The Relationship Between Pegon Arabic Banten Literacy and Understanding of Qotrul Ghaits Texts in Arabic Language Learning in Class X MAN 1 Gorontalo City

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the relationship between Arabic Pegon literacy and comprehension of the *Qotrul Ghaits* text in Arabic language learning among tenth-grade students at MAN 1 Kota Gorontalo. The research employed a quantitative non-experimental correlational design. The population consisted of 120 students, with 60 participants selected using proportional random sampling. The instruments included a 20-item Arabic Pegon literacy test and a 25-item *Qotrul Ghaits* comprehension test, both validated by experts and tested for reliability, yielding Cronbach's Alpha values of 0.87 and 0.89, respectively. Data were analyzed using normality, linearity, Pearson Product–Moment correlation, and determination coefficient (R^2) tests via SPSS version 25. The results revealed a positive and significant correlation between Pegon literacy and text comprehension, with $r = 0.712$ and $p = 0.000$ ($p < 0.05$). The determination coefficient $R^2 = 0.507$ indicates that Pegon literacy accounts for 50.7% of the variation in text comprehension. These findings confirm that higher Pegon literacy skills are associated with better understanding of classical religious texts written in Pegon script. The study fills a gap in previous research, which has rarely examined the empirical relationship between Pegon literacy and comprehension in modern Islamic education contexts. It recommends integrating Pegon literacy systematically into Arabic language curricula in madrasahs to strengthen religious literacy, preserve the intellectual heritage of Islamic Nusantara, and enhance students' comprehension of classical Arabic texts.

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Introduction

The Pegon Arabic script is one of the typical writing systems of the archipelago that was formed through the process of acculturation between Arabic letters and regional languages such as Javanese, Sundanese, and Banten[1]. In the history of the development of Islamic education, Pegon served as a writing and reading medium that allowed non-Arab people to understand classical religious texts more easily[2]. Great scholars such as Sheikh Nawawi al-Bantani used this script to write monumental works such as *Qotrul Ghaits*, a book of tauhid that is widely studied in traditional Islamic boarding schools[3]. Through Pegon, complex Arabic texts can be translated into local languages without compromising the depth of their meaning, thus becoming an effective means of teaching Islamic values to the wider community.

The existence of Arab Pegon script scattered across various regions of Indonesia has attracted attention to analyze its orthographic writing conventions. Etymologically, orthography means "the correct writing of characters (script)[4]. In linguistic and pedagogic contexts, Pegon has a dual function: as a tool of scientific communication and as a linguistic bridge between Arabic and local languages . Pegon's reading and writing skills not only show mastery of the letter system, but also show a depth of understanding of the structure of the Arabic language[5]. Pegon literacy reflects students' cognitive and semantic abilities in associating language symbols with broader text meanings. Thus, Pegon literacy is not just a technical skill of writing and reading, but a form of religious literacy that is directly related to the ability to understand classical Islamic texts.[6]

In modern madrassas such as MAN 1 Gorontalo City, Arabic learning still faces challenges in instilling an understanding of classical texts such as *Qotrul Ghaits* . Students often have difficulty in interpreting Arabic texts due to differences between the structure of Arabic and their native language. In this context, Pegon literacy can be a relevant pedagogical solution. By using the Pegon Arabic text, students can bridge the understanding between the Arabic language and the context of their local language. This allows them to understand religious texts not only from a linguistic perspective, but also from a more contextual meaning side.

The relationship between Pegon literacy and the understanding of religious texts is important to study because the two have a strong conceptual linkage. Pegon reading and writing ability has the potential to affect students' level of understanding of the content of Arabic books[7]. Students who are familiar with Pegon writing tend to find it easier to identify language patterns and meanings in the text *Qotrul Ghaits* . Pegon literacy acts as a cognitive tool that helps students interpret texts more deeply. In learning practice, Arabic teachers can use Pegon as an alternative learning medium to improve students' understanding of the teaching material.[8]

This understanding is supported by various previous studies and studies that affirm that Pegon has a vital role in transmitting Islamic knowledge in the archipelago[9]. A study by Sulistiani et al. (2023) shows that the use of Pegon in learning the yellow book helps students understand religious texts more contextually[10]. Similarly, Pegon serves as a pedagogical instrument that facilitates the teaching of Arabic through a cultural approach[11]. Thus, it can be understood that the relationship between Pegon literacy and text comprehension *Qotrul Ghaits* is not a new phenomenon, but a continuation of the local Islamic literacy tradition that has long been rooted in Islamic boarding schools, and is now beginning to be re-adapted in formal madrasah education.[12]

