RESEARCH ARTICLE

Calligraphy-Based Instruction for Establishing Students' Creativity in Arabic Alphabet Writing

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Abstract

This study investigates the development of students' creativity through Arabic calligraphy activities at TPQ Darul Ulum Petung Glagasan Bangsalsari, a non-formal Islamic educational institution. While Taman Pendidikan Al-Qur'an (TPQ) traditionally emphasizes Qur'anic recitation and memorization, this institution integrates structured calligraphy instruction as a medium for artistic and cognitive development. Employing a qualitative case study design, data were collected through observation, semi-structured interviews, and documentation. Participants included the TPQ head, the calligraphy instructor, and selected students actively involved in the program. Data were analyzed using an interactive model consisting of data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing, with triangulation applied to ensure credibility. The findings reveal that creativity development occurs through a structured and progressive instructional process, beginning with mastery of basic letter anatomy, followed by guided compositional exercises, and culminating in decorative elaboration. Indicators of creativity observed include fluency in design variation, flexibility in spatial arrangement, elaboration of ornamental details, persistence, and enhanced intrinsic motivation. Supporting factors include institutional commitment, instructional competence, availability of basic facilities, public recognition of student work, and parental encouragement. Inhibiting factors involve limited instructional time, student fatigue, varying initial writing abilities, and motivational fluctuations. The study concludes that Arabic calligraphy can serve as an effective pedagogical medium for fostering creativity within non-formal Islamic education, contributing to holistic child development by integrating technical discipline, aesthetic sensitivity, and character formation.

Key words: Creativity Development, Arabic Alphabet Writing, Calligraphy

INTRODUCTION

Creativity has become a central concern in contemporary educational discourse, particularly in the context of religious and character education. In Islamic educational institutions, creativity is not merely associated with artistic production, but also with the cultivation of intellectual sensitivity, aesthetic awareness, and spiritual refinement. The integration of creativity into religious learning environments reflects the broader objective of Islamic education, which seeks to develop holistic individuals capable of harmonizing cognitive, affective, and psychomotor dimensions (Yahya, 2020). Within this framework, artistic practices such as Arabic calligraphy serve as a meaningful pedagogical medium to foster creative development while simultaneously strengthening religious literacy.

Islamic tradition itself places significant emphasis on literacy and writing. The first revelation received by the Prophet Muhammad commands reading and implicitly underscores the importance of writing as a means of acquiring and transmitting knowledge. As highlighted by Aziz (2012), the Qur'anic verses in Surah Al-'Alaq (96:1–5) emphasize the role of the pen as an instrument of learning and intellectual development. Writing, therefore, is not merely a technical skill but a sacred act intertwined with gratitude, reflection, and human growth. In this sense, the teaching of Arabic writing, particularly through the art of calligraphy, represents both an educational and spiritual endeavor.

Calligraphy (*khath*) occupies a prestigious position in Islamic civilization. It is widely recognized as one of the highest forms of Islamic art due to its intimate connection with the Qur'an (Sirojuddin, 2020). Unlike ordinary handwriting, calligraphy adheres to strict proportional systems, aesthetic rules, and compositional balance. It requires precision, discipline, patience, and imagination. Thus, learning calligraphy does not only improve writing skills but also nurtures character traits such as perseverance, concentration, and artistic sensitivity. Lestari, Ichsan, Sukriyanto, and Asela (2021) argue that Islamic calligraphic art holds pedagogical urgency because it integrates aesthetic appreciation with religious internalization, thereby contributing to character formation in Islamic education.

In formal schools, Arabic calligraphy is often offered as an extracurricular activity aimed at developing students' artistic talents and visual-spatial intelligence. Atiqo (2021) demonstrates that calligraphy activities in Madrasah Ibtidaiyah significantly contribute to the development of students' visual-spatial intelligence by enhancing their ability to recognize shapes, lines, proportions, and spatial composition. Similarly, Maulida (2018) emphasizes the teacher's crucial role in guiding students' creative exploration through structured calligraphy training. These studies confirm that calligraphy can function as an effective medium for creativity development in formal educational settings.

