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THE SUCCESS OF CALLIGRAPHY LEARNING ON MAHARAH AL-KITABAH OF AL-QUR'AN MEMORIZERS AT MADRASAH ALIYAH MA'HAD TAHFIZHIL QUR'AN FOUNDATION ISLAMIC CENTER NORTH SUMATERA

¹Ja'alna Salwinur Baeha, ²Lily Sardiani Daulay

^{1,2} Universitas Islam Negeri Sumatera Utara, Indonesia

Corresponding E-mail: ¹baehajaalna@gmail.com, ²lilysardiani@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

The Qur'an is one of the revelations of Allah SWT revealed to the Prophet Muhammad SAW and is a guide for Muslims. The AL-Qur'an is full of meanings that are very related to life, also the discussion in the AL-Qur'an is relevant to the times. The SU Islamic Center Foundation is one of the modern-based boarding schools that has produced thousands of memorizers of the Qur'an. However, there are difficulties for male students and female students in writing Arabic letters, and the Qur'an contains Arabic writing. This research aims to find a comprehensive understanding according to the title under study. This research methodology is a type of qualitative descriptive method, namely literature study by looking for references from journals and theses that are appropriate regarding the effectiveness of calligraphy on maharah al-kitabah (calligraphy) of memorizing the Qur'an. In terms of analyzing data, researchers use data collection techniques, namely through observation, direct interviews with resource parties at Ma'had Tahfizhil Qur'an Islamic Center SU Foundation and documentation. The results of the study show that male students or female students do not all have a high interest in learning maharah al-kitabah (calligraphy), especially at the Madrasah Aliyah level, and also lack of skills in writing.

Keywords: Islamic Center, Calligraphy, Hafidzh/hafidzho



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INTRODUCTION

Calligraphy art is a beautiful art of the work of human hands related to writing. The art of calligraphy or often called *khat* is also one of the Islamic arts that is able to apply the *word of Allah SWT* and can provide messages in its writing. (Lestari et al., 2021). In addition, the art of calligraphy is not only focused on writing, or creating beautiful writing which is then attached to the walls of a house or school. But it can also be used as a medium in preaching or in improving the Islamic economy. Not only a few people make calligraphy a very profitable business. The selling power of calligraphy art has a very appropriate position in business.

Calligraphy art is not only an art that has uniqueness in it, but there is also a message in its writing. In writing calligraphy is not just writing an ordinary writing, but there are steps that must be applied in the writing. The art of calligraphy also contains *religious* values, moral values that can make a person's character disciplined, honest, creative, trustworthy, hardworking, independent, and can make a person responsible for himself. (Lestari et al., 2021; Safliana, 2018)..

In essence, the art of calligraphy must be developed in the era of young people today. Introducing the art of calligraphy writing to the Islamic generation is mandatory. Do not let the art of calligraphy become faded and unpopular again due to the absence of introduction to the younger generation today. The art of calligraphy is very closely related to the writing of Arabic letters, such as the Al-Qu'ran. In practice, the art of calligraphy has been rooted in Islamic education, especially in boarding school education which implements a system of memorizing and studying the holy *book of Al-Qu'ran*, and it is a familiar thing for students.

Islamic boarding school is the oldest educational institution in Indonesia, which gave birth to many Islamic scholars. Very many Islamic figures were born from pesantren institutions. Pesantren is a social and religious broadcasting institution. Not a few of the pesantren's outputs become weighty people. (Syafe'i, 2017). If we compare the religious knowledge of people who are in the pesantren environment with people who live in the outside community, then it covers more religious knowledge of people who are in the pesantren environment. The reason is because every day pesantren always gives lessons that are very related to Islam. Starting from social studies, memorizing the Koran, analyzing the contents of the Koran, and even applying to themselves and their lives from something that is obtained after reading the contents of the Al-Qu'ran.

Al-Qu'ran is one of the revelations of Allah SWT revealed to the Prophet Muhammad SAW and is a guide for Muslims. Al-Qu'ran is full of meanings related to the life that is lived, and also the discussion in the holy *book of Al-Qu'ran* is relevant to the times. (Bestari, 2020). Apart from being a guide for

Muslims, it is also a differentiator between truth and falsehood. Al-Qur'an is not only to be memorized, but also must learn the contents of the Al-Qur'an content. Not only that, for a memorizer must learn how to write the verses of the Al-Qur'an, because the Al-Qur'an is not only published from the hands of Muslims, but infidels also published the Al-Qur'an.

