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The Influence of Pegon Minangkabau Arabic Literacy on the Understanding of Islamic Values of Grade VII Students of MTs Alkhairaat Gorontalo City

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the influence of Pegon Minangkabau Arabic literacy on the understanding of Islamic values of grade VII students of MTs Alkhairaat Gorontalo City. Pegon Minangkabau literacy is part of the intellectual heritage of Islam Nusantara which combines elements of local language and Arabic letters, and functions as a medium for internalizing cultural-based religious values. This research was conducted using a quantitative approach through a correlational design. The number of samples in the study consisted of 60 students from two classes, each numbering 30 people. Data collection was carried out through a Pegon literacy test containing 25 questions and a questionnaire on understanding Islamic values consisting of 20 items using the Likert scale. Data analysis included normality test, homogeneity test, Pearson correlation, and simple linear regression analysis processed using SPSS software version 26. The results of the study revealed that there was a positive and significant relationship between the Arabic literacy ability of Pegon Minangkabau and the level of understanding of Islamic values of students ($r = 0.682$; $p < 0.05$). Pegon's literacy ability contributes 46.5% to improving students' understanding of Islam. These findings strengthen the theory of Cultural Literacy and Contextual Teaching and Learning (CTL), which affirm the importance of culture-based learning in strengthening the meaning of Islamic teachings. This research also has novelty because it is the first quantitative study to examine the application of Pegon Minangkabau literacy outside its home area, namely Gorontalo. Practically, the results of this study recommend the application of Pegon literacy in PAI learning as a contextual strategy to strengthen the religious character and preservation of the archipelago's Islamic culture in madrasas.



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Introduction

Islamic Religious Education (PAI) holds an important position in shaping students' character, moral attitudes, and religious identities in the midst of increasingly complex social dynamics and technological developments. In various educational studies in Indonesia, value education in PAI is understood not only to deliver normative material or memorize verses, but is closely related to habituation practices, teacher examples, and value-oriented learning environments [1]. Previous studies have confirmed that the formation of Islamic character is more effective through daily interactions that include worship practices, social behavior, and school culture that support Islamic values rather than simply mastering theoretical knowledge[2]. Therefore, value literacy in PAI learning is considered more meaningful when it is associated with students' local experiences and culture, so that the understanding of Islamic teachings does not stop at the cognitive realm but touches on their affective and social aspects[3]–[5]. PAI teachers play the role of the main agent in fostering Islamic values through a combination of religious practices, value-based learning, and social interaction inside and outside the classroom[6], [7]. Various national studies confirm that the essence of learning Islamic Religious Education (PAI) does not only focus on the delivery of knowledge material, but rather on the process of instilling and appreciating Islamic values which is reflected in students' attitudes and behaviors in daily life. Empirical findings show that the internalization of Islamic values is the main goal that must be integrated in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of learning.

In the context of pluralistic Indonesian education, PAI also serves to strengthen religious moderation and form attitudes of tolerance, social piety, and a balance between faith, morals, and social roles of students[8]. Thus, religious education in madrassas and schools is no longer enough if it only emphasizes the memorization of Islamic verses and theories. A learning approach that fosters contextual understanding and spiritual awareness is needed, where students not only know the concepts of Islamic teachings, but are also able to implement them in real life. The change in the paradigm of PAI learning from textual to contextual is an important demand in answering moral and spiritual challenges in the midst of modernization.

Several recent studies illustrate that PAI learning in many educational units still faces methodological challenges, mainly due to the tendency to focus on theoretical memorization without adequate connection to the reality of students. The dominance of classical Arabic text-based lecture and learning methods without contextual assistance causes students to have difficulty understanding the meaning of Islamic values in depth[9]. This condition is exacerbated by linguistic barriers, especially in understanding classical Arabic which is considered less relevant to students' daily lives. It is in this context that Pegan Arabic literacy, especially Pegan Minangkabau, becomes a strategic alternative because it uses regional languages but is still rooted in Islamic scientific traditions[10]. The use of Pegan script allows students to access religious materials in the language they understand so that bridges between text and context can be better built[11]. Recent studies have shown that a language approach that is closer to the local culture can help students overcome linguistic barriers, as well as open up spaces for more reflective understanding of values [3], [10].

In the Islamic tradition of the archipelago, Pegan Minangkabau has an important position as a form of literacy that develops through a network of suraus and local religious educational institutions. This script is used to write books, stories, and moral texts in the Minangkabau language so that it becomes an effective means to convey Islamic values to the community[12]. The main advantage of Pegan lies in its ability to combine elements of the local language and Islamic teachings, making it easier for readers to understand the moral message it contains[13]. Several empirical studies in West Sumatra show that Pegan literacy has significant potential in improving the understanding of the archipelago's Islamic culture, including in strengthening religious identity and student involvement in value learning. Pegan is not only a stationery, but a cultural medium that connects Islamic teachings with the social narrative of its people. In the context of learning, Pegan can help students understand abstract concepts such as morality, ethics, responsibility, and social values through local narratives that are close to their lives[10], [14].

From a theoretical perspective, this research refers to two major foundations, namely the Cultural Literacy theory and the Contextual Teaching and Learning (CTL) approach. Cultural Literacy emphasizes that a deep understanding of texts is highly dependent on the cultural knowledge that readers have. In PAI learning, the delivery of Islamic teachings through a medium that is in accordance with the cultural environment of students can increase the effectiveness of internalizing values. Meanwhile, CTL emphasizes the need to associate learning materials with real experiences and students' social environments so that learning is more meaningful. The use of Pegan as a learning medium is in accordance with the principles of CTL because it involves the context of the local culture, familiar language, and religious experiences of students in daily life. Culture-based literacy has also been proven to be able to increase students' motivation to learn, value reflection skills, and spiritual awareness[3], [11], [13]. Therefore, the integration of Pegan in the learning of Islamic values can be

seen as a pedagogical strategy that not only maintains tradition, but also harmonizes learning with the conditions and needs of students in madrassas[15].

