

Characteristics of Students' Work as a Result of Calligraphy Art Education at LEMKA Sukabumi

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ABSTRACT

This research examines the characteristics of students' calligraphy artwork at the LEMKA Arabic Calligraphy Islamic Boarding School, Sukabumi, as a result of applied art education. The gap phenomenon found is that there are differences in approaches to calligraphy art education, where some teachers adhere to traditional rules, while others open up space for exploration of contemporary styles. This causes variations in the characteristics of students' work, which have not been widely investigated in previous studies. This research fills the research gap by specifically examining how the curriculum at the LEMKA Islamic Boarding School is reflected in the students' work. Previous studies focused more on aspects of learning management and Islamic boarding school existence strategies, without exploring the relationship between education and the aesthetic characteristics of students' work. The research method used is a qualitative approach with descriptive methods. Data was collected through observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation of the students' works. The analysis technique is carried out through data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions based on aesthetic patterns and Islamic values. The research results show that the work of students at the LEMKA Islamic Boarding School can be classified into four main categories: manuscript calligraphy, manuscript decoration, decoration, and contemporary. Each category reflects the integration of Islamic aesthetics and freedom of expression with variations in the use of khat, colors and decorative elements. This research proves that the characteristics of LEMKA students' calligraphy artwork are based on 2 inseparable aesthetic concepts, namely essential aesthetics and material aesthetics.

KEYWORDS

Arabic Calligraphy,
LEMKA, Boarding
School, Art Education,
Characteristics

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INTRODUCTION

The art of Arabic calligraphy has become an inseparable part of Islamic civilization, including in Indonesia. Since the development of calligraphy in the archipelago, various institutions and Islamic boarding schools have begun to adopt it as part of Islamic art education (Alhail, 2024). One of the calligraphy educational institutions that has an important role in the development of this art is the Arabic Calligraphy Islamic Boarding School LEMKA Sukabumi (Hasibuan, 2009). Since its establishment by Didin Sirojuddin, this pesantren has produced thousands of calligraphers and calligraphy practitioners spread across various regions of Indonesia (Sirojuddin, 2014).

LEMKA Islamic Boarding School has a unique educational system because it combines the aesthetic value of art and Islamic principles in the learning process (Alhail, Wadiyo, & Sinaga, 2024). However, in its implementation, various challenges arise related to negotiations between aesthetic paradigms and religious norms. Some of the phenomena that attract attention are the orientation bias

between aesthetics and Islamic values, especially in the artworks created by students (Al-Fadhil, 2023). On the one hand, the art of calligraphy as an aesthetic expression has extensive creative freedom, including innovations in shapes, colors, and media (Prasetio, 2015). However, on the other hand, Arabic calligraphy in Islam also has normative limitations related to religious teachings, for example in figurative representations and the use of certain symbols (Alhail, Wadiyo, & Wibawanto, 2024). This phenomenon raises academic and practical discussions related to the extent to which the reflection of the Islamic aesthetic paradigm is applied in the educational curriculum at LEMKA and how this affects the characteristics of students' works.

In the previous study, research related to the curriculum and education of calligraphy art at the LEMKA Islamic Boarding School discussed more aspects of learning management, pesantren survival strategies, calligraphy learning models, and educational values in writing calligraphy (Rasdiyanah, 2021). However, there has been no research that specifically explores the characteristics of students' work as a reflection of the education applied in this pesantren. In addition, there is a phenomenon that the works produced by students show variations that reflect different aesthetic approaches (Azis & Lubis, 2023). Some works retain a classical style that conforms to traditional calligraphy rules, while others begin to adapt contemporary elements that could lead to differences in interpretation in Islamic perspectives (Khairiah, 2020). This suggests that there is a dynamic between aesthetics and religion that has not been fully explained in previous studies.

Another gap phenomenon is the inconsistency in the implementation of the curriculum related to aesthetic rules. Some teachers at the LEMKA Islamic Boarding School adhere to the prohibition of representations of living forms, while others are more open to visual exploration in contemporary calligraphy artworks (Musri, 2010). As a result, students have a diverse understanding of the aesthetic boundaries in Arabic calligraphy, which is then reflected in their work.

Based on a review of literature and previous studies, there are several research gaps that have not been touched in depth, namely: the lack of studies on the characteristics of students' works as a reflection of calligraphy education at the LEMKA Islamic Boarding School. Most of the research only discusses aspects of the curriculum and learning methods without explicitly relating them to the characteristics of the artworks produced, the lack of exploration regarding the negotiation between the aesthetic paradigm and Islamic teachings in calligraphy artworks produced by students, the absence of studies that specifically identify patterns and variations in students' works based on aesthetic aspects, materials, techniques, and Islamic values applied in education at the LEMKA Islamic Boarding School, the difference in the application of aesthetic values in the curriculum and the reality of students' practice, which causes variations in their artworks.