However, the implementation of calligraphy learning in non-formal Islamic institutions such as Taman Pendidikan Al-Qur'an (TPQ) remains relatively underexplored. TPQ is a community-based Islamic educational institution primarily focused on teaching Qur'anic reading and basic religious knowledge. According to Sutrisno (2018), TPQ plays a strategic role in eradicating Qur'anic illiteracy at the grassroots level. Traditionally, TPQ curricula emphasize recitation (tilawah),

memorization, and moral instruction. Creative artistic development, especially through structured calligraphy learning, is rarely positioned as a core activity.

This condition presents an important research gap. While creativity development through games (Rahmawati, 2019/2020) or drawing activities (Khuznah, 2019/2020) has been widely examined in early childhood education, limited attention has been given to creativity development through Arabic calligraphy in TPQ settings. Existing research on calligraphy tends to focus on formal schools or pesantren contexts (Amri, 2021; Laila, 2020), leaving the TPQ environment relatively understudied. Therefore, investigating how calligraphy activities can develop students' creativity in a TPQ context offers both theoretical and practical contributions.

From a psychological perspective, creativity is defined as the ability to produce new ideas, solutions, or products that are both original and meaningful (Munandar, 2002). Creativity involves cognitive flexibility, fluency of ideas, elaboration, and originality. It also requires non-cognitive dimensions such as motivation, curiosity, and persistence. Rachmawati and Kurniati (2019) explain that creativity development in children requires supportive environments, stimulating learning experiences, and teacher guidance. Without proper facilitation, children's creative potential may remain dormant.

In the context of Arabic writing, creativity is closely linked with technical mastery. Rohendi and Dayun (2018) emphasize that effective writing instruction must integrate anatomical understanding of letter structures, proportional balance, and motor coordination. Calligraphy learning, therefore, becomes a structured creative process where students internalize writing rules before expressing aesthetic variations. This structured creativity distinguishes calligraphy from free drawing, as it combines rule-based discipline with artistic imagination.

Moreover, creativity development is inseparable from effective instructional planning and evaluation. Mukni'ah (2016) highlights that well-structured lesson planning ensures that learning objectives are aligned with instructional strategies and evaluation methods. Evaluation, according to Febriana (2021) and Haryanto (2020), is essential for assessing learning outcomes and providing constructive feedback to students. In calligraphy learning, evaluation may include assessing letter accuracy, proportional consistency, neatness, and aesthetic harmony. Constructive evaluation can motivate students and reinforce their creative growth.

Despite the potential of calligraphy as a medium for creativity development, several challenges may arise in TPQ settings. Limited instructional time, inadequate facilities, and students' fatigue due to evening learning schedules can hinder optimal implementation. Susanto (2017) notes that children's creativity may be inhibited by environmental constraints, rigid teaching methods, or lack of encouragement. Therefore, understanding supporting and inhibiting factors in calligraphy-based creativity development becomes essential for improving instructional practice.

TPQ Darul Ulum Petung Glagasan Bangsalsari presents a unique case in this regard. Unlike most TPQs that focus solely on Qur'anic recitation, this institution integrates structured calligraphy training into its learning program. The activity is conducted regularly and supported by institutional facilities. Preliminary observations indicate that some students have participated in calligraphy competitions, suggesting the emergence of creative and artistic competencies.

However, systematic analysis of how creativity is developed through this program has not yet been conducted.

