence in expressing themselves through artwork. This study shows that Arabic language education students who are involved in calligraphy activities show enthusiasm and enjoy these activities, thus providing a pleasant learning atmosphere and increasing the motivation of students of the Arabic language education study program.

Despite its great potential, the use of Arabic calligraphy as a pedagogical tool is often hampered by limited resources and infrastructure in the university environment. Many Arabic language education study programs lack specialized materials such as small whiteboards, erasers, and traditional stationery, which are necessary for authentic calligraphy practice, thus lacking in building aesthetic appreciation. The study highlights that without adequate infrastructure support, students may only be exposed to calligraphy theory without practical experience, which can hinder the development of a deep understanding of aesthetics. This inhibiting factor is a major challenge, especially in institutions with limited budgets, where the focus is more on the linguistic aspect than the visual arts.

Another inhibiting factor is related to the tendency of students to want instant results. Some students show a preference for fast methods, such as digital calligraphy creation through the *Ana Muhtarif* app and similar platforms, compared to manual writing processes that require perseverance and fine motor skills. To respond to this phenomenon, lecturers can use calligraphy applications as an initial medium in the development of design concepts. After the digital design is prepared, students are directed to process and improve the work manually so that the aesthetic value, process quality, and traditional characteristics of calligraphy are maintained. Thus, this condition indicates the need for a more inclusive and adaptive pedagogical approach to increase student motivation so that calligraphy learning can function optimally.<sup>44</sup>

To optimize the use of calligraphy, mitigation strategies must be focused on strengthening human resources and the learning environment. The development of lecturers'

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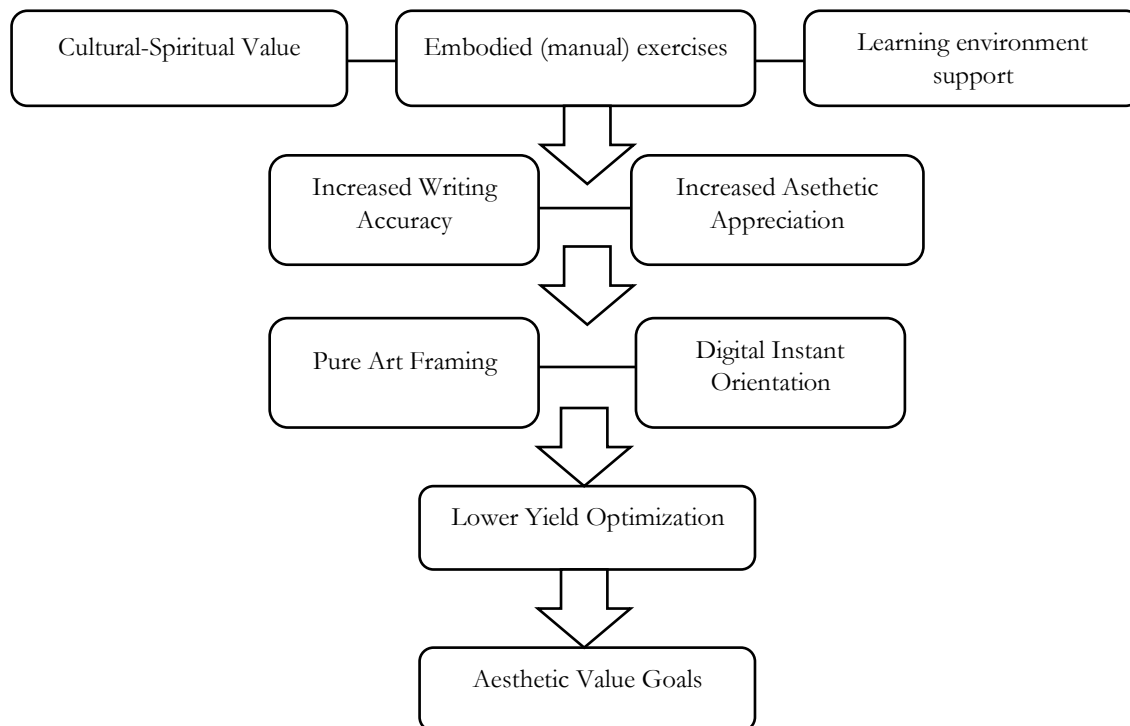
<sup>44</sup> Muhammad Alghiffary, *Tantangan Penerapan Kaligrafi dalam Pembelajaran*, Arif: Interviewer, 2025, November 28.

professionalism through special training (workshops) of calligraphy and art-based teaching methodologies is crucial to increase their confidence and capabilities. Institutions need to revise the curriculum to provide a larger portion of practice and consider providing calligraphy studios or art labs equipped with adequate tools and materials. In addition, differentiated learning approaches can be applied to accommodate different skill levels of students, for example with remedial modules for the less proficient or advanced projects for the talented.