Based on this gap, this study aims to identify and analyze the characteristics of students' calligraphy artworks at the LEMKA Islamic Boarding School as a result of the curriculum implemented. This study will also examine how Islamic aesthetic reflection plays a role in shaping students' work and the extent to which religious values and aesthetics interact in the learning process. Based on the background and research gaps that have been identified, this study has several main objectives, namely: identifying the characteristics of students' calligraphy artworks at the LEMKA Islamic Boarding School as a result of the applied art education.

METHOD

This study uses a qualitative approach with a descriptive method. This approach was chosen to understand the characteristics of Arabic calligraphy artworks produced by students at the LEMKA Sukabumi Islamic Boarding School in depth and holistically. Descriptive methods are used to document, analyze, and interpret various aspects of students' calligraphy artworks (Rohidi, 2011). This research was carried out at the LEMKA Sukabumi Islamic Boarding School, which is known as one of the centers of Arabic calligraphy education in Indonesia. The duration of the study was carried out for 7 months from June 20 to December 20, 2024. The research subjects consisted of students who had participated in calligraphy education at the pesantren. The data in this study were obtained from two main sources (Faradila et al., 2024), namely: primary data includes Arabic calligraphy artworks produced by students and interviews with students, teachers, and pesantren administrators, and secondary data includes related documents, such as calligraphy manuals, learning

curriculum, and the results of previous research on Arabic calligraphy art at the LEMKA Islamic Boarding School.

Data collection is carried out by several techniques, namely: observation by directly observing the calligraphy learning process, techniques used by students, and their works, in-depth interviews conducted with students, teachers, and pesantren administrators to obtain information about learning methods, challenges faced, and the development of students' skills in the art of calligraphy, and documentation by collecting data in the form of photos of calligraphy works, learning records, as well as video recordings of the process of making works (Ghony et al., 2020). The data obtained is analyzed by descriptive-qualitative methods, through 3 stages, namely: 1) Data reduction by selecting data that is relevant to the focus of the research, such as the visual characteristics of calligraphy works, techniques used, and student development, 2) Presentation of data through data that has been reduced is compiled in the form of narrative descriptions, tables, and images to facilitate analysis, 3) Drawing conclusions by interpreting the data obtained for understand the patterns and characteristics of students' works and their relevance to calligraphy education at the LEMKA Islamic Boarding School (Iman et al., 2024).

To ensure the validity and reliability of the data, several triangulation techniques are used, including: 1) Triangulation of sources by comparing information from various sources, such as observations, interviews, and documentation, 2) Triangulation techniques by using various data collection methods to test the consistency of information, 3) Triangulation of time by conducting observations and interviews at different times to see the consistency of research results (Moleong, 2018). In this study, the ethical aspect is the main concern by ensuring official permission from the pesantren before conducting research, providing information to research participants regarding the purpose and benefits of the research, maintaining the confidentiality of the identity and personal data of research participants, and not changing or engineering the data obtained.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

1. Results of Findings on the Characteristics of Students' Work at the LEMKA Arabic Calligraphy Islamic Boarding School, Sukabumi

An educational institution that has a variety of differences in paradigm, objectives, systems, governance, and teaching also influences the uniqueness produced from the output of the educational institution, thus forming a characteristic that distinguishes the institution from other institutions. One of them is the non-formal educational institution of the LEMKA Arabic Calligraphy Islamic Boarding School located in Sukabumi which has a special *characteristic framework* that distinguishes the LEMKA Arabic Calligraphy Islamic Boarding School from other Arabic calligraphy institutions. Based on field findings data through primary and secondary sources from interviews, observations, documentation and document studies, it was obtained that the characteristics of the students' calligraphy artworks at the LEMKA Arabic Calligraphy Islamic Boarding School have been found and formulated into a LEMKA calligraphy model.

Based on the results of data classification from data analysis techniques, it was found that the LEMKA Arabic Calligraphy Islamic Boarding School developed calligraphy not from khat or writing, but the development lies in the media and decoration, so that the research facts prove that there are 4 branches of calligraphy that are studied as part of the educational results at the LEMKA Arabic Calligraphy Islamic Boarding School in the form of artwork products including: manuscript calligraphy, decorative calligraphy of mushaf, decorative calligraphy, and contemporary calligraphy. The following is a model of the characteristics of the work of students at the LEMKA Arabic Calligraphy Islamic Boarding School.