Based on the aforementioned background, this study seeks to answer two primary research questions: (1) How is students' creativity developed through Arabic calligraphy activities at TPQ Darul Ulum Petung Glagasan Bangsalsari? and (2) What are the supporting and inhibiting factors in developing students' creativity through calligraphy in this context? By addressing these questions, this study aims to contribute to the discourse on creativity development in non-formal Islamic education. Theoretically, this research enriches the conceptual understanding of creativity development within religious educational settings. Practically, it provides insights for TPQ administrators and educators regarding effective strategies for integrating artistic activities into Qur'anic education. In a broader sense, this study supports the idea that Islamic educational institutions can serve not only as centers of religious literacy but also as spaces for nurturing creativity, aesthetic sensitivity, and holistic child development.

METHODS

This study employed a qualitative research approach with a case study design to explore in depth how students' creativity is developed through Arabic calligraphy activities at TPQ Darul Ulum Petung Glagasan Bangsalsari. A qualitative approach was chosen because this research aims to understand social phenomena holistically, particularly the processes, interactions, meanings, and contextual factors underlying creativity development within a natural educational setting. Qualitative research allows the researcher to interpret participants' experiences and institutional practices comprehensively rather than reducing them into numerical representations (Moleong, 2019; Sugiyono, 2017). The case study design was considered appropriate as it focuses on a bounded system—namely, a specific TPQ institution that uniquely integrates structured calligraphy instruction into its learning activities.

The research was conducted at TPQ Darul Ulum Petung Glagasan Bangsalsari, a non-formal Islamic educational institution that primarily provides Qur'anic education for children. This site was purposively selected due to its distinctive implementation of Arabic calligraphy training as part of its regular learning program. Unlike most TPQs that emphasize recitation and memorization, this institution systematically incorporates calligraphy as a medium for developing students' writing skills and artistic creativity. The participants of this study consisted of the TPQ head, the calligraphy instructor, and selected students who actively participated in calligraphy activities. These participants were chosen through purposive sampling, based on their direct involvement and experience in the implementation of calligraphy learning.

Data were collected through three primary techniques: observation, interviews, and documentation. Observations were conducted to examine directly the learning process of calligraphy activities, including instructional strategies, student engagement, classroom atmosphere, and interaction patterns between teacher and students. Through non-participant observation, the researcher documented how the instructor introduced letter forms, demonstrated writing techniques, provided corrections, and evaluated students' work. This method enabled the researcher to

capture authentic learning dynamics within the natural setting. Interviews were conducted in a semi-structured format to obtain in-depth information from the TPQ head and the calligraphy instructor regarding instructional planning, objectives, challenges, and perceived impacts of calligraphy learning on students' creativity. Interviews with selected students were also conducted to explore their experiences, motivations, and perceptions toward calligraphy activities. Semi-structured interviews were chosen to provide flexibility while maintaining focus on the research objectives. Documentation was collected in the form of lesson plans, students' calligraphy works, photographs of learning activities, and institutional records related to calligraphy programs. Documentation served to support and triangulate findings obtained from observations and interviews.

Data analysis followed the interactive model of qualitative analysis, which involves data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing (Wicaksono, 2021; Sugiyono, 2017). Data condensation refers to the process of selecting, focusing, simplifying, and transforming raw data obtained from field notes, interview transcripts, and documentation into meaningful units. In this stage, the researcher categorized data based on themes such as instructional stages, creativity indicators, supporting factors, and inhibiting factors. After condensation, data were presented in a descriptive narrative form to facilitate systematic interpretation. Data display enabled the researcher to identify patterns, relationships, and emerging themes related to creativity development through calligraphy learning. Finally, conclusions were drawn through continuous reflection and verification to ensure that interpretations were grounded in empirical evidence. This iterative process allowed findings to emerge inductively from the data rather than being imposed by preconceived assumptions.

To ensure the trustworthiness and validity of the data, this study applied triangulation techniques. Source triangulation was conducted by comparing information obtained from different participants, including the TPQ head, instructor, and students. Technique triangulation was applied by cross-checking findings derived from observation, interviews, and documentation. Through triangulation, the researcher minimized bias and enhanced the credibility of the findings (Moleong, 2019). In addition, prolonged engagement in the field and careful documentation of research procedures contributed to data dependability and confirmability.

The research procedure was carried out in several stages. The initial stage involved preliminary observation and institutional permission to conduct the study. This was followed by intensive data collection through repeated visits to observe calligraphy sessions and conduct interviews. During the implementation stage, the researcher maintained ethical considerations by ensuring voluntary participation, obtaining informed consent, and preserving participants' confidentiality. After data collection was completed, the researcher systematically analyzed the data and organized the findings according to the research questions concerning the process of creativity development and its supporting and inhibiting factors.

Overall, this methodological framework enabled a comprehensive exploration of how Arabic calligraphy activities function as a medium for creativity development in a non-formal Islamic educational context. By focusing on process-oriented analysis and contextual interpretation, this study provides an in-depth understanding of

pedagogical practices within TPQ Darul Ulum and contributes to broader discussions on creativity development in Islamic education.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Implementation of Calligraphy Learning at TPQ Darul Ulum

The findings reveal that the implementation of Arabic calligraphy learning at TPQ Darul Ulum Petung Glagasan Bangsalsari is conducted in a structured yet flexible manner. Unlike conventional TPQ programs that focus primarily on Qur'anic recitation, this institution integrates calligraphy as a complementary activity aimed at developing students' writing skills and artistic creativity. The calligraphy sessions are scheduled once a week after regular Qur'anic lessons and are attended by students who demonstrate interest and commitment.

Based on observational data, the learning process is divided into three main stages: introduction and demonstration, guided practice, and evaluation with feedback. During the introduction stage, the instructor explains the form and proportional structure of specific Arabic letters. Students are introduced to anatomical components of the letters, including stroke direction, thickness contrast, and spatial balance. This instructional approach aligns with the anatomical writing method described by Rohendi and Dayun (2018), which emphasizes systematic mastery of letter construction before artistic exploration. The instructor demonstrated letter formation step by step using a whiteboard before asking students to imitate the strokes in their respective notebooks.

Figure 1. Documentation of teacher demonstrating Arabic letter formation

During observation, it was evident that students paid close attention to stroke order and line proportion. The instructor frequently corrected hand positions and pen angles to ensure accurate results. This indicates that creativity in this context is built upon technical discipline rather than spontaneous expression. Such structured creativity reflects Munandar's (2002) perspective that creative ability involves not only originality but also elaboration and skill refinement.

An excerpt from the interview with the calligraphy instructor further clarifies this structured approach:

"*Before students are allowed to create decorative compositions, they must first master the basic letters. If their foundation is weak, their artwork will not be proportional.*

Calligraphy is about patience and precision." (Interview with Calligraphy Instructor)

This statement confirms that creativity development in this TPQ is gradual and cumulative. Students are not immediately encouraged to produce ornamental compositions; instead, they undergo repetitive practice to strengthen motor coordination and visual-spatial sensitivity.

After mastering individual letters, students begin to combine them into short Qur'anic phrases. At this stage, they are given limited freedom to arrange composition, adjust spacing, and add simple ornamentation.

Figure 2. Sample of students' early-stage calligraphy work (basic letter practice)

The transition from isolated letter practice to compositional design demonstrates the development of visual-spatial intelligence, as previously identified by Atiqo (2021). Students begin to consider layout balance, margin spacing, and proportional alignment. This indicates cognitive engagement beyond mechanical writing.

Indicators of Creativity Development

The data show that students' creativity development through calligraphy activities can be identified through several observable indicators: fluency in generating design variations, flexibility in arranging composition, elaboration in adding decorative elements, and persistence in refining their work. These indicators correspond to the theoretical dimensions of creativity proposed by Munandar (2002), particularly fluency, flexibility, and elaboration.

First, fluency is visible in students' ability to produce multiple design alternatives when assigned to write a short Qur'anic verse. Some students experimented with curved alignment, while others preferred symmetrical block compositions. Although still guided, their attempts reflect emerging creative fluency.

Second, flexibility appears in how students adjust their compositions when encountering spatial constraints. During observation, one student initially miscalculated spacing, causing letters to exceed the margin. Instead of restarting, the student creatively resized subsequent letters to maintain visual balance. The instructor explained:

"*Sometimes students make mistakes in measuring space. I do not immediately ask them to repeat everything. I guide them to find solutions. This helps them think creatively rather than depend entirely on correction.*" (Interview with Calligraphy Instructor)

This pedagogical strategy reflects supportive facilitation, which Rachmawati and Kurniati (2019) consider essential for nurturing creativity. Rather than suppressing errors, the instructor transforms them into learning opportunities.

Third, elaboration is demonstrated through the addition of decorative motifs surrounding the written text. Although ornamentation remains simple, students attempt to integrate floral patterns or geometric borders inspired by Islamic art traditions (Sirojuddin, 2020). The presence of these decorative details indicates expanding aesthetic awareness.

Figure 3. Example of student work with decorative ornamentation

From a psychological perspective, such elaborative details show that students are moving beyond imitation toward expressive personalization. Creativity in this stage is not purely original but represents modification and adaptation within established rules. In addition to cognitive indicators, affective changes were also observed. Students displayed increased confidence and pride when their work was displayed on the classroom wall. A student stated during interview:

"*I feel happy when my writing is displayed. My parents also appreciate it at home. I want to make better designs next time.*"

This response demonstrates intrinsic motivation, which is a crucial component of creativity development (Munandar, 2002). Recognition and appreciation function as reinforcement mechanisms that sustain creative engagement.

The Role of Instructional Planning and Evaluation

Although TPQ Darul Ulum is a non-formal institution, the calligraphy program demonstrates elements of systematic instructional planning. The instructor prepares basic learning targets, such as mastering specific letter sets within a certain period. This reflects the importance of structured planning in educational settings as emphasized by Mukni'ah (2016).

Evaluation is conducted informally but consistently. The instructor assesses students' work based on neatness, proportional accuracy, and stroke consistency. Feedback is provided immediately after submission. According to Haryanto (2020), formative evaluation plays a crucial role in improving learning processes because it provides direct corrective input. Similarly, Febriana (2021) notes that evaluation should not merely measure outcomes but also guide students toward improvement. During observation, evaluation sessions often included direct demonstration of corrected strokes.

Figure 4. Teacher providing direct correction on student notebook

Such interactive evaluation fosters reflective thinking. Instead of merely assigning scores, the instructor explains why certain strokes are disproportionate or misaligned. This approach strengthens students' understanding of aesthetic principles and reinforces disciplined creativity.

The TPQ head also emphasized the importance of this program:

"We want our students not only to read the Qur'an but also to appreciate its beauty. Calligraphy teaches patience and artistic sensitivity. It shapes their character."
(Interview with TPQ Head)

This statement highlights the integration of aesthetic education and character formation, consistent with the broader objectives of Islamic education (Yahya, 2020). Calligraphy learning thus functions not only as skill training but also as moral cultivation.

Overall, the findings demonstrate that creativity development at TPQ Darul Ulum is a structured, guided, and progressive process. It begins with technical mastery, continues with compositional exploration, and culminates in decorative elaboration. The instructional approach balances discipline and freedom, correction and encouragement. The combination of demonstration, guided practice, and formative evaluation creates a supportive environment for creativity growth.

Supporting and Inhibiting Factors in Developing Creativity through Calligraphy

The development of students' creativity through Arabic calligraphy activities at TPQ Darul Ulum Petung Glagasan Bangsalsari is influenced by various supporting and inhibiting factors. These factors shape the effectiveness, sustainability, and impact of the program. Based on observational data, interviews, and documentation analysis, the findings indicate that creativity development does not occur automatically through activity participation; rather, it emerges from the interaction between instructional design, institutional support, student motivation, and environmental conditions.

One of the primary supporting factors is the strong commitment of the institution's leadership. The TPQ head demonstrated clear support for integrating calligraphy into the learning program. This institutional backing ensures that the

activity is not incidental but structurally recognized within the TPQ's educational agenda. As stated by the TPQ head:

> "*Calligraphy is part of our effort to build not only religious literacy but also artistic sensitivity. We allocate time and provide basic materials so that students can develop their potential.*"

Institutional commitment is crucial in non-formal educational settings, where programs often depend on voluntary initiatives. Yahya (2020) emphasizes that leadership vision significantly influences the quality of educational innovation. In this case, leadership support allows calligraphy learning to function as a sustainable creative platform rather than a temporary extracurricular experiment.

A second supporting factor is the pedagogical competence and dedication of the calligraphy instructor. Observations indicate that the instructor not only masters technical aspects of Arabic writing but also understands how to guide students progressively. The instructional approach reflects systematic planning and developmental sensitivity, consistent with principles of educational planning outlined by Mukni'ah (2016). The instructor's ability to balance correction with encouragement plays a significant role in maintaining students' motivation.

Another key supporting factor is the availability of basic learning facilities, including writing tools, sample models, and display space for student work. Although the facilities are modest, they are sufficient to sustain the activity. The classroom walls display selected student artworks, creating a sense of appreciation and recognition.

Recognition through display functions as positive reinforcement. According to Munandar (2002), creativity flourishes in environments where achievements are acknowledged and valued. Students who see their work exhibited publicly tend to develop stronger intrinsic motivation and self-confidence.

Parental encouragement also emerges as an important external supporting factor. Several students mentioned that their parents expressed pride in their calligraphy achievements. One student stated: "My parents keep my calligraphy at home and show it to relatives. That makes me want to improve."

Such family support strengthens creative persistence. Susanto (2017) notes that children's creativity is highly influenced by social affirmation from significant adults. When parents appreciate artistic efforts, children internalize positive self-perceptions regarding their creative abilities.

Despite these supporting elements, the research also identifies several inhibiting factors that limit optimal creativity development. One major constraint is limited instructional time. Calligraphy sessions are conducted only once a week and must be adjusted to the broader TPQ schedule. Since the primary focus of TPQ remains Qur'anic recitation, calligraphy receives secondary time allocation. This limited exposure restricts practice intensity, which is essential for skill mastery in structured art forms such as calligraphy (Sirojuddin, 2020).

Another inhibiting factor relates to students' physical fatigue. Because TPQ activities are held in the afternoon or evening after formal school hours, some students arrive tired. Observations show occasional decreases in concentration during detailed stroke exercises. Creativity in calligraphy requires fine motor control and sustained attention; therefore, physical fatigue can reduce learning effectiveness.

Additionally, variations in students' initial writing abilities create instructional challenges. Some students possess strong basic handwriting skills, while others struggle with letter formation. The instructor must adjust guidance individually, which can slow collective progress. Rohendi and Dayun (2018) argue that mastery of anatomical writing principles is fundamental before advancing to artistic composition. When foundational skills differ significantly among students, maintaining uniform progression becomes difficult.

Motivational fluctuations also appear as an inhibiting factor. While some students demonstrate high enthusiasm, others participate due to peer influence rather than intrinsic interest. Sustaining long-term motivation in non-formal settings requires continuous stimulation and variation in learning activities. Rachmawati and Kurniati (2019) emphasize that creative programs must provide novelty and challenge to maintain engagement.

Theoretical Interpretation of Findings

The findings of this study confirm that creativity development through calligraphy at TPQ Darul Ulum reflects a structured creative process combining technical mastery and expressive exploration. This process aligns with Munandar's (2002) conceptualization of creativity as the interaction between cognitive abilities and supportive environments. Students' fluency, flexibility, and elaboration gradually emerge through repetitive practice combined with guided experimentation.