Empirical support for cultural literacy-based learning has been gaining strength in recent years. A number of studies have found that local culture-based approaches are able to improve students' understanding of spiritual values because learning associated with local traditions is easier to accept and understand. For example, in the Minangkabau context, literacy practices such as Randai and the Pegan manuscript have been proven to be able to revive Islamic moral narratives that are relevant to the lives of the younger generation[16]. The use of Pegan as a learning medium is also able to help students overcome the constraints of classical Arabic, which is often the main obstacle in understanding religious texts. However, quantitative research that directly assesses the relationship between Pegan literacy ability and understanding Islamic values is still very limited, especially outside the area of origin of the Pegan tradition. This shows that there is a need for more structured research to get an empirical picture of the effectiveness of Pegan in the context of value learning in madrassas outside West Sumatra[10], [13].

However, the reality of implementing PAI learning in the field shows serious challenges. Several studies have revealed that PAI learning in madrassas is often still oriented towards the delivery of texts, memorization, and Islamic theory, with a great emphasis on cognitive aspects. The aspect of appreciating Islamic values in a reflective and interactive manner is still not optimally realized[9]. Teachers focus more on academic success than character building through meaningful learning experiences. This condition indicates the need for transformation in learning practices to be more oriented towards strengthening Islamic values rooted in students' cultural and social experiences. The main focus of PAI learning should not only be on the ability to memorize and understand the text, but on the formation of a strong religious and moral identity of students through the process of internalizing values. One of the considerable challenges in PAI learning is the difficulty of students in understanding classical Arabic texts. Many students experience difficulties in understanding the meaning of Arabic religious texts due to the limitations of vocabulary, the complexity of grammatical structures (*São Paulo, Sā* and *honor*), as well as the lack of cultural context that supports an in-depth understanding of the text[17], [18]. Learning approaches that only emphasize literal translation without involving social and cultural context often hinder students' ability to understand the Islamic values contained in the text. As a result, the substantive meaning of Islamic teachings is not absorbed thoroughly and is only understood as a linguistic concept[19].

Gorontalo is an interesting context to test the effectiveness of Minangkabau Pegan literacy in learning Islamic values. The area has a strong religious culture and a madrasah community that actively practices value-oriented education. MTs Alkhairaat Gorontalo City is known as a madrasah with a strong culture of worship habituation, morals, and examples. This school environment facilitates various religious activities such as tadarus, Qur'an literacy, and socio-religious activities that shape the religious culture of students. This condition makes it an ideal context to test how Pegan Minangkabau can play a role in learning Islamic values[12]. The study of cultural literacy in Gorontalo also shows that students have an interest in approaches based on local traditions and other Islamic traditions of the archipelago. The growing tradition of local literacy provides an opportunity for teachers to adopt teaching methods that combine local context with religious content[20]. Therefore, the application of Minangkabau Pegan in MTs Alkhairaat has strong pedagogical relevance.

In terms of academic studies, there is a research gap that is quite clear. Most studies on Pegan have focused on the philological, historical, or content analysis aspects of manuscripts, and few have examined their effectiveness in learning Islamic values with a quantitative approach. In addition, the majority of research was conducted in Pegan's home areas such as Java and West Sumatra, while studies in Eastern Indonesia, including Gorontalo, were still very limited. Thus, this research offers novelty by presenting an empirical analysis of the influence of Pegan Minangkabau literacy on students' understanding of Islamic values outside the context of their culture of origin. This study integrates two major frameworks—Cultural Literacy and CTL—to explain how Pegan literacy can function in the process of internalizing Islamic values in madrasah students[21]. This shows an important theoretical contribution in expanding the understanding of Pegan literacy as part of the archipelago's cultural literacy that can be adapted in other regions.

Practically, the findings of this study provide a number of important implications for the development of PAI learning in the madrasah environment. First, the use of Pegan Minangkabau can be used as an alternative medium in learning moral beliefs because it is able to present Islamic values in a more communicative manner and close to the language understood by students.[22]. Teachers can design modules or teaching materials based on Pegan texts that contain moral stories, Islamic history, and manners that are relevant to the lives of students in Gorontalo. Second, the principles of CTL learning can be applied by connecting Pegan texts with real events or students' social experiences, so that the learning process becomes more relevant, contextual, and applicative.

Third, Pegan literacy also has the potential to be integrated as part of the preservation of the archipelago's Islamic literacy tradition, so that students not only understand religious teachings, but also feel closeness to the local Islamic cultural heritage. Fourth, it is necessary to improve the competence of PAI teachers in mastering the use of Pegan as a learning medium, including pedagogical training and cultural literacy so that teachers are able to implement it effectively. Finally, collaboration between schools, parents, and the community is a crucial element in strengthening the learning of Islamic values, especially through activities that foster discipline, responsibility, and positive social behavior.[23], [24].

This research also has limitations that need to be considered. The use of one research location, namely MTs Alkhairaat Gorontalo City, makes the research results have a limited scope of generalization. In addition, the Pegan literacy indicator and the measurement of Islamic values need to be further developed to provide a more comprehensive picture of the relationship between the two[25]. However, this study provides a solid basis for further research. More in-depth studies can be carried out through digital-based Pegan learning experiments, the development of Pegan thematic modules, and advanced analysis related to the influence of cultural literacy on the development of religious character and spiritual literacy of students in various regions[22].

The results of research in the field of Arabic language learning confirm that the understanding of religious texts cannot be separated from the cultural context and learning experience of students[26]. Learning approaches that ignore the cultural dimension tend to make students lose motivation to learn and view learning Arabic as something rigid and far from their daily lives. To address this, Arabic education experts suggest the need for innovations in learning strategies, such as the use of contextual media, concept maps (*mind mapping*), as well as the development of teaching materials based on local culture. This innovation is believed to increase the relevance of learning and strengthen the connection between religious texts and students' social lives[27].

In this context, Minangkabau Pegan Arabic literacy offers great potential as an alternative to a contextual and culture-based PAI learning approach. The Pegan script is an adaptation of Arabic letters used to write regional languages, including the Minangkabau language. Since the time of the previous scholars, the Pegan script has functioned as the main medium for the spread of da'wah and Islamic education in the archipelago. Through the use of Pegan, Islamic teachings are conveyed using a language that is close to the community so that it is easy to understand, and in the end makes it a form of Islamic literacy rooted in the local culture[14]. Therefore, Pegan is not just a writing system, but also a representation of the process of inheriting Islamic values that are intertwined in the cultural context of Indonesian society.