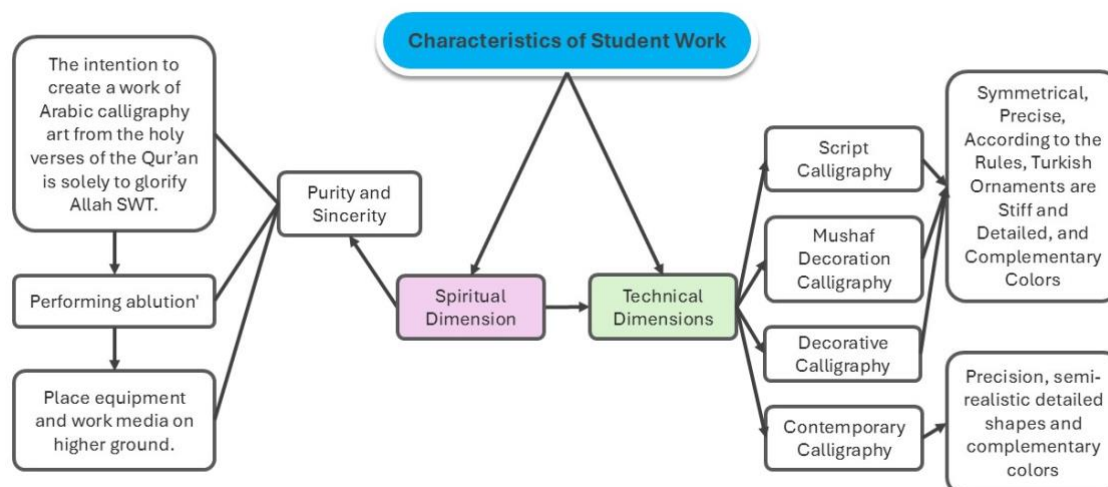


Figure 1 Aesthetic Concepts that Shape the Characteristics of Students' Calligraphy Works at LEMKA Islamic Boarding Schools (Source: Alhail, 2025)

Generally, Arabic calligraphy made by students of the LEMKA Arabic Calligraphy Islamic Boarding School begins with the values of purity and sincerity, including using a centralized good intention to make Arabic calligraphy artworks from the holy verses of the Qur'an solely to glorify Allah SWT, then accompanied by ablution so that it is in a clean and holy state, and every equipment and media of work is placed in a higher place, not placed in a lower place such as the floor.

Technically, in manuscript calligraphy has a dominating characteristic in students' works is the use of khat according to the rules with the addition of rigid geometric lines as a framing decoration of the verses written. In calligraphy, mushaf decorations have a dominating characteristic in the work of students, namely the use of khat according to the rules and decorations made with Turkish ornaments and complementary colors or contrasting colors. In calligraphy, decoration has a dominating characteristic in students' works, namely the use of khat according to the rules of the rules, geometric ornaments and Turkish flora, and complementary colors. In contemporary calligraphy, the shapes of the objects painted are characterized by semi-realist details and the color combination used is color with complementary patterns.

2. Results of Findings on the Characteristics of Students' Works as a Result of Arabic Calligraphy Art Education at the LEMKA Islamic Boarding School, Sukabumi

The results of the study show that the works of students at the LEMKA Islamic Boarding School can be classified into four main categories: manuscript calligraphy, mushaf decoration, decoration, and contemporary. Each category reflects the integration between Islamic aesthetics and freedom of expression, with variations in the use of khat, colors, as well as decorative elements. This study contributes to the development of a calligraphy art curriculum that is more in line with Islamic aesthetic principles as well as innovations in contemporary calligraphy art.

The characteristics found from the students' work are that the works produced come from the sincere intention of Allah SWT to glorify the holy verses of the Qur'an, accompanied by ablution and glorify the equipment and media used to make Arabic calligraphy artworks. The following are the results of the analysis of 4 Arabic calligraphy artworks of students at the LEMKA Calligraphy Islamic Boarding School.



Figure 2 Calligraphy of Manuscripts by Imron Syafii
(Source: Alhail Document, 2024)

Shafii's work is created through a spiritual dimension procedure and technically Shafii's work contains a rigid style in his geometric ornaments. Calligraphy works that are the result of Arabic calligraphy education at the LEMKA Islamic Boarding School, are believed and trusted by students and teachers that Shafii's works are able to convey spiritual messages from the verses written and are seen to radiate a sense of amazement at the power of Allah SWT, this can happen because of the use of procedures from the spiritual dimension that are carried out before the creation of the work and maintain the purity of oneself and heart until the work is completed. Based on the essential aesthetics that are the principle of LEMKA in working, the calligraphy of this manuscript is made with the sincere intention of working for Allah, then starting with purification through ablution and maintaining the glory of the media. Based on material aesthetics, this calligraphy is made using several khat including khat riq'ah with black, khat tsulus with red, khat farisi with green, and khat diwani with blue. In addition, this work is made using geometric ornaments in black.