Islamic boarding school of North Sumatra Islamic Center Foundation is one of the Qur'an tahfidz boarding schools in Medan, North Sumatra. The Islamic Center Foundation of North Sumatra is a social organization that was founded in 1982 whose chairman is H. Abdul Manang Simatupang, which is located on Jl. Willem Iskandar, Medan Estate Village, Percut Sei Tuan District, Deli Serdang North Sumatra.

In this discussion related to calligraphy art writing, a question arises how the Arabic writing of the Al-Qur'an verse that has been memorized by students who have memorized more than 1 juz or 5 juz? Because memorization is not only just in the lips and mind, besides being able to understand the contents and contents, it must also understand the writing of each letter and verse. Therefore, the study becomes important to know how the Arabic writing of a *hafidzh / hafidzhah*, so that the existence of his memorization and understanding of his Arabic writing can be useful for maintaining the authenticity of the Al-Qur'an.

RESEARCH METHODS

In this study, the method used by researchers is a qualitative method. The definition of qualitative methods according to Strauss and Corbin in Cresswell, J, is research that must be observed directly in the field involving themselves and the people they want to interview to get the information they want to find (Rahmat, 2009). (Rahmat, 2009).

Data collection by interviewing, observation, and documentation. Interviewing is a conversation or dialog conducted by two people aimed at obtaining clarity, facts, and data about something under study and then asking questions to trusted sources. (Rahmat, 2009). In this study, researchers interviewed the Principal of Madrasah Aliyah Hifzhil Qur'an Islamic Center, Head of extracurricular activities, and students of the Islamic Center Foundation of North Sumatra. Observation is examining a condition or situation. It is an accurate method for collecting data, which aims to obtain information which is then used as the object of the researcher's study.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

A. Definition of calligraphy

In Arabic, calligraphy means *khat*, which means "line base", "handwork", or "hand-drawn". In the book *Irsyad al Qosid* by Shaykh Samsudin al Afkani (calligrapher) in the chapter *Hasyr al'ulum*: "Calligraphy is a science that can

introduce the shape of Arabic letters, single forms, and connected letters. It is also able to introduce the placement and how to assemble them into writing or a line, change a spelling that needs to be changed and how to change it." (Los, n.d.) This definition explains that calligraphy studies the procedures for writing, arranging, assembling, so that an art is formed.

Another opinion also says the art of calligraphy is the art of painting that manifests the *word of Allah* SWT. the goal is to apply it in beautiful paintings on wood, paper and cloth. Calligraphy art can be written using brushes, pencils, or other stationery. Calligraphy art is a beautiful art of the work of human hands related to the field of writing and there is a religious meaning in the writing. (Lestari et al., 2021; Syarofah et al., 2022)..

In another reference, namely by Fahrurrozi and Sahril, it is mentioned that calligraphy is the study of hijaiyah letters or Arabic letters, where each discussion of these letters, there are procedures or methods and rules for placing which letters should be located above the line and which letters are located below the line, as well as studying single letters and how to write them (Fahrurrozi & Napitupulu, 2023).

From some of the above opinions about the meaning of calligraphy, it can be concluded that calligraphy is the art of writing hijaiyyah letters. In the writing there is a meaning in it given by the painter, both in terms of religious meaning, educational value, and also in writing it must pay attention to the rules and regulations of the writing itself.

B. Brief Biography of Islamic Center Foundation Boarding School North Sumatra

In the beginning, the SU Islamic Center Foundation established the Ulama cadre program in North Sumatra, which was allowed to take part in the program were alumni of Islamic boarding schools or madrasah aliyah equivalent. Within a period of 3 years per batch. In January 1989, the Islamic Center SU Foundation opened a Qur'an tahfidzh program specifically for men which was named "Madrasah Tahfizhil Qur'an Islamic Center SU Foundation". (Nova, 2017). As time goes by right in 2002 Ma'had Islamic Center Foundation developed its program by opening tahfizh for girls. Until now Ma'had Tahfidzh Qur'an has produced many Hafidzh / Hafidzho who come from various regions, provinces, such as Nias Island, Riau, Nangroe Aceh Darussalam, Etc.

At that time in 2002 the students were not allowed to follow the formal learning system. The students were only focused on memorizing Al-Qu'ran and improving their understanding of the memorized Al-Qu'ran verses. The reason is that the Ma'had is worried about the outside world which is full of negative things that are feared to affect the memorization of the students. Globalization and the rampant development of culture in the outside world, it is feared that it will bring less positive things to teenagers who are still

unstable. (Nova, 2017). The researcher's view of the reasoning of the Ma'had at that time, the Ma'had leadership and the teachers involved that year should have been able to introduce Islamic Center students to various cultures in Indonesia, introducing perspectives, and aspects both positive and not to aspects of ancestral morality. Then the students can sort out which ones can and should be absorbed in accordance with the Koranic code of life.