In the realm of modern education, Pegan Minangkabau can be used as a means of learning that connects aspects of language, culture, and Islamic values. The use of Pegan texts in learning activities provides a more meaningful learning experience for students because they can understand religious teachings through language and symbols that are close to the reality of their lives.[28]. These findings are in line with the idea of Cultural Literacy by E.D. Hirsch (2021), who emphasizes that understanding of a text will increase when students have a supportive cultural knowledge background. In addition, the Critical Literacy theory from Paulo Freire (2020) also emphasizes that literacy is not only related to the ability to read and write, but also concerns the ability to interpret moral and spiritual messages based on the social context of students.

The integration between cultural literacy and Islamic literacy is an urgent need in the current Islamic education system. The cultural literacy approach provides a space for students to understand religious messages through local language and symbols, while Islamic literacy directs students to internalize religious values into their behavior and identity[29]. These two forms of literacy, when combined, are able to bridge the gap between cognitive understanding and the appreciation of authentic Islamic values. This is where Pegan Minangkabau Arabic literacy has strategic relevance, because it can connect Islamic teachings with the social and cultural reality of students, while preserving the archipelago's Islamic literacy heritage.

Recent studies have also shown the effectiveness of local wisdom-based learning approaches in increasing students' motivation and understanding of Islamic values, finding that culture-based literacy in Gorontalo increases students' involvement in learning and strengthens their religious awareness. Tonji emphasized that integrating local cultural symbols and narratives in religious learning plays an important role in shaping students' moral reflection[30]. Tolapa (2023) and Wati et al. (2024) also noted that culture-based approaches are able to strengthen the relationship between students and their social environment, making Islamic values more alive and internalized in daily behavior[29], [31].

Geographically, Gorontalo is an area that has a distinctive social and cultural context and potential for the application of Pegan Minangkabau Arabic literacy. Although the Pegan script comes from the Minangkabau tradition, its universal value can be adapted in the context of Gorontalo to enrich students' religious understanding. A number of local studies show that efforts to develop Arabic teaching materials based on local wisdom have been carried out with positive results[5], [6]. In addition, the education model based on the

integration of general and religious curricula as applied in integrated Islamic schools in Gorontalo shows the harmony between the learning of religious values and the local socio-cultural context.

The conditions at MTs Alkhairaat Gorontalo City also show great opportunities for the application of this approach. This madrasah has students with diverse social and cultural backgrounds but has a strong religious spirit. PAI teachers play an active role in building a learning environment with Islamic character through learning activities, worship practices, and habituation of Islamic values in schools[32]. The application of Pegan Minangkabau Arabic literacy in this madrasah is expected to be able to help students understand Islamic values in a way that is more in accordance with the context of their lives and provide a meaningful learning experience, so that students' Islamic identity is stronger in their daily activities.

Based on various studies and empirical findings, it can be emphasized that PAI learning has an important role in strengthening the process of internalizing Islamic values through a cultural literacy approach. This study, which examines the influence of Pegan Minangkabau Arabic literacy on the understanding of Islamic values of grade VII students of MTs Alkhairaat Gorontalo City, is significant because it seeks to answer the learning needs of PAI that are relevant to the regional Islamic context. The results of this research are also expected to enrich the treasures of research on cultural literacy, Arabic language literacy, and strengthening Islamic values, as well as provide a foothold for curriculum development and the implementation of PAI learning strategies that are more contextual, actively involve students, and are oriented towards the formation of religious character.

Research Methods

This study uses a quantitative approach with a correlational design because it aims to identify the relationship and influence between two main variables, namely Pegan Minangkabau Arabic literacy as an independent variable (X) and understanding Islamic values as a bound variable (Y). The selection of a quantitative approach is based on the ability of this method to produce objective, measurable, and statistically analyzable data.[33]. Through a correlational design, the study seeks to see the extent to which changes in the Pegan literacy variable are related to the level of understanding of students' Islamic values without providing treatment or manipulation of the variables studied. Therefore, this research is expected to be able to provide an empirical picture of the great contribution of Pegan literacy to the understanding of religious values in the madrasah environment.

The research was carried out at Madrasah Tsanawiyah (MTs) Alkhairaat, Gorontalo City, one of the Islamic educational institutions under the auspices of the Alkhairaat Foundation. This location was chosen purposively because it has characteristics that are in accordance with the focus of the research, namely a religious madrasah environment, active in religious habituation activities, and applying Qur'an literacy in daily learning activities. In addition, this madrasah is inhabited by students with quite diverse social and cultural backgrounds, so it is relevant as a place to examine the effectiveness of local culture-based learning such as Pegan Minangkabau Arabic literacy. The implementation of the research lasted for three months, from March to May 2025, through several stages ranging from initial observation, instrument preparation, data collection, to final analysis.

The population in this study includes all students of grade VII MTs Alkhairaat Gorontalo City who are divided into two study groups, namely classes VII A and VII B, with a total of 60 students. Because the population is below 100 and relatively small, this study uses a *total sampling* technique or saturated sample, so that all members of the population are automatically used as research samples. Thus, the number of samples used is 60 students, consisting of 30 students of class VII A and 30 students of class VII B. The selection of this technique aims to make the data obtained more representative and truly describe the factual conditions of all grade VII students at MTs Alkhairaat Gorontalo City.

The characteristics of the respondents in this study include aspects of age, gender, and residential background. Based on madrasah data, most students are between 12–14 years old, which falls into the category of early teens. At this stage of development, students are in a phase of improving cognitive and moral abilities, where they begin to be able to think abstractly, reason more logically, and understand social and religious values. In addition, some students live in the urban environment of Gorontalo City, while others come from suburban areas. This difference in residential area has the potential to affect students' access to religious activities. These social and cultural factors are important aspects that can have an impact on their literacy level and understanding of Islamic values.

This research involves two main variables. The independent variable or independent variable is the literacy of Pegon Minangkabau Arabic, which is assessed through the ability of students to recognize the Pegon letters, read, write, and understand the content of Pegon scripted texts that contain Islamic teachings. Meanwhile, dependent variables or bound variables include the understanding of students' Islamic values, which are measured based on indicators of honesty, responsibility, discipline, and social concern. These two variables were studied to determine the extent to which Pegon's literacy ability affects students' understanding of Islamic values in daily life.