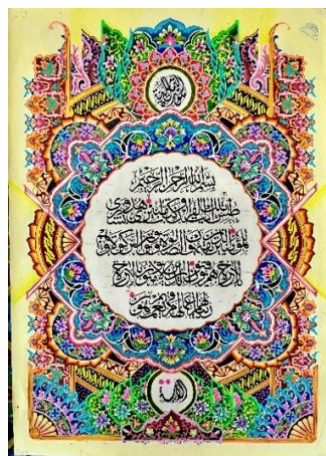


Figure 3 Decorative Calligraphy of Mushaf by Muhammad Ilyas
(Source: Alhail Document, 2024)

Ilyas' work is created through a spiritual dimension procedure and technically Ilyas' work contains a rigid style in his geometric ornaments. The calligraphy work which is the result of Arabic calligraphy education at the LEMKA Islamic Boarding School, is believed and trusted by students and teachers that Ilyas' work is able to convey spiritual messages from the verses written and is seen to radiate a sense of awe at the power of Allah SWT, this can happen because of the use of procedures from the spiritual dimension that are carried out before making the work and maintaining the purity

of the self and heart until the work is completed. Based on the essential aesthetics that are the principle of LEMKA in working, the calligraphy of this manuscript is made with the sincere intention of working for Allah, then starting with purification through ablution and maintaining the glory of the media. Based on material aesthetics, this calligraphy is made using several khat including khat diwani jali and khat tsulust. In addition, this work is made using geometric ornaments and flora. The application of colors in this mushaf decorative calligraphy is complementary colors.



Figure 4 Decorative Calligraphy by Dimas Aditya Permana
(Source: Alhail Document, 2024)

Permana's work is created through a spiritual dimension procedure and technically Permana's work contains a rigid style in its geometric ornaments. Calligraphy works that are the result of Arabic calligraphy education at the LEMKA Islamic Boarding School, are believed and trusted by students and teachers that Permana's works are able to convey spiritual messages from the verses written, this can happen because of the use of procedures from the spiritual dimension that are carried out before making the work and maintaining the purity of the self and heart until the work is completed. Based on the essential aesthetics that are the principle of LEMKA in working, the calligraphy of this manuscript is made with the sincere intention of working for Allah, then starting with purification through ablution and maintaining the glory of the media. Based on material aesthetics, this calligraphy is made using several khat including khat tsulust, khat riq'ah, khat diwani, khat diwani jali, and khat naskhi. In addition, this work is made using geometric ornaments and flora. The application of colors in this decorative calligraphy is complementary colors.



Figure 5 Contemporary Calligraphy by Miftah
(Source: Alhail Document, 2024)

Miftah's work is created through a spiritual dimension procedure and technically Miftah's work contains a rigid style in his geometric ornaments. The calligraphy work that is the result of Arabic calligraphy education at the LEMKA Islamic Boarding School, is believed and trusted by students and teachers that Miftah's work is able to convey spiritual messages from the verses written and is seen to radiate a sense of amazement at the power of Allah SWT, this can happen because of the use of procedures from the spiritual dimension that are carried out before the creation of the work and maintain the purity of the self and heart until the work is completed. Based on the essential aesthetics that are the principle of LEMKA in working, the calligraphy of this manuscript is made with the sincere intention of working for Allah, then starting with purification through ablution and maintaining the glory of the media. Based on material aesthetics, this calligraphy is made using several styles including figural style and symbolic style. In addition, this work is made using a variety of objects such as wood, sky, clouds, water droplets, fabric, grass, caterpillar shapes, leaves, feathers, iron, and sun. The application of color in contemporary calligraphy is complementary colors.

Research Limitations

The limitation of this research lies in the characteristics of the students' work which basically cannot fully reflect the characteristics of the LEMKA Arabic calligraphy Islamic Boarding School education as a whole, further research is still needed to look at the scope of different works such as the work of Ustad Didin, the work of alumni, and the work of teachers, in order to find concepts with high credibility on the characteristics of calligraphy works as a result of education in Islamic Boarding Schools LEMKA Arabic calligraphy

CONCLUSION

This study answers the research question about how the characteristics of students' calligraphy artworks in the LEMKA Islamic Boarding School as a result of education. Then, this study proves that the characteristics of the calligraphy artwork of LEMKA students are made based on 2 aesthetic concepts that are integrated and inseparable, namely the essential aesthetics that contain spiritual procedures such as the intention for Allah, ablution, and glorifying equipment and media for work and material aesthetics that contain the rules of beauty that have existed before empirically.

This research is expected to contribute to: academic development as a reference in the study of Arabic calligraphy art, especially in the aspect of Islamic education and aesthetics, LEMKA Islamic Boarding School and similar institutions in evaluating and developing a calligraphy art education curriculum that is more in line with Islamic aesthetic principles, artists and calligraphers as reflection materials to understand how Islamic aesthetic values affect calligraphy artworks, and the general public in understanding the dynamics of Arabic calligraphy education in Islamic boarding schools and how the results contribute to the development of Islamic art in Indonesia.

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