Until the last few years the Ma'had allowed students to attend formal learning outside the Islamic Center Foundation such as Madrasah Tsanawiyah, Madrasah Aliyah and Higher Education. But after that, Ma'had conducted a field evaluation of the students' memorization. The results obtained from evaluating the memorization of students who carry out two activities in different locations are very negative results, the memorization of a student who participates in learning outside the Islamic Center Foundation complex does not provide positive results, the success rate is very low. (Nova, 2017).

After consideration and the demands of the education world that students also need to follow general and religious learning, which is not only focused on the Al-Qu'ran alone. An idea emerged to develop a program that did not yet exist at the SU Islamic Center Foundation, namely opening a formal education program. (Nova, 2017). Since 2009, the Islamic Center Foundation has two programs in addition to Tahfidz Qur'an education, also opened Madrasah Tsanawiyah Hifdzil Qur'an equivalent to junior high school, and then in 2011 the Islamic Center Foundation again developed its education level, namely opening Madrasah Aliyah Tahfidzhil Qur'an which is equivalent to high school. (Nova, 2017).

C. Definition of *Maharah Al-kitabah*

Writing is an activity that can provide results in the long term, because writing comes from a person's thoughts that are poured in real terms on a book with hand scribbles. A theory or idea that is not put into writing will be easily lost, and to preserve the theory or idea by pouring it into a handwriting. It is very important to learn how to write correctly and follow the rules set. As in Arabic poetry;

الْعِلْمُ لَيْسَ فِي الْكِتَابِ ضَاعَ

If knowledge is not written down, it will be lost

Writing proficiency in formal educational institutions in Arabic language learning is an aspect that is trained continuously which provides an optimal result. The stages carried out in the training process can be started with an introduction to Arabic letters, practicing how to write single letters, making words, making sentences, to a high level, namely being able to make a paragraph in the form of a short story essay. (Rathomi, 2020).

In his writing, Rathomi revealed an opinion from Abdullah Al-Ghali and Abdul Hamid Abdullah that *maharah kitabah* is an activity that goes through a process of drawing and writing letters with clear writing and can be understood by the reader, which is written in accordance with the established methods of Arabic writing, and does not change the meaning or meaning of the original speaker. (Rathomi, 2020).

The definition can draw two components in writing proficiency. The first is being able to form and string words into a paragraph essay that can be understood for its content and meaning. Second, the stringing of paragraphs comes from thoughts that are poured into writing. In learning Arabic writing can be directed to the practice of writing letters called *imla'* (dictation), *khat* (Arabic writing or calligraphy), *insya'* (essay). These three aspects should be trained seriously and carried out continuously to get an optimal result. (Rathomi, 2020).

Arabic is the language of Muslims, and the language of the Holy Qur'an. A person does not understand the pedomen of life, namely the *book* and *sunnah* with a correct understanding except with an understanding of Arabic. (Eni, 1967). It is appropriate for a Muslim to love Arabic and have an effort in mastering and learning it. Allah SWT has chosen Arabic from many languages on earth as the language of the Qur'an. Because Arabic is a good language when compared to other languages. Through learning calligraphy someone will be able to master Arabic writing must not be perfect.

Al-Qu'ran memorizers are strongly advised to learn how to write Arabic, namely by learning calligraphy, because what is memorized is in the form of Arabic writing. At Ma'had Tahfizh Al-Qu'ran Islamic Center Foundation North Sumatra calligraphy is not found in formal learning only in extracurricular programs.

D. Calligraphy Learning System at Islamic Boarding School Islamic Center North Sumatra

The learning system is a set of elements that are interconnected and related, and can also contain the way learning is carried out in order to achieve the objectives of the learning. (Syarofah et al., 2022).. It can be concluded that the system in learning is a method or concept that is organized and carried out during the learning process, with the aim of achieving the success of the learning.

This article will discuss the calligraphy learning system at the Ma'had Tahfizh Al-Qu'ran Islamic Center Foundation of North Sumatra. How is the calligraphy learning system and the division of time between formal learning and Tahfizh Al-Qu'ran.

In the previous paragraph, the definition of Calligraphy or *khat* was explained, which is a beautiful handwriting art of human work related to writing, which is a popular art in the community and in the Islamic world.

Calligraphy learning at the Islami Center SU Foundation is not available in the formal program either at the Madrasah Tsanawiyah level or at the Madrasah Aliyah level. This learning only exists in extracurricular programs. According to the Head of Extracurricular, calligraphy is not used as formal learning because calligraphy is contested in MTQ. Categories that are often contested include *mushaf*, *decoration*, *contemporary*, and *script*.