The research instrument is designed based on the theoretical foundation and variable indicators that have been determined. To measure the level of literacy of Pegon Minangkabau Arabic, a short description test was used which amounted to 25 items. The test items cover four main aspects: Pegon letter recognition, the ability to read Pegon text, the ability to write simple Pegon texts, and the comprehension of the content of the text. The test is given in writing in 60 minutes, and each student's response is evaluated using assessment criteria that include reading accuracy, spelling, and understanding of the meaning of the text.

To measure students' understanding of Islamic values, a questionnaire in the form of a Likert scale was used with five response options, namely strongly disagree (1), disagree (2), neutral (3), agree (4), and strongly agree (5). This instrument contains 20 statements developed based on four main indicators of Islamic values. The honesty indicator assesses honesty in speech and actions; Responsibility indicators measure student discipline in carrying out tasks and following rules; Discipline indicators assess students' regularity in learning and worship; Meanwhile, the social concern indicator observes empathy and students' ability to cooperate with peers. Each response is given a score which is then summed up to obtain an overall score of understanding of students' Islamic values.

Before the instrument was applied in the main study, trials were conducted on 15 students outside the research sample to ensure its validity and reliability. The validity test was performed using the Pearson Product Moment correlation technique, and all items were declared valid because the calculated r value exceeded the r of the table at a significance level of 0.05. Furthermore, reliability was tested using Cronbach's Alpha method and yielded a coefficient of 0.83, indicating that the instrument had a strong internal consistency level. Thus, both the Pegon literacy test and the questionnaire on understanding Islamic values are suitable for use as research instruments.

Data collection in this study was carried out through three main procedures, namely observation, testing, and filling out questionnaires, and supported by documentation. In the first stage, observation was carried out to find out the extent to which PAI students and teachers knew and used the Pegon script in the learning process. The second stage involves the implementation of tests and questionnaires in two classes that are sampled. Each class first took the Pegon literacy test for 60 minutes, then the students filled out the questionnaire in about 45 minutes. The entire process is carried out in the classroom with direct supervision from researchers and subject teachers so that the results are more valid and objective. The third stage is in the form of documentation collected to complete the research data, such as school profiles, number of students, academic records, and photos of activities during the research.

The data obtained from the test and questionnaire were then analyzed using the SPSS application version 26. The analysis process is carried out through several stages, namely normality tests, homogeneity tests, correlation tests, and simple linear regression tests. The normality test uses the Kolmogorov-Smirnov method to determine whether the data is normally distributed. If the significance value is greater than 0.05, then the data is declared to meet the assumption of normality. After that, the analysis continues at other testing stages as per the needs of the research. The homogeneity test was carried out using the Levene Test to ensure that the variance between the data groups was uniform. After the data meets the assumptions of normality and homogeneity, the next stage is to conduct a Pearson Product Moment correlation test to determine the direction of the relationship and the level of strength between Pegon literacy and students' understanding of Islamic values. The value of the correlation coefficient (r), that is close to 1 indicates that the relationship between the two variables is in the strong category.

The next stage of analysis is to apply simple linear regression to determine how much influence Pegon Minangkabau Arabic literacy has on students' understanding of Islamic values. The regression equation used follows the form $Y = a + bX$, where Y represents the understanding of Islamic values, X is Pegon's literacy, a is constant, and b is the regression coefficient. The decision-making criteria were determined based on the significance value (p), where $p < 0.05$ indicates a significant influence between the two variables. On the other hand, if the significance value exceeds 0.05, then there is no significant relationship.

Through this series of analyses, the research is expected to produce empirical evidence on the role of Pegon Minangkabau Arabic literacy in improving the understanding of Islamic values of grade VII MTs

Alkhairaat students in Gorontalo City. These findings are expected to be the basis for strengthening the learning design based on local cultural literacy, especially in supporting the internalization of Islamic teachings in madrasas.

Results and Discussion

This research was carried out at MTs Alkhairaat Gorontalo City in the even semester of the 2024/2025 school year. The madrasah is an Islamic educational institution under the Alkhairaat Foundation and is known to have a strong commitment to the implementation of learning that emphasizes Islamic values. The research activities lasted for three months and included the initial observation stage, the data collection process, and the analysis of the research findings. The focus of this study is to identify the influence of Pegon Minangkabau Arabic literacy on the level of understanding of Islamic values of grade VII MTs Alkhairaat students of Gorontalo City.

The research population includes all grade VII students who are divided into two study groups, namely VII A and VII B, with a total of 60 students. Each class consisted of 30 students who were all used as research samples through the total sampling technique, considering that the population was relatively small and it was possible to be used as a full sample without additional selection. All students participated directly in the data collection process so that the results of this study were able to describe the real condition of Pegon's literacy ability and the level of understanding of Islamic values of students in the madrasah.

The research data was obtained through two types of instruments, namely the Minangkabau Pegon Arabic literacy test and a questionnaire that measures students' understanding of Islamic values. The Pegon literacy test consists of 25 questions that include four main indicators: the ability to recognize Pegon letters, the skill of reading the Pegon text, the ability to write simple sentences in the Pegon script, and the understanding of the content of religious texts written in the Pegon script. Meanwhile, the instrument to measure the understanding of Islamic values contains 20 statements that are assessed using a five-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree). The questionnaire grid was compiled based on four indicators of Islamic values, namely honesty, responsibility, discipline, and social concern.

Before being used in research, both instruments have gone through a validity and reliability test process. The validity test was carried out using the Pearson Product Moment correlation technique, and the results showed that all items had a calculated r-value greater than the r-value of the table (0.254), so that all items were declared valid. Furthermore, the reliability test using Cronbach's Alpha method yielded a value of 0.83, which indicates that the instrument has a high level of internal consistency and is suitable for use as a measuring tool in the study.