The results of the study show that Arabic calligraphy has an important role as a pedagogical tool in learning in the Arabic Language Education Study Program of UIN K.H. Abdurrahman Wahid Pekalongan, not only practicing the technical skills of writing Arabic letters correctly, but also fostering students' aesthetic appreciation of the beauty of the form, proportion, and harmony of Arabic writing. Through the practice of calligraphy, students learn to develop precision, patience, concentration, creativity, and artistic sensitivity that are closely related to Islamic cultural and spiritual values. Calligraphy also helps students understand that Arabic not only has a linguistic aspect, but also visual and artistic value that can enrich the learning experience. Although in general, students respond positively to calligraphy learning, its use as a pedagogical medium is not fully optimal because there is still an assumption that calligraphy is only limited to art, not part of the learning strategy. In addition, the limitations of facilities, time, mentoring, and the tendency of students to choose instant methods through digital media are also obstacles in its development. Therefore, the integration of calligraphy in learning needs to be strengthened through more systematic methods, adequate practice portions, and support for lecturer facilities and competencies so that calligraphy can function optimally in improving writing skills as well as appreciation of students' aesthetics.

Pedagogically, these findings imply that calligraphy needs to be placed as a targeted Arabic literacy medium, not just an art skills course. The implications: (a) the learning of the book can be designed on a stage-based basis (proportion of letters–joint exercises–composition–product/portfolio) with rubrics that assess the accuracy of the letter form as well as aesthetic quality; (b) teaching strategies need to be blended: digital is used for initial sketching/design and exploration of compositions, followed by manual execution to train motor precision, discipline, and aesthetic sense; (c) Because the facilitation factor is very decisive, the study program needs to prepare a practical ecosystem (tools, space, studio time, and mentoring) so that calligraphy truly functions as a pedagogy, not just a theory.

Theoretically, this research contributes by strengthening the idea that Arabic language learning can be understood as a multimodal literacy practice (linguistic-visual-motor) that combines linguistic competence with aesthetic competence; In addition, the findings affirm the role of cultural-spiritual relevance as a mediator of learning motivation in Arabic language learning. The study also offers a conceptual contribution in the form of a framework for the integration of calligraphy as a pedagogy:



**Figure 2.** *Conceptual Framework of Calligraphy Integration as a Pedagogical Tool*

This framework can be a foothold for further research and the development of a more holistic PBA curriculum.

## Conclusion

The use of Arabic calligraphy as a pedagogical medium has been shown to make a meaningful contribution to enhancing the aesthetic appreciation of students in Arabic Language Education programs. Through active engagement in calligraphic practice, students encounter Arabic not merely as a linguistic system but also as an expression of art, culture, and spirituality. The processes of shaping letters, arranging compositions, and internalizing aesthetic values in each stroke help cultivate visual sensitivity, precision, and a deeper understanding of harmony and proportion, thereby creating a more holistic and meaningful learning experience while strengthening students' motivation and interest in learning Arabic.

At the same time, the implementation of calligraphy in instruction is shaped by both enabling and constraining factors. Supporting factors include its close connection to Islamic cultural values, the competence of lecturers, and students' interest and relevant educational backgrounds, whereas the main obstacles involve limited facilities, restricted instructional time, and the tendency of some students to prefer faster digital methods over manual practice. These findings suggest that the integration of calligraphy into the Arabic language education curriculum should be reinforced through stronger instructional policies, adequate learning resources, and adaptive teaching approaches that respond to students' needs, so that calligraphy may serve not only as a tool for language development but also as a means of fostering aesthetic competence and professional character in contemporary academic contexts. The limitations of this study include limited scope of locations and respondents so that the findings are not necessarily representative of all Arabic Language Education programs, as well as aesthetic appreciation assessments that rely heavily on perception/portfolio and are potentially subjective. The impact of calligraphy may also be influenced by other variables such as students' artistic-religious backgrounds, lecturer competence, limited training time, and availability of facilities, including the tendency of some students to choose digital methods. The recommendation is that the following research needs to expand the sample across institutions, use a comparative (manual–digital-blended) and/or longitudinal design, and apply a standardized rubric with triangulation of assessors and data. Implementably, the curriculum needs to emphasize the learning achievements of calligraphy, provide adequate facilities and practice time, train lecturers, and integrate manual exercises with digital media adaptively.

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