In participating in this extracurricular program, students are not forced to participate in all programs, either calligraphy programs or other extracurricular programs. The system applied is a *questionnaire system*, which is a system carried out by data collection techniques and asking written questions to students and also answered by students in writing. So every time there are new students, the *questionnaire system* is applied and they choose according to their own wishes. There are 13 active extracurricular activities, and the total extracurricular activities are 25.

The calligraphy learning system at the Islamic Center has obstacles and can cause the extracurricular activity to die. The reason is the cost or wage for the supervisor/teacher in that field. If the question arises, is calligraphy learning still applied at the Islamic Center SU Foundation? The answer is there but it is not included in the extracurricular program anymore, but the teacher will be called if there is a competition only.

Calligraphy enthusiasts at the Islamic Center Foundation students are divided into each category, such as the *mushaf* category with 6 people, *decoration* with 7 people, *contemporary* with 5 people, and the *script* category with 2 people. Finding a teacher for calligraphy learning must also be in accordance with the category of the field. Because there are no mentors who are multitalented in all fields. If one mentor is found for all fields, then the Foundation is able to provide commensurate wages.

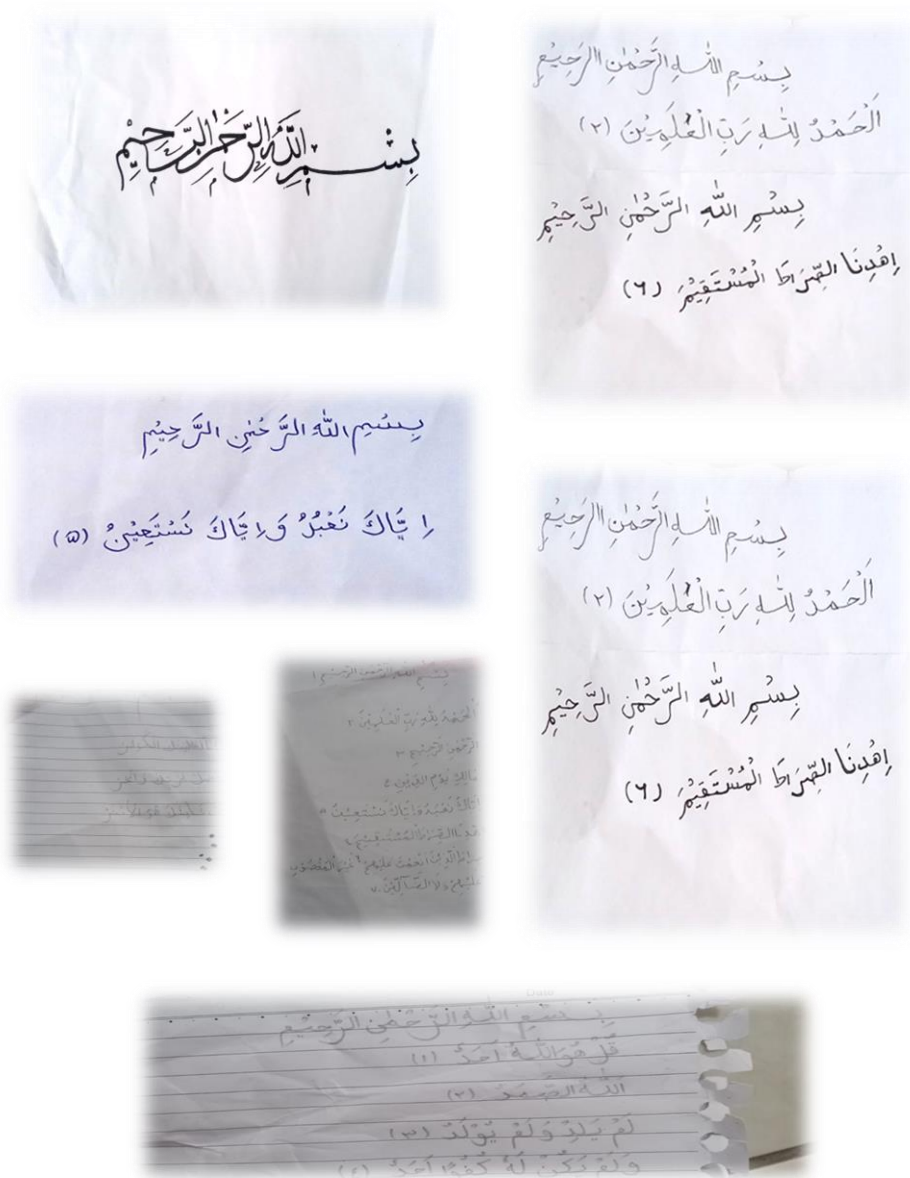
Researchers also interviewed the Principal of Madrasah Aliyah Islamic Center SU Foundation, Mr. PL. He said that formal learning has been determined directly by the Ministry of Religion. So Ma'had Tahfizhil Qur'an Islamic Center SU Foundation is an institution that combines two curricula, namely the *Tahfizhul Qur'an* education curriculum with the curriculum under the auspices of the Ministry of Religion, Ministry of Religion.