Description of Research Data

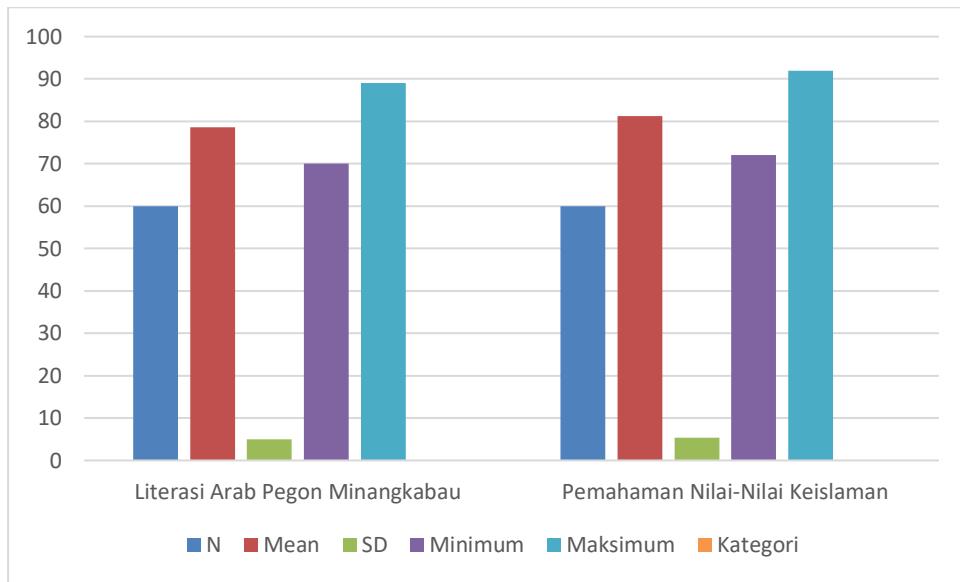
Based on the results of data processing using the SPSS application version 26, descriptive statistics were obtained that describe the distribution of Pegon literacy scores and the level of understanding of students' Islamic values. A summary of these statistics is presented in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics of Research Variables

| Variabel | N | Mean | SD | Minimum | Maximum | Category |
|-----------------------------------|----|-------|------|---------|---------|----------|
| Arabic Literacy Pegon Minangkabau | 60 | 78,60 | 4,95 | 70 | 89 | Good |
| Understanding Islamic Values | 60 | 81,20 | 5,40 | 72 | 92 | Good |

Based on the data in the table, the average literacy ability of Pegon Minangkabau students reached 78.60 and was included in the good category. This finding indicates that the majority of students have high proficiency in recognizing letters, reading, and writing Minangkabau Pegon texts.

Meanwhile, the average score for understanding Islamic values of 81.20 is also in the good category. The results show that students have a good level of understanding of Islamic values, which include aspects of honesty, responsibility, discipline, and social concern.



The standard deviation (SD) values for both variables were relatively small (4.95 for Pegon literacy and 5.40 for Islamic values), indicating that the distribution of data between students tended to be homogeneous. The minimum and maximum score ranges also do not show extreme differences, which means that students' abilities in both variables are relatively uniform.

Statistical Assumption Test

Before correlation and regression analysis is carried out, an assumption test is first carried out to ensure that the data is suitable for analysis using parametric statistical techniques. The normality test was carried out using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov method, while the homogeneity test used the Levene Test. The results of the two tests are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Normality and Homogeneity Test Results

| Variabel | Kolmogorov-Smirnov Sig. | Levene Sig. | Information |
|--------------------------------------|----------------------------|----------------|--------------------------------|
| Arabic Literacy Pegon Minangkabau | 0,200 | 0,164 | Normal and homogeneous data |
| Understanding Islamic Values | 0,200 | 0,113 | Normal and homogeneous data |

Based on the test results, the significance value in both variables was greater than 0.05 ($p > 0.05$). Thus, the data is declared to be normally distributed and has a homogeneous variance. Therefore, the data meet the prerequisites to proceed with correlation testing and simple linear regression analysis.

Pearson Correlation Test

Correlation analysis was carried out to determine the extent of the relationship between the literacy ability of Pegon Minangkabau Arabic as a variable X and the level of understanding of students' Islamic values as a variable Y. The results of Pearson's correlation testing are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Pearson Correlation Test Results

| Variabel | r | Sig. (p) | Information |
|---------------------------------|-------|----------|--|
| Pegon ↔ Literacy Islamic Values | 0,682 | 0,000 | Positive and significant relationships |

Based on the calculation results, a coefficient correlation value (r) of 0.682 with a significance value of 0.000 ($p < 0.05$) was obtained. These findings indicate that there is a strong, positive, and significant relationship between Minangkabau Pegon Arabic literacy and understanding of Islamic values. In other words, the better the students' ability to recognize, read, and understand the Pegon script, the higher their level of understanding of Islamic values in daily life.

The correlation value of 0.682 is in the category of strong relationships (Sugiyono, 2019), which means that Pegan Minangkabau literacy contributes significantly to strengthening students' understanding of religious values. This positive relationship shows that students' ability to recognize and understand Pegan texts helps them to more easily understand the moral and spiritual messages in Islamic teachings.

Simple Linear Regression Test

To find out how much influence Pegan Minangkabau Arabic literacy has on students' understanding of Islamic values, a simple linear regression analysis was performed. The results of the test can be seen in Table 4.

Table 4. Simple Linear Regression Test Results

| Model | Constant (a) | Coeficin (b) | R ² | Sig. (p) | Information |
|----------------|--------------|--------------|----------------|----------|-------------|
| Regresi Linear | 35,27 | 0,59 | 0,465 | 0,000 | Signifikan |

From the results of the regression analysis, the equation was obtained: $Y = 35.27 + 0.59X$. This equation shows that every increase in one unit of literacy ability of Pegan Minangkabau will be followed by an increase of 0.59 units in the understanding of students' Islamic values. An R² value of 0.465 means that 46.5% variation in the understanding of Islamic values can be explained by Pegan's literacy ability. Meanwhile, the remaining 53.5% were influenced by other factors such as family environment, religious extracurricular activities, and the quality of PAI teaching. A significance value (p) of 0.000 (< 0.05) indicates that the regression model used is significant. The results of the analysis show that the regression model used is significant. In other words, the research hypothesis is acceptable, namely that there is a positive and significant influence between the literacy of Pegan Minangkabau Arabic and the level of understanding of students' Islamic values.

Empirically, the findings of this study show that students' skills in Pegan Minangkabau literacy have a considerable role in shaping their understanding of Islamic teachings and values at MTs Alkhairaat Gorontalo City. Students who are able to read and write Pegan texts well generally have a stronger understanding of values such as honesty, responsibility, and discipline. This condition can be understood because the Minangkabau Pegan text is a learning medium that integrates local language with Islamic content, so that students feel closer and easier to understand the religious content learned.

In addition, the results of the study also confirm the high relevance between these findings and the characteristics of the madrasah environment. MTs Alkhairaat is known to have a strong religious culture and a tradition of religious literacy that continues to be maintained. The use of Pegan texts not only helps students master Islamic teaching materials but also plays a role in maintaining the archipelago's Islamic literacy heritage. Thus, these findings provide evidence that culture-based literacy can be applied in various educational contexts and remain effective as an approach to strengthening Islamic values.

Overall, the results of this study confirm the hypothesis proposed, namely that Pegan Minangkabau Arabic literacy has a positive and significant influence on students' understanding of Islamic values. These findings also affirm the importance of cultural literacy-based PAI learning innovations as a contextual learning strategy that has the potential to improve the quality of character and spiritual education of students in the modern era.

Discussion

The results of this study reveal that there is a positive and significant influence between the Arabic literacy ability of Pegan Minangkabau and the level of understanding of Islamic values of grade VII students of MTs Alkhairaat Gorontalo City. This is shown through a correlation value of $r = 0.682$ with a significant level of $p < 0.05$. Based on the findings of simple linear regression, it was found that Pegan literacy contributed 46.5% in improving students' understanding of Islamic values. These findings not only strengthen the research hypothesis but also show that students' ability to understand and use the Minangkabau Pegan script is closely related to the process of internalizing Islamic values among students. Moreover, these results are in line with the theoretical framework used in the study.

1. Characteristics of Minangkabau Pegan Arabic Writing

The Minangkabau Pegan Arabic script is the result of a creative adaptation between the Arabic letter system and the local phonology of the Minangkabau language. In the manuscript of the Naqshbandiyah Order that is the object of study, the author used modified forms of Arabic letters to write down typical Minangkabau

sounds such as *ng*, *ny*, *c*, *é*, and *o*. For example, the letter *nga* (غ) is used to represent the velar nasal sound /ŋ/, while *pa* (پ) and *ga* (گ) are used to represent the sounds /p/ and /g/ that are not found in the classical Arabic alphabet. This phenomenon shows the process of indigenization of Arabic writing, which is the effort of local communities to adapt the script system to their phonetic needs without abandoning the Islam inherent in Arabic letters.



In the study of the Minangkabau Pegen Arabic manuscript, three important pieces of text were found that describe the real form of the use of Pegen Arabic writing in the Minangkabau realm. The three pieces not only show linguistic aspects, but also contain religious, social, and moral values that lived in Minangkabau society in the past. The following is a detailed explanation of each manuscript piece.

a) The First Arabic Pegen Piece: The Value of Piety and Moral Awareness

The first piece shows the Pegen Arabic script with the characteristic letters *ca* (ج) and *nga* (غ) which indicate the adaptation of the local Minangkabau sound into the Arabic script. The writing on this manuscript is in deep black ink with a firm letter shape and a tight spacing between the lines. This manuscript contains a religious message about man's relationship with God. One part of the text reads: **إينيو نان منيمبه الله كرانو**

تاكوت دوسا

Those who fear God are afraid of sin. Meaning: "He worships Allah out of fear of sin."

This sentence reflects the religious views of the Minangkabau people who place worship as a form of submission and fear of the consequences of sin. The values contained in it affirm the importance of moral awareness and piety as the foundation of life. The use of the Minangkabau language in Pegen writing shows that the spread of Islamic teachings at that time was carried out in a communicative and grounded way so that it was easily understood by the general public.

b) The Second Pegan Arabic Piece: The Teachings of Patience and Fortitude

The second piece features more refined and organized writing. Pegan's writing in this section seems to be complete, indicating that this manuscript may have been used in the context of teaching or reading in the surau. The shape of the letters fa (ف) and qaf (ق) looks distinctive, with the stroke of the edges slightly slanted to the left, a common feature of the handwriting of Minangkabau scholars in the past.

The text in this piece contains moral messages and life advice, as seen in the following sentence:

سياف نان صبر الله تاهمكن حتينيو

He who is patient, God will heal his heart. It means: "Whoever is patient, Allah will strengthen his heart."

This expression shows the strong influence of the teachings of Sufism and Islamic morals in Minangkabau culture. Patience is seen as the key to inner peace and strength to face life's trials. In terms of language, this writing shows the syncretism between Arabic and Minangkabau, where the words "sabar" and "Allah" are retained in Arabic, while the sentence structure follows the local language pattern. This strengthens the evidence that the Pegan manuscript is an effective means of teaching Islam that is familiar with the language of the people.

c) Third Pegan Arabic Piece: Social and Humanitarian Values

The third piece looks older and faded, but the text can still be read quite clearly. This writing tends to be unhinged and uses dense Pegan Arabic letters with a writing style that is slightly tilted to the right. This piece focuses more on social teaching and ethics between people.

One example of the text reads: جاغن انيايو سسامو اورڠ Do not persecute our neighbors Meaning: "Do not oppress your fellow man."

The message is very simple but full of meaning. It contains high human values and social justice, in accordance with the principles of Islam and Minangkabau customs which reads "adat basandi syarak, syarak basandi Kitabullah." Through this Pegan text, it appears that Islamic values are spread not only through lectures, but also through writings that can be passed down from generation to generation. The gentle and direct style of language shows that the author of this manuscript understands the social conditions of his society and seeks to teach morals in an easy-to-understand way.

From these three pieces, it can be concluded that the Minangkabau Pegan Arabic manuscript is the result of a combination of Arabic script, local language, and Islamic values. The adaptation of letters such as "خ", "ج", and "ف" is proof of the Minangkabau people's innovation in adapting Arabic letters to the phonetic needs of regional languages. In addition, the diverse content of the manuscript ranging from moral advice, religious teachings, to social messages—shows that the Pegan manuscript functions not only as a medium of da'wah, but also as a cultural and educational document.

Thus, the Minangkabau Pegan Arabic manuscript is not just a relic of ancient writing but is an intellectual and spiritual trace of the people of the archipelago, which combines religious knowledge and local wisdom. The study of this manuscript is important to understand how Islam grew and blended with the Minangkabau culture in a peaceful and civilized manner.

In the manuscripts written by the teachers at the institute, these letters not only function phonetically, but also contain symbolic value. The use of Arabic letters is understood as a form of respect for the language of revelation, while the adjustment of the letter form reflects the openness of the local culture to innovation. This kind of writing shows the dynamics of Islamic literacy in Minangkabau — where the Arabic language and writing are accepted not as dominance, but as a medium of cultural and spiritual transformation.

2. Cultural Identity in the Manuscripts of the Naqshabandiyah Order

The Arabic-Malay manuscripts used in the Minangkabau Naqshabandiyah Order not only contain the teachings of Sufism and dhikr but also reflect the cultural identity of the Minangkabau people. This can be seen in word selection, language style, and sentence structure that often combines Arabic and local terms. For example, words such as a *sacred heart*, a *gentle path*, or *deep knowledge* show a form of fusion between religious Arabic and Minangkabau language which is full of traditional nuances.

In addition, the content of the manuscript is often accompanied by Minangkabau proverbs and proverbs that describe the philosophy of life "adat basandi syarak, syarak basandi Kitabullah". This philosophy is the basis

that Islamic teachings are not understood separately from customs but rather reinforce each other. Pegen Arabic writing in this context became a medium of expression of religious local identity, where the Minangkabau people combined universal Islamic values with their indigenous culture through the script system. Thus, the Minangkabau Pegen Arabic functions not only as a stationery, but also as a symbol of identity and continuity of local religious traditions.

3. Linguistic and Symbolic Meaning in Texts

From a linguistic point of view, the manuscript of the Minangkabau Naqshbandiyah Tarekat shows a writing style that is rich in mixed codes between Arabic and Minangkabau. Many religious terms are written in Arabic, such as *dhikr*, *caliph*, *mursyid*, *mortal*, and *baqa'*, while the explanation or interpretation of the teachings is conveyed in the Minangkabau language using the Pegen letter. This language mixture shows a high level of bilingualism and the dual function of the Arabic-Malay script as a link between the two worlds of meaning — revelation and locality.

From a symbolic side, Pegen Arabic writing is considered to have a sacred dimension, because Arabic letters are believed to carry their own spiritual value. In the context of the tarekat, this writing functions as a "trace of barakah" (a sign of blessing) from the teacher to the student. Therefore, many manuscripts begin with the sentence *basmalah*, praise to the Prophet, and prayers of blessing for the reader. This tradition shows that Pegen Arabic served not only as a stationery, but also as a medium of spiritual transmission that connected the dimensions of the text and religious inner experience.

4. Contextualization of Research Results

The findings of this study provide a new perspective on the contribution of Pegen Minangkabau Arabic literacy in shaping the religious character of students in madrasas. At MTs Alkhairaat Gorontalo City, the learning process does not only focus on mastering the material alone, but is also directed at the formation of students' personalities and morals through educational activities that are integrated with Islamic values. This madrasah has a strong learning tradition, reflected in the routine of *tadarus*, congregational prayers, and the reading of classical books. In this environment, the use of Pegen texts is more acceptable because it is considered to be in harmony with students' daily lives.

One of the distinctive characteristics of learning at MTs Alkhairaat is the teacher's efforts to associate Islamic teachings with local cultural conditions. Pegen literacy is an effective means of bridging two learning spaces: religious texts and students' social realities. When students learn Pegen texts that contain moral messages such as honesty, responsibility, and social care, they are not only trained to recognize Arabic letters that have been modified according to the local language, but are also directed to understand the ethical values contained in them. This approach allows students to build relationships between knowledge and values, as well as between language and meaning in the context of their lives.

From the point of view of value education, the internalization process does not take place instantly. A meaningful and context-based learning experience through the use of Pegen texts helps students instill Islamic values more deeply. Teachers play an important role in directing this process through explanations, reflective discussions, and habituation of behaviors in daily life. Thus, the findings of the study confirm that the use of Pegen not only serves as a linguistic innovation, but also as an effective and relevant character education approach to the needs of today's learners.

The cultural context of Gorontalo itself also strengthens the results of this research. The people of Gorontalo are known to be religious, with strong Islamic values and a customary-based social system that upholds morality. The integration of Minangkabau Pegen into learning is a form of cultural interaction that enriches local treasures. This adaptation shows that the cultural literacy of the archipelago Islamic has high flexibility to be applied in various regions without losing its spiritual meaning[34].

5. Analysis of Statistical Meaning and Pedagogical Implications

The results of statistical analysis showed a fairly strong correlation value ($r = 0.682$), illustrating the existence of a linear relationship between Pegen literacy and understanding Islamic values. Pedagogically, these results show that the ability to understand Pegen texts is not just a linguistic ability, but also involves complex cognitive and affective processes. When students read Pegen's text, they not only recognize the symbol of the letters, but also interpret the implied moral and spiritual meaning.

The determination value of 46.5% indicates that almost half of the variation in students' understanding of Islamic values can be explained by Pegen's literacy ability. While the rest are influenced by external factors such as the family environment, extracurricular activities, and teacher guidance. These results show that Pegen literacy has a significant contribution as one of the components in Islamic-based character education.

In the context of learning, the findings of this study provide an empirical basis for PAI teachers to design more creative strategies. Pegon texts can be used in various forms, such as wisdom stories, religious poetry, or the history of Nusantara scholars. This variety of text usage not only helps improve students' reading skills, but also enriches their learning experience. For example, students may be asked to rewrite the story of an exemplary Islamic figure in Pegon script and present it in class. Activities like this do not only train basic literacy skills, but also deepen students' understanding of Islamic values through a reflection process.

Furthermore, the approach is in line with the principles of Contextual Teaching and Learning (CTL) which emphasizes the relationship between the subject matter and the reality of students' lives. When learning is associated with the social and cultural experiences of learners, the learning process becomes more meaningful because students realize that Islamic teachings can be implemented in daily life. Thus, Pegon literacy acts as a bridge that connects religious texts and social practices, as well as between theoretical knowledge and real action, even between religious values and the cultural realities they live by.

From a theoretical perspective, the results of this study strengthen the concept of Cultural Literacy introduced by Hirsch (2021). Hirsch explained that literacy is not only related to the ability to read texts, but also the understanding of meaning born from the cultural context. In this framework, Pegon is a means that brings together language with local Islamic culture. Through Pegon-based learning, students not only interact with religious texts, but also understand the way of thinking and the values of the archipelago's Islamic community that is behind it.

In addition, the findings of this study also strengthen the idea of Freire (2020) in the theory of Critical Literacy. Freire emphasized that literacy is not only concerned with the ability to read texts, but also includes the process of intellectual liberation and social awareness. In the context of Pegon-based learning, students are not positioned as passive recipients of religious information, but as active parties interpreting messages, connecting them with social experiences, and developing critical thinking about the values learned. This process helps students build a more reflective and mature moral consciousness.

The relationship between theory and practice is evident in the results of this study. Pegon as a learning medium has proven to function as a means of contextualizing Islamic teachings in students' lives. These findings are consistent with the study by Rahmawati and the State (2024), which reported that the use of Pegon in learning was able to increase the spirituality of students in the pesantren environment. In another study, Bustamam (2024) shows that the Minangkabau Pegon manuscript is loaded with moral values that are relevant to the reality of today's life. The difference in this study lies in the focus of the context: the previous study was conducted more in the cultural environment of Pegon's origin, while this study tested it in the Gorontalo region. Thus, this research expands the scope of the study and makes a new contribution to the development of Islamic literacy in the archipelago through a quantitative approach.

The research findings are also strengthened by the results of the Scientific and Humaidi (2024) study, which emphasizes the importance of learning based on local wisdom to improve students' understanding of Arabic and Islamic values. According to them, the integration of local culture in teaching materials can help students understand the meaning of Islamic teachings more naturally and contextually. This shows that Pegon literacy can serve as a relevant pedagogical medium to bridge the gap between religious texts and students' socio-religious understanding.

6. Novelty and Practical Application in MTs Alkhairaat

One of the important aspects of this research is its novelty. This is the first quantitative study to examine the application of Minangkabau Pegon literacy outside their home area. This novelty proves that universal values in Islamic literacy in the archipelago can be applied in various geographical contexts without losing their substance. The adaptation of Pegon literacy in Gorontalo also shows that the Islamic culture of the archipelago has a life force across ethnicities and regions.

In terms of practical applications, PAI teachers can integrate Pegon into the learning process to enrich teaching materials. Teachers can develop learning modules that contain Pegon texts that are relevant to Islamic themes, such as morals, worship, or Islamic history. Students can be trained to copy texts, read with comprehension, and write personal reflections based on the moral messages contained in them. In addition, madrassas can hold training for teachers and students to introduce the Pegon script system and its use methods in learning. This kind of program not only helps preserve the archipelago's Islamic culture, but also supports the vision of the Independent Curriculum that emphasizes project-based learning, character, and local culture.

Furthermore, the results of this research have the potential to be an important reference for policymakers, especially within the Ministry of Religion, in formulating curriculum development oriented to Islamic cultural literacy. By incorporating the elements of Pegan into the Islamic Religious Education (PAI) material, students not only gain religious knowledge, but are also encouraged to understand cultural values and the history of the development of Islamic literacy in Indonesia.

7. Relevance to Contemporary Islamic Education

In the context of modern Islamic education, this research has high relevance. The flow of globalization and digitalization brings great challenges to the world of education, especially in maintaining cultural values and identity. Pegan Minangkabau literacy can act as a cultural fortress that strengthens students' Islamic identity while encouraging them to think critically and creatively. Pegan teaches that religion and culture should not be opposed. In the Pegan texts, Islamic values are conveyed with local language and symbols, which makes the teachings of Islam feel closer and easier to understand. This process encourages the growth of a moderate and inclusive understanding of Islam, in line with the vision of the Ministry of Religion in strengthening religious moderation.

More than that, Pegan-based learning can be a means of multicultural education. Students learn to appreciate cultural differences while still holding to the basic values of Islam. This kind of approach is important to build social harmony in a pluralistic society. In this context, Pegan literacy is not only a tool for the preservation of cultural heritage, but also a medium for peace and tolerance education.

8. Akhir Synthesis

Overall, the results of this study confirm that Pegan Minangkabau Arabic literacy has a significant influence on students' understanding of Islamic values. Through Pegan-based learning, students not only improve their reading and writing skills, but also foster strong moral and spiritual awareness. Learning becomes more meaningful because it connects religious teachings with social and cultural contexts that are familiar to students.

The application of Pegan literacy at MTs Alkhaira Gorontalo City is clear evidence that Islamic education can continue to innovate without leaving its cultural roots. Pegan is not only a legacy of the past, but also a relevant pedagogical instrument to shape a young generation that is religious, characterful, and loves local culture. In the long term, this approach can be a learning model for other madrassas in Indonesia to develop an integrative curriculum between values, language, and culture.

Thus, Pegan Minangkabau literacy is not only part of history, but also the path to a future of Islamic education that is humanistic, contextual, and value-based.

Conclusion

Based on the series of research results and statistical analysis carried out, it can be emphasized that the Arabic literacy ability of Pegan Minangkabau has a real and meaningful influence on the understanding of Islamic values of grade VII students of MTs Alkhaira Gorontalo City. The statistical test showed a correlation value (r) of 0.682 with a significance level of $p < 0.05$. These findings indicate that the better the Pegan literacy of students, the higher their level of understanding of Islamic moral and religious values. The value of the determination coefficient ($R^2 = 0.465$) showed that Pegan literacy contributed 46.5% to the improvement of understanding of Islamic values, while the rest was influenced by other variables that were not studied in this study.

The findings show that the use of the Minangkabau Pegan text not only plays a role as a means of preserving local Islamic culture, but also functions as a learning medium that is able to answer the needs of modern education. Through Pegan literacy, students can understand Islamic teachings more deeply because they learn Islamic values through language and symbols that are close to daily life. In addition to the cognitive aspect, the use of Pegan in the learning process also supports teachers in developing more interesting and communicative methods of delivering material, so that students show better motivation to learn.

In addition, this research makes a meaningful contribution to the development of Islamic education based on local cultural wisdom. Pegan Minangkabau literacy can be used as an integrative learning model that connects religious texts, local cultural identities, and strengthening students' religious character. Thus, the use of the Pegan script not only serves to preserve the Islamic literacy heritage of the archipelago, but also serves as a bridge between classical Islamic teachings and the needs of contemporary Islamic education.

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