Although the Pegon Arabic script has long been part of the archipelago's Islamic literacy tradition, empirical research examining the relationship between Pegon literacy ability and students' level of understanding of religious texts is still very limited[13]. Most previous studies have focused more on the historical, semiotic, or cultural aspects of Pegon without examining the quantitative relationship between Pegon reading ability and understanding of the text[14]. There have not been many studies that have examined the role of Pegon literacy as a statistically measurable variable in the context of modern education. Thus, there is still a gap in research on how Pegon reading and writing can affect students' understanding of classical Arabic texts such as *Qotrul Ghaits.*[6]

Previous studies, such as those conducted by Sulistiani et al. (2023) and Hikmawati & Muthohirin (2024), have indeed shown the role of Pegon in religious learning, but the approach is qualitatively descriptive without correlation data[15]. Meanwhile, quantitative research that uses a statistical approach to see the relationship between variables, especially in the state madrasah environment, is still rarely carried out[16]. There is no study that specifically examines the context of MAN 1 Gorontalo City that began to integrate the Banten Pegon text in Arabic language learning. Therefore, this study fills the gap by analyzing the relationship between Pegon literacy and text comprehension *Qotrul Ghaits* through a correlational quantitative approach.[17]

The novelty of this research lies in the effort to present quantitative empirical evidence regarding the influence of Pegon literacy on the understanding of religious texts. This research not only confirms the traditional function of Pegon as a medium of da'wah and education, but also positions it as an objectively measurable pedagogical variable. In addition, the use of manuscripts *Qotrul Ghaits* the Pegon version of Banten in the context of madrasah education in Gorontalo is a form of cross-cultural adaptation that has never been researched before[18]. Another novelty lies in the preparation of the Pegon literacy test instrument and text comprehension *Qotrul Ghaits* empirically validated, which makes this study have a methodological contribution to the study of Arabic language education.[17]

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In addition to making new contributions, this research also departs from the conceptual contradiction in the researchers' views regarding the relevance of Pegon in the modern era of education[19]. Some studies have suggested that Pegon began to be abandoned because it was considered inefficient compared to Latin letters in contemporary education[20], while other research shows that Pegon actually strengthens the understanding of local Islamic values and improves students' religious literacy[21]. This study seeks to bridge this contradiction by showing that Pegon remains relevant when integrated into Arabic learning in a contextual and systematic manner.[4]

In terms of scientific creativity, this research combines classical philological approaches with modern statistical analysis, which methodologically is rarely done in the study of Islamic literacy. This approach suggests that traditional intellectual heritage such as Pegon can be researched using quantitative scientific methodological tools.[22]The innovation of the research also lies in the use of the Pegon test instrument adapted from the Banten version of *Qotrul Ghaits* manuscript, so that the results are not only relevant to the Gorontalo context, but can also be replicated in other regions in Indonesia. Thus, this research is not only reproductive, but also creative in linking the classical Islamic scientific tradition with contemporary scientific approaches.[23]

In general, this research also adjusts to global trends in Islamic education that emphasize the importance of preserving local literacy heritage through digital and scientific approaches[24]. Efforts to integrate the Pegon script into Arabic language learning in madrassas are in line with the growing Islamic literacy revitalization movement in various educational institutions[25]. By raising the context of MAN 1 Gorontalo City as the research location, this study shows that Pegon literacy can be developed not only in its home areas such as Banten or Java, but also in the Eastern Indonesia region that is beginning to adopt a contextual approach in religious education.[26]

Finally, the urgency of this research lies in the need to strengthen students' religious literacy amid declining interest in classical Arabic texts[27]. In today's digital era, many students are more familiar with popular religious sources than the works of traditional scholars[28]. In fact, texts such as *Qotrul Ghaits* contains deep Islamic values of faith and ethics. Therefore, this research is present as an effort to revive the spirit of classical literacy through Pegon media that is more contextual and easily accessible to students. The integration of Pegon literacy in Arabic language learning in madrassas is expected to be a strategic step to improve understanding of religious texts while maintaining the continuity of the intellectual heritage of Islam in the archipelago.[29]

Research gaps regarding the relationship between Pegon Arabic literacy and text comprehension *Qotrul Ghaits* needs to be filled because Pegon literacy has great potential in improving students' ability to understand classical religious texts[30]. So far, Arabic learning in madrassas has often been focused on grammar (nahwu-sharaf) and literal translation, so that aspects of literacy based on local culture such as Pegon are underutilized[31]. Considering that Pegon is a writing system that has been tested in the history of Islamic education in the archipelago, it is appropriate that it be used as an effective pedagogical means in learning Arabic. This research is here to provide empirical proof of this role in the context of modern madrasas.