From an educational perspective, the program demonstrates that creativity in Islamic educational contexts does not contradict discipline. On the contrary, structured rules serve as scaffolding for creative expansion. This supports the argument that creativity can flourish within clearly defined frameworks rather than requiring total freedom. The balance between rule adherence and aesthetic variation characterizes Islamic calligraphy as both disciplined and imaginative (Sirojuddin, 2020).

Moreover, the integration of calligraphy into TPQ learning expands the functional scope of non-formal Islamic education. Traditionally, TPQ prioritizes recitation accuracy and memorization (Sutrisno, 2018). This research shows that artistic integration can enrich the educational experience without undermining religious objectives. Instead, calligraphy strengthens students' appreciation of Qur'anic text by highlighting its visual beauty, thus fostering deeper emotional connection.

The findings also reinforce previous studies conducted in formal educational settings. Atiqo (2021) demonstrated the development of visual-spatial intelligence through calligraphy in Madrasah Ibtidaiyah. Similarly, Maulida (2018) emphasized the teacher's role in cultivating student creativity through calligraphy extracurricular programs. This study extends those findings to the TPQ context, illustrating that creativity development is not limited to formal schooling environments but can be effectively nurtured in community-based religious institutions.

Furthermore, evaluation practices observed in this study reflect formative assessment principles described by Haryanto (2020) and Febriana (2021). Constructive feedback enhances reflective learning and supports gradual improvement. Rather than using summative grading systems, the instructor applies corrective dialogue and demonstration, which appear more suitable for skill-based artistic learning.

Overall, the interplay between institutional support, instructional competence, environmental reinforcement, and individual motivation shapes the trajectory of creativity development in this setting. Creativity emerges as a dynamic process influenced by multiple interconnected variables.

CONCLUSION

This study examined how students' creativity is developed through Arabic calligraphy activities at TPQ Darul Ulum Petung Glagasan Bangsalsari and identified the supporting and inhibiting factors influencing its implementation. The findings reveal that creativity development in this context is not spontaneous but structured, gradual, and pedagogically guided. The learning process begins with technical mastery of letter anatomy, continues with guided composition exercises, and progresses toward decorative elaboration. Through this structured progression, students demonstrate indicators of creativity such as fluency, flexibility, elaboration, persistence, and increased intrinsic motivation.

The instructional model implemented at TPQ Darul Ulum balances discipline and creative exploration. Repetitive practice ensures proportional accuracy and technical consistency, while limited compositional freedom encourages imaginative adaptation. This confirms that creativity can flourish within rule-based artistic traditions such as Islamic calligraphy. Rather than restricting creativity, structured guidelines function as scaffolding that supports expressive refinement.

Supporting factors include strong institutional commitment, competent instructional guidance, availability of basic learning facilities, positive reinforcement through artwork display, and parental encouragement. These elements collectively create a conducive environment for creative growth. Conversely, inhibiting factors such as limited instructional time, student fatigue, varying initial abilities, and fluctuating motivation present challenges that require strategic management.

Theoretically, this research contributes to discussions on creativity development in Islamic educational contexts by demonstrating that non-formal religious institutions can serve as effective spaces for artistic and cognitive growth. Practically, it offers insights for TPQ administrators and educators seeking to enrich Qur'anic education with creative activities. Integrating calligraphy not only enhances writing skills but also fosters patience, aesthetic sensitivity, and self-confidence.

Future research may explore comparative studies across multiple TPQs to examine variations in implementation models or employ mixed-method approaches to measure creativity outcomes quantitatively. Strengthening teacher training and expanding instructional time allocation may further optimize program effectiveness. In conclusion, Arabic calligraphy activities at TPQ Darul Ulum represent a meaningful educational innovation that integrates religious literacy with creative development. By harmonizing technical discipline and artistic expression, the program contributes to holistic child development within the framework of Islamic education.

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