E. The Relationship Between *Maharah Al-kitabah* and the Memorizers of the Koran

Islamic Center Foundation Pesantren makes the Al-Qu'ran memorization program a mandatory activity, and calligraphy learning is only applied in extracurricular activities. The students are focused on memorizing the Al-

Qu'ran, studying it and understanding the content of the Al-Qu'ran by following formal learning.

Based on data conducted by researchers through direct interviews and the practice of *maharah al-kitabah* which is carried out directly on the spot, there are 3 male students and 8 female students. Researchers asked each student to write one short surah starting from *surah al-fatihah*, *surah al-kausar*, *surah Al-ikhlas*. The male students are MN, JA, AS, and the female queues are MR, SS, WD, TS, AZ, NN, LM, KF. The following are the results of the handwriting of the sources that the researchers got;



It can be seen from the handwriting of some male students and female students at the SU Islamic Center Foundation, that the Arabic writing or *maharah al-kitabah* of the students is not as beautiful as imagined. In this case the students are not to blame. Everyone has advantages and talents in their respective fields. They just need to be taught about how to write Arabic beautifully and according to the method. There are several students who are interested in learning calligraphy, one of them is a female student, LM. LM participated in the calligraphy competition in the *mushaf* category.



The writing on the *bismillah* above is the result of LM's handwriting. He said that calligraphy is a hobby that he is interested in. His father and mother's family support him to hone the hobby he is interested in. ML once felt *down*, at which time when she participated in the calligraphy competition. Participating in the calligraphy competition must sacrifice money, energy, time and thoughts. When ML followed the process to welcome the competition to be faced, ML spent a lot of time to improve the skills he had, by learning more about calligraphy writing. The pesantren environment or more precisely ML's friends did not support him, it actually made him *down*. However, that did not stop ML from participating in the competition. ML is a child who has a positive aura, ML said that calligraphy gives its own meaning in his life. Even though in the view of people ML did not win and participating in the competition was in vain, for ML learning calligraphy made him a disciplined person, more respectful of time, and made him an honest and diligent worshipper. By knowing the writing of Arabic letters ML feels easier to memorize the Al-Qu'ran, because then when memorizing ML can imagine the letters of the Al-Qu'ran verse.

It can be concluded that the relationship between *maharah al-kitabah* and the memorizers of the Al-Qu'ran is very closely related. A short story from one of the female students above can give us a lesson, that studying calligraphy makes it easier to memorize and also a strong memory of the verse that has been memorized.

CONCLUSION

Calligraphy is the art of writing beautiful hijaiyah letters, where in this calligraphy art what is prioritized is its aesthetic value, by paying attention to the rules and regulations of the writing itself. Learning the art of calligraphy or *maharah al-kitabah* can make it easier for memorizers of the Koran to memorize the verses of the Koran.

The Islamic Center Foundation of North Sumatra is a boarding school that combines two educational institutions, namely *Tahfizhul Qur'an educational institutions* and educational institutions under the auspices of the Ministry of Religion. This boarding school does not establish calligraphy learning in the formal curriculum. Calligraphy is found in extracurricular activities only, and outside mentors are invited to learn if there is a competition.

Researchers can conclude that the Islamic Center SU Foundation does not choose calligraphy as a subject in the field of skills. However, this boarding school prefers other subjects for the field of hand skills and is more inclined to produce a product such as weaving. Actually, the relationship between hand skills is very far related to the tahfidz program at the Islamic Center SU Islamic Boarding School.

This study is presented because in the view of researchers, there are still many Arabic handwriting results, alumni of Tahfidz Al-Qur'an Islamic boarding schools whose results do not provide positive results. One of them is the alumni of the Islamic Center Foundation Boarding School. The researcher hopes that at least, there is progress towards the beautiful Arabic handwriting of a memorizer of Al-Qur'an who is more expected to be a hafidz / hafidzoh who has completed memorizing Al-Qur'an which amounts to 30 juz.

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