Filling this gap is important because learning rooted in the cultural context of students has been shown to increase motivation, understanding, and retention of learning[32]. In the context of madrasas in Indonesia, the integration of local culture into religious learning is one of the approaches that is in line with the principles of *Freedom of Learning* and *Pancasila Student Profile*[33]. By using the Pegon text, students not only learn Arabic as a foreign linguistic system, but also as part of their scientific and spiritual identity. Therefore, this study is designed to scientifically test whether Pegon literacy really has a significant relationship with students' level of understanding of religious texts.[34]

In addition to academic urgency, this research also has a socio-cultural goal, namely to restore the position of Pegon as a relevant Islamic literacy media in the modern era of education[35]. In the context of Gorontalo, the use of Pegon is unique because this region is not the area of origin of the Pegon script, but has a strong spirit to preserve the intellectual heritage of the archipelago's Islam. This research is expected to be a replication model for other regions in Eastern Indonesia in integrating local heritage into religious education curricula. Thus, this research not only contributes to the development of Arabic language education theory, but also strengthens the cultural dimension in Islamic learning.

Methodologically, this research was conducted using a correlational quantitative approach, because this approach allows researchers to measure the extent to which Pegon literacy is related to the understanding of religious texts objectively[36]. Using the two main instruments, the Pegon literacy test and the text comprehension test *Qotrul Ghaits* This research can produce measurable empirical data. The correlation results are expected to show a positive relationship between Pegon literacy ability and text comprehension, so as to strengthen the theoretical basis that local literacy has an influence on Arabic language mastery. This approach also provides methodological updates for the study of Islamic literacy which has been dominated by a qualitative approach[37].

Based on the theoretical framework and provisional findings that have been presented, the purpose of this study is to find out and analyze the relationship between Pegon Arabic literacy (variable X) and the understanding of *Qotrul Ghaits* text (variable Y) in students of class X MAN 1 Gorontalo City. The hypothesis of this research is:

1. H_0 (null hypothesis): There was no significant relationship between Pegon Arabic literacy and understanding of *Qotrul Ghaits texts* in grade X students of MAN 1 Gorontalo City.

2. H_1 (alternative hypothesis): There is a positive and significant relationship between Pegon Arabic literacy and the comprehension of *Qotrul Ghaits texts* in grade X students of MAN 1 Gorontalo City.

This hypothesis is formulated based on the assumption that Pegon literacy plays a role as a factor that facilitates linguistic and semantic understanding of Arabic-language texts. Thus, this study aims to provide empirical evidence on the role of Pegon literacy in improving the understanding of religious texts in the Islamic educational environment.

Method

This study uses a non-experimental quantitative approach with a correlational design, as it aims to determine the relationship between Pegon Arabic literacy and text comprehension *Qotrul Ghaits* in class X students of MAN 1 Gorontalo City[38]. The correlational design is used to measure the strength and direction of the relationship between two variables without giving direct treatment to the study subject [39]. This approach was chosen because it is in accordance with the purpose of the research which aims to find an empirical relationship between the ability to read and write Pegon and the comprehension of religious texts. The research was carried out at MAN 1 Gorontalo City, which is located at Jl. Poigar No. 26, Molosipat Village, Sipatana District, Gorontalo City, Gorontalo Province, in October 2025. The selection of this location was based on the consideration that the madrasah began to integrate the Arabic text of Pegon in Arabic language learning, making it representative to be studied in the context of modern Islamic education.

The population of this study is all students of class X MAN 1 Gorontalo City for the 2025/2026 academic year as many as 120 students spread over three parallel classes. The research sample totaled 60 students, consisting of 20 students from class X-1, 20 from class X-2, and 20 from class X-3, which was determined by