

RESEARCH ARTICLE

Interpreting Qur'anic Calligraphy in Mosque Architecture: A Review on its Aesthetical Outlook

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Abstract

Qur'anic calligraphy constitutes a central element of Islamic visual culture, functioning not only as an artistic expression but also as a medium through which the Qur'an is experienced in everyday religious life. This study aims to examine the aesthetic characteristics and community reception of Qur'anic calligraphy displayed in mosque architecture, focusing on the Great Mosque of Ar-Raudlah in Kraksaan and the Raudlatul Jannah Mosque in Probolinggo, East Java. Employing a qualitative research design within the framework of Living Qur'an studies, data were collected through observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation. The findings reveal that Thuluth script dominates the calligraphic forms in both mosques, reflecting aesthetic principles of harmony, balance, and sacred symbolism. Qur'anic verses such as Ayat al-Kursi and Surah al-Fatihah are strategically positioned in architectural focal points, reinforcing their theological significance and spiritual functions. From the perspective of reception, *jamaah* perceive Qur'anic calligraphy not merely as decorative ornamentation but as a source of spiritual reflection, moral guidance, and religious protection. The visual presence of Qur'anic inscriptions contributes to heightened devotional awareness (*khushu'*) and strengthens communal religious identity. This study demonstrates that Qur'anic calligraphy serves as a form of visual reception of the Qur'an, integrating aesthetics, theology, and lived religious experience within mosque spaces.

Key words: Qur'anic Calligraphy, Living Qur'an, Aesthetic Reception, Mosque Architecture, Islamic Art.

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INTRODUCTION

Islamic calligraphy represents one of the most distinctive and enduring artistic expressions within Islamic civilization. Emerging alongside the revelation of the Qur'an in the seventh century, Arabic calligraphy developed not merely as a functional writing system but as a sacred art closely connected to the transmission, preservation, and aesthetic embodiment of divine revelation. The Qur'an, as the central text of Islam, has played a decisive role in shaping the form, function, and meaning of Islamic calligraphy, transforming written words into a visual medium that reflects theological, spiritual, and cultural values (Akbar, 2012; Israr, 1985). As a result, Qur'anic calligraphy occupies a privileged position within Islamic art, architecture, and religious life.

Historically, the early stages of Qur'anic writing were driven by the urgent need to record divine revelation accurately. During the formative period of Islam, verses of the Qur'an were written on various materials such as animal skins, palm leaves, stones, and bones. The codification of the Qur'an during the era of the Rightly Guided Caliphs, particularly under the caliphate of 'Uthmān ibn 'Affān, marked a crucial moment in the standardization of Qur'anic script and orthography (Zuhri, 2017). Over time, the development of Arabic script, including the introduction of diacritical marks and vowel signs, contributed to the refinement of Qur'anic writing and laid the foundation for the emergence of diverse calligraphic styles.

As Islamic civilization expanded geographically and culturally, Arabic calligraphy evolved beyond its initial textual function. It became a primary visual language through which Muslims expressed devotion, identity, and aesthetic sensibility. Various scripts such as Kufic, Thuluth, Naskh, and Diwani emerged, each characterized by distinct formal properties and symbolic meanings (Akbar, 2012; Mujahidin, 2016). Among these, Thuluth script gained prominence in architectural contexts, particularly in mosques, due to its monumental scale, rhythmic elegance, and visual harmony. Qur'anic inscriptions rendered in Thuluth script often adorn mihrabs, domes, walls, and entrances, reinforcing the sacred atmosphere of worship spaces.

In the Indonesian context, Islamic calligraphy developed through a process of cultural interaction and adaptation. The arrival of Islam in the archipelago introduced Arabic script and Qur'anic aesthetics, which gradually interacted with local artistic traditions. Over time, calligraphy became an integral element of mosque architecture, religious education, and communal religious expression (Syamsuriadi, 2015; Mujahidin, 2016). Mosques across Indonesia display a wide range of Qur'anic calligraphic forms that reflect both universal Islamic values and local cultural sensibilities. These calligraphic decorations function not only as visual embellishments but also as media of religious communication and moral instruction.

Within Islamic art discourse, the aesthetic dimension of calligraphy cannot be separated from its spiritual and theological significance. Islamic aesthetics emphasizes transcendence, harmony, balance, and abstraction, reflecting the principle of *tawhīd* (divine unity). Unlike representational art, Islamic calligraphy avoids figurative depiction and instead transforms language into visual form, allowing divine words to be contemplated through both sight and meaning (Jinan, 2010; Kusuma, 2020). This aesthetic approach positions Qur'anic calligraphy as a bridge between sensory

perception and spiritual reflection, inviting viewers to engage with the sacred text beyond literal reading.

The aesthetic experience of Qur'anic calligraphy is closely linked to the concept of reception. Reception theory, originally developed in literary studies, emphasizes the role of the reader or viewer in producing meaning through interaction with a text or artwork (Ratna, 2011; Pradopo, 2007). Applied to Qur'anic studies, reception refers to how individuals and communities perceive, interpret, and respond to the Qur'an in various social and cultural contexts. This perspective has been further developed within the framework of Living Qur'an studies, which examine how the Qur'an is lived, practiced, and experienced in everyday life beyond formal textual interpretation (Aufa, 2020; Dozan, 2022).

Qur'anic calligraphy in mosques represents a significant form of Living Qur'an practice. The placement of Qur'anic verses within architectural spaces transforms the mosque into a visual and symbolic environment where the Qur'an is continuously present and encountered. *Jamaah* do not merely read the verses; they see them, feel their presence, and associate them with spiritual meanings, moral values, and protective or blessing-related beliefs. For example, verses such as Ayat al-Kursi and Surah al-Fatihah are commonly used in mosque calligraphy due to their perceived spiritual efficacy and theological importance (Rahman, 2018; Hidayatullah, 2020).

Previous studies on Islamic calligraphy have largely focused on formal aesthetics, stylistic analysis, or historical development (Saskia, 2012; Prayogi, 2020). While these studies provide valuable insights into visual composition, materials, and artistic influences, fewer works have explored how mosque communities receive and interpret Qur'anic calligraphy as part of their lived religious experience. Research that integrates aesthetic analysis with reception studies remains relatively limited, particularly at the local mosque level. This gap highlights the need for empirical studies that examine how Qur'anic calligraphy functions simultaneously as an artistic form and a medium of religious meaning.

The cities of Kraksaan and Probolinggo offer a relevant context for such an investigation. Mosques in these areas display prominent Qur'anic calligraphy integrated into their architectural design, reflecting both artistic intention and religious symbolism. The Great Mosque of Ar-Raudlah in Kraksaan and the Raudlatul Jannah Mosque in Probolinggo, in particular, feature Qur'anic inscriptions rendered in Thuluth script, including Ayat al-Kursi, Surah al-Fatihah, and selected verses from Surah al-Baqarah. These calligraphic elements not only enhance the visual beauty of the mosques but also shape how *jamaah* engage with Qur'anic messages during religious activities.

Understanding the aesthetics and reception of Qur'anic calligraphy in these mosques is important for several reasons. First, it contributes to the broader field of Qur'anic studies by highlighting non-textual modes of engagement with the Qur'an. Second, it enriches Islamic art studies by situating calligraphy within lived religious contexts rather than treating it solely as an autonomous art form. Third, it provides insights into how local Muslim communities interpret and internalize Qur'anic messages through visual culture, thereby strengthening the connection between art, spirituality, and everyday religious practice.

Based on these considerations, this study aims to analyze the aesthetics and reception of Qur'anic calligraphy in the Great Mosque of Ar-Raudlah Kraksaan and the Raudlatul Jannah Mosque in Probolinggo. Specifically, it seeks to examine the aesthetic characteristics of the calligraphic forms used in these mosques and to explore how *jamaah* perceive, interpret, and respond to the Qur'anic inscriptions displayed within the mosque spaces. By adopting a qualitative, field-based Living Qur'an approach, this study endeavors to contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of Qur'anic calligraphy as both an artistic and a lived religious phenomenon.

METHODS

This study employed a qualitative research design with a descriptive-analytical orientation. The qualitative approach was selected because the research focuses on understanding meanings, perceptions, and lived religious experiences related to Qur'anic calligraphy within mosque spaces. Rather than measuring variables quantitatively, this study seeks to explore how aesthetic forms of Qur'anic calligraphy are perceived, interpreted, and internalized by mosque communities. The research is situated within the framework of Living Qur'an studies, which emphasize the manifestation of the Qur'an in social practices, cultural expressions, and everyday religious life (Aufa, 2020; Dozan, 2022).

The Living Qur'an approach allows the Qur'an to be examined not only as a written text but also as a lived phenomenon that interacts dynamically with its social environment. In this context, Qur'anic calligraphy is understood as a visual reception of the Qur'an that reflects both aesthetic creativity and religious meaning. This approach is particularly relevant for analyzing mosque calligraphy, where Qur'anic verses function simultaneously as sacred text, artistic ornament, and symbolic guidance for *jamaah*.

The research was conducted at two mosques located in East Java, Indonesia: the Great Mosque of Ar-Raudlah in Kraksaan and the Raudlatul Jannah Mosque in Probolinggo. These sites were selected based on purposive sampling due to their prominent use of Qur'anic calligraphy as architectural ornamentation and their active role as centers of communal worship. Both mosques display Qur'anic inscriptions rendered in Thuluth script, including Ayat al-Kursi, Surah al-Fatihah, and selected verses from Surah al-Baqarah, which are strategically placed in significant architectural locations such as the mihrab and dome interiors.

The selection of these research sites enables a comparative examination of aesthetic forms and reception patterns across different mosque settings while remaining within a shared cultural and religious context. This comparison provides a deeper understanding of how Qur'anic calligraphy functions within mosque architecture and communal religious life.

Data were obtained from both primary and secondary sources. Primary data consisted of direct observations of Qur'anic calligraphy within the mosque interiors, in-depth interviews with mosque administrators, religious figures, and *jamaah*, as well as photographic documentation of calligraphic elements. These sources provided first-hand insights into the aesthetic characteristics of the calligraphy and the perceptions of individuals who regularly interact with it.

Secondary data included relevant literature such as books, academic journals, theses, and research reports related to Islamic calligraphy, aesthetics, reception theory,

Living Qur'an studies, and qualitative research methodology (Akbar, 2012; Jinan, 2010; Miles & Huberman, 2014; Hardani et al., 2020). These sources were used to contextualize the findings and support analytical interpretation.

Three primary data collection techniques were employed: observation, interviews, and documentation. First, non-participant observation was conducted to examine the visual characteristics of Qur'anic calligraphy in both mosques. This included observing the script style, placement, color, size, composition, and integration with architectural elements. Observations also focused on how *jamaah* interact with the calligraphy during prayer and other religious activities.

Second, semi-structured interviews were conducted with selected informants, including mosque caretakers, religious leaders, and *jamaah*. The interviews aimed to explore informants' perceptions, interpretations, and emotional responses to the Qur'anic calligraphy displayed in the mosques. Interviews also addressed beliefs regarding the spiritual meanings, protective functions, and moral messages associated with specific verses, such as Ayat al-Kursi and Surah al-Fatihah (Al-Habsyi, personal communication, October 25, 2022; Kholili, personal communication, October 15, 2022).

Third, documentation was used to support observational and interview data. This included photographs of calligraphic inscriptions, mosque architectural features, and relevant written materials. Documentation served as visual evidence and facilitated more detailed aesthetic analysis.

Data analysis followed an interactive qualitative analysis model consisting of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing (Miles & Huberman, 2014). During data reduction, raw data from observations, interviews, and documentation were organized, categorized, and filtered to identify relevant themes related to aesthetics and reception. Thematic coding was applied to highlight patterns in aesthetic appreciation, symbolic interpretation, and religious meaning. Data display involved presenting organized information in narrative and descriptive forms to facilitate interpretation. Visual data from documentation were integrated into the analysis to support descriptions of calligraphic forms and spatial placement. In the final stage, conclusions were drawn by interpreting the relationships between aesthetic elements and reception patterns, while continuously verifying findings against the data.

To ensure the credibility and trustworthiness of the findings, several strategies were employed. Triangulation was conducted by comparing data obtained from different sources and methods, including observation, interviews, and documentation (Hadi, 1982; Marzuki, 2013). Member checking was also applied by confirming key interpretations with selected informants to minimize misrepresentation. Dependability was strengthened through detailed documentation of research procedures, while confirmability was ensured by grounding interpretations in empirical data rather than researcher assumptions. These measures enhance the rigor and reliability of the qualitative findings.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Aesthetic Characteristics of Qur'anic Calligraphy in the Great Mosque of Ar-Raudlah Kraksaan

The Great Mosque of Ar-Raudlah in Kraksaan presents Qur'anic calligraphy as a central visual and symbolic element within its architectural design. Based on field observations, Qur'anic inscriptions are prominently placed in strategic locations such as the mihrab area, the inner dome, and the upper walls of the main prayer hall. The dominant script used in these inscriptions is Thuluth, which is widely recognized for its proportional balance, elongated vertical strokes, and rhythmic curvature. This choice of script reflects both aesthetic considerations and religious symbolism, as Thuluth has historically been associated with monumental and sacred architectural spaces (Akbar, 2012; Mujahidin, 2016).

The visual composition of the calligraphy demonstrates a careful integration between text and architectural form. The verses are arranged symmetrically, creating a sense of harmony and balance that aligns with Islamic aesthetic principles emphasizing order and unity. The use of gold and dark green color palettes further enhances the sacred atmosphere, symbolizing divine majesty and spiritual tranquility. These colors contrast subtly with the neutral tones of the mosque's interior walls, ensuring that the Qur'anic inscriptions remain visually dominant without overwhelming the spatial harmony.



Figure 1. Qur'anic Calligraphy in the Mihrab of Ar-Raudlah Mosque

The primary verse displayed in the mihrab area is Ayat al-Kursi (Qur'an 2:255), rendered in large-scale Thuluth script. The central placement of this verse reinforces its theological significance as a verse emphasizing divine sovereignty, protection, and omniscience. From an aesthetic perspective, the elongated vertical strokes of the script draw the viewer's gaze upward, symbolically directing attention toward transcendence and divine presence. This visual orientation aligns with the function of the mihrab as the focal point of prayer direction (qiblah).

The aesthetic form of the calligraphy cannot be separated from its intended religious function. As observed during congregational prayers, *jamaah* frequently direct their gaze toward the mihrab area before and after prayer, implicitly engaging with the Qur'anic inscription. This interaction illustrates how visual aesthetics facilitate a contemplative encounter with the Qur'an beyond verbal recitation, supporting the notion that calligraphy operates as a lived form of Qur'anic engagement.

Reception of Qur'anic Calligraphy Among Jamaah

Interviews with mosque caretakers and *jamaah* reveal that Qur'anic calligraphy in the Ar-Raudlah Mosque is not perceived merely as decorative ornamentation. Instead, it is understood as a medium that conveys spiritual messages, moral guidance, and protective symbolism. According to one mosque caretaker, the selection of Ayat al-Kursi for the mihrab was intentional, as the verse is widely believed to provide spiritual protection and reinforce faith among *jamaah*:

"Ayat al-Kursi is chosen because it reminds people of Allah's power and protection. When jamaah see it while praying, they feel calmer and more confident in their faith"
(Al-Habsyi, personal communication, October 25, 2022).

This statement reflects a reception pattern in which aesthetic appreciation is closely intertwined with theological belief. The visual presence of the verse is believed to generate a sense of spiritual security and inner peace, particularly during communal worship. Such perceptions align with previous studies on the reception of Ayat al-Kursi in Islamic communities, which highlight its association with protection and divine safeguarding (Rahman, 2018; Hidayatullah, 2020).

In addition, several *jamaah* reported that the calligraphy serves as a visual reminder of Qur'anic teachings in their daily lives. Rather than consciously reading the entire verse each time, *jamaah* internalize its message through repeated visual exposure. One interviewee stated:

"Even if we do not read the verse word by word, seeing it every day reminds us of Allah's greatness and encourages us to behave better" (Kholili, personal communication, October 15, 2022).

This reception pattern illustrates how Qur'anic calligraphy functions as a subtle form of moral education. The aesthetic form allows Qur'anic values to be continuously present in the worship environment, reinforcing ethical awareness through visual familiarity. This finding supports the Living Qur'an perspective, which emphasizes that the Qur'an is experienced not only through textual interpretation but also through embodied and sensory engagement (Aufa, 2020; Dozan, 2022).

Aesthetic Features of Calligraphy in the Raudlatul Jannah Mosque Probolinggo

In contrast to the Ar-Raudlah Mosque, the Raudlatul Jannah Mosque in Probolinggo displays Qur'anic calligraphy with a slightly different aesthetic emphasis. While Thuluth script remains dominant, the calligraphic compositions are more expansive and integrated with ornamental motifs. Floral and geometric patterns frame the inscriptions, creating a visual dialogue between text and ornamentation. This stylistic approach reflects a localized aesthetic preference that blends Qur'anic calligraphy with decorative elements commonly found in Indonesian mosque architecture.



Figure 2. Dome Calligraphy in Raudlatul Jannah Mosque

One of the most prominent inscriptions in the Raudlatul Jannah Mosque is Surah al-Fatihah, positioned around the inner dome. The circular arrangement of the verses follows the curvature of the dome, symbolizing completeness and unity. From an aesthetic standpoint, this composition enhances spatial continuity and encourages upward contemplation. The dome, as an architectural element, often symbolizes the heavens in Islamic architecture, and the placement of Surah al-Fatihah reinforces its role as the opening chapter of the Qur'an and a foundational component of Islamic worship (Ibnu Hasyim, 2016).

The color scheme used in the dome calligraphy includes gold lettering against a deep blue background, producing a strong visual contrast that accentuates legibility while maintaining elegance. The repetition of verses around the dome creates a rhythmic visual experience, allowing *jamaah* to engage with the Qur'anic text from multiple angles within the prayer hall.

Community Reception and Symbolic Interpretation

Interviews conducted at the Raudlatul Jannah Mosque indicate that *jamaah* perceive the calligraphy as an integral part of their spiritual experience. Many informants emphasized that the presence of Surah al-Fatihah in the dome reinforces their awareness of prayer as a holistic act involving both physical movement and spiritual reflection. A mosque administrator explained:

"Surah al-Fatihah is recited in every prayer. When people see it written beautifully above them, it strengthens their concentration and reminds them of the meaning of prayer" (Al-Habsyi, personal communication, October 25, 2022).

This reception highlights how visual aesthetics can enhance *khushu'* (devotional focus) during worship. The calligraphy does not distract *jamaah*; instead, it supports spiritual attentiveness by reinforcing familiar Qur'anic texts through visual presence. This finding resonates with studies on Islamic aesthetics, which argue that beauty in religious spaces serves to elevate spiritual consciousness rather than merely please the senses (Jinan, 2010; Sahroni, 2021).

Furthermore, several *jamaah* associated the calligraphy with a sense of communal identity. The shared visual experience of Qur'anic inscriptions fosters a collective awareness of religious values and reinforces the mosque's role as a center of spiritual and social life. In this sense, Qur'anic calligraphy functions as a visual marker

of Islamic identity, embedding religious meaning within the physical environment of the community.

Comparative Analysis of Aesthetic Forms and Spatial Placement

A comparative examination of Qur'anic calligraphy in the Great Mosque of Ar-Raudlah Kraksaan and the Raudlatul Jannah Mosque Probolinggo reveals both shared aesthetic principles and distinctive local expressions. In both mosques, Thuluth script serves as the dominant calligraphic style, reflecting a shared preference for a script traditionally associated with monumentality, legibility, and sacred architectural contexts (Akbar, 2012; Mujahidin, 2016). This commonality indicates an alignment with broader Islamic aesthetic conventions that prioritize visual harmony and spiritual elevation.

Despite this similarity, differences emerge in the spatial placement and compositional emphasis of the calligraphy. In the Ar-Raudlah Mosque, Qur'anic inscriptions—particularly Ayat al-Kursi—are concentrated around the mihrab area, reinforcing a focal-point orientation. This spatial strategy emphasizes theological authority and spiritual protection, aligning the verse's meaning with the functional center of prayer. In contrast, the Raudlatul Jannah Mosque distributes calligraphy more expansively, especially through dome inscriptions of Surah al-Fatihah arranged in circular compositions. This approach creates an immersive visual environment in which the Qur'anic text envelops *jamaah* from above, encouraging contemplative engagement throughout the prayer hall.

From an aesthetic perspective, the Ar-Raudlah Mosque prioritizes visual clarity and textual dominance with minimal ornamental framing, while the Raudlatul Jannah Mosque integrates calligraphy with decorative motifs, such as floral and geometric patterns. These differences reflect localized artistic preferences and architectural traditions, demonstrating how Qur'anic calligraphy adapts to cultural contexts without compromising its sacred function.

The findings of this study underscore that Qur'anic calligraphy in mosque architecture functions as a form of visual reception of the Qur'an. Reception, in this sense, refers to how Qur'anic texts are encountered, interpreted, and given meaning through sensory experience rather than solely through textual exegesis (Ratna, 2011; Pradopo, 2007). The visual presence of Qur'anic verses transforms the mosque into a space where the Qur'an is continuously "read" through sight, even when verbal recitation is absent.

Interviews with *jamaah* from both mosques indicate that repeated visual exposure to Qur'anic calligraphy fosters familiarity and internalization of Qur'anic messages. Several informants explained that although they may not consciously read each verse in full, the calligraphy serves as a constant reminder of divine guidance and moral responsibility. This form of engagement reflects what Living Qur'an scholars describe as non-textual interaction with the Qur'an, where meaning is constructed through practice, perception, and emotional resonance (Aufa, 2020; Dozan, 2022).

One *jamaah* at the Raudlatul Jannah Mosque stated:

"Seeing Surah al-Fatihah written beautifully above us makes prayer feel more complete. It reminds us that prayer is not just words but a whole experience" (Kholili, personal communication, October 15, 2022).

This statement illustrates how aesthetic presentation enhances the experiential dimension of worship, allowing Qur'anic texts to be felt as part of a holistic religious environment.

Symbolic Meanings and Theological Interpretations

The selection of specific Qur'anic verses for calligraphic display reflects shared theological interpretations within the mosque communities. Ayat al-Kursi, prominently displayed in the Ar-Raudlah Mosque, is widely understood as a verse emphasizing divine power, protection, and sovereignty. *Jamaah* commonly associate its presence with spiritual safeguarding, particularly within sacred spaces. This belief aligns with broader Islamic traditions that emphasize the protective virtues of Ayat al-Kursi (Rahman, 2018; Hidayatullah, 2020).

Similarly, the use of Surah al-Fatihah in the Raudlatul Jannah Mosque reflects its central role in Islamic ritual practice. As the opening chapter of the Qur'an and a required component of daily prayers, Surah al-Fatihah holds deep theological and pedagogical significance. Its placement in the dome reinforces its role as the foundation of worship and a source of spiritual guidance. The circular arrangement of the verses symbolically conveys completeness and unity, echoing Islamic cosmological concepts of harmony and order (Ibnu Hasyim, 2016).



Figure 3. Dome Inscription of Surah al-Fatihah

These findings demonstrate that Qur'anic calligraphy operates as a symbolic system through which theological meanings are visually communicated. The aesthetic form enhances the perceived sanctity of the verses, reinforcing their spiritual authority and emotional impact.

Beyond aesthetic and spiritual dimensions, Qur'anic calligraphy in both mosques serves educational and moral functions. Interviews indicate that mosque administrators intentionally select verses that convey ethical teachings and reinforce religious values. The visual presence of Qur'anic texts functions as a form of informal religious education, particularly for congregants who may not regularly engage in formal Qur'anic study.

One mosque caretaker explained:

“The calligraphy is there so people can always be reminded of the Qur'an. Even children who cannot read Arabic fluently become curious and ask about the meaning” (Al-Habsyi, personal communication, October 25, 2022).

This observation highlights the pedagogical potential of Qur'anic calligraphy as a visual learning tool. By embedding Qur'anic texts within communal spaces, mosques facilitate continuous exposure to religious teachings, fostering moral awareness and spiritual curiosity. Such findings resonate with studies emphasizing the educational value of Islamic art and calligraphy in transmitting religious values (Maryono, 2018; Ni'mah, 2019).

Living Qur'an in Architectural Contexts

The integration of Qur'anic calligraphy into mosque architecture exemplifies how the Qur'an is lived and experienced within physical environments. Architecture, in this context, functions as a medium that shapes religious perception and behavior. The placement, scale, and aesthetic treatment of Qur'anic inscriptions influence how *jamaah* move, focus, and reflect within mosque spaces (Laurens, 2004).

The findings suggest that Qur'anic calligraphy contributes to the creation of a sacred atmosphere that supports spiritual concentration (*khushu'*) and communal identity. *Jamaah* perceive the mosque not merely as a functional space for prayer but as a spiritually charged environment where divine words are visibly present. This aligns with Living Qur'an scholarship that emphasizes the dynamic relationship between text, space, and community (Ghozali Syafi'i, 2018; Suriani, 2018).

The results of this study contribute to both Islamic art studies and Qur'anic studies by highlighting the intersection between aesthetics, reception, and lived religious practice. First, the findings demonstrate that Islamic calligraphy should not be analyzed solely in terms of formal aesthetics but also in relation to how it is received and interpreted by communities. Second, the study expands the scope of Living Qur'an research by incorporating architectural and visual dimensions, areas that remain underexplored in existing literature.

Moreover, the comparative approach adopted in this research illustrates how local cultural contexts shape the aesthetic expression of Qur'anic calligraphy while maintaining shared theological foundations. This perspective underscores the adaptability and universality of Islamic visual culture.

CONCLUSION

This study has examined the aesthetics and reception of Qur'anic calligraphy in the Great Mosque of Ar-Raudlah Kraksaan and the Raudlatul Jannah Mosque Probolinggo through a qualitative Living Qur'an approach. The findings reveal that Qur'anic calligraphy in both mosques functions as a multifaceted phenomenon encompassing aesthetic beauty, theological symbolism, educational value, and lived religious experience.

Aesthetically, both mosques employ Thuluth script as the primary calligraphic style, reflecting a shared commitment to visual harmony and sacred expression. Differences in spatial placement and ornamental integration demonstrate how local cultural preferences influence the visual presentation of Qur'anic texts. In terms of reception, *jamaah* perceive the calligraphy not merely as decoration but as a source of spiritual reflection, moral guidance, and communal identity. Verses such as Ayat al-Kursi and Surah al-Fatihah are understood as carrying protective, theological, and pedagogical significance, reinforced through their visual presence within mosque architecture.

From a Living Qur'an perspective, Qur'anic calligraphy represents a non-textual mode of engaging with the Qur'an, where meaning is constructed through sight, emotion, and repeated exposure. The integration of Qur'anic inscriptions into mosque spaces allows the Qur'an to be continuously present in communal life, shaping religious experience beyond formal recitation and interpretation.

This study contributes to academic discourse by bridging Islamic art studies and Living Qur'an research, emphasizing the importance of reception and lived experience in understanding Qur'anic calligraphy. Future research may expand this approach by examining other forms of visual Qur'anic reception or by exploring comparative contexts across different regions. Ultimately, Qur'anic calligraphy remains a powerful medium through which the Qur'an is visually embodied, spiritually experienced, and socially lived within Muslim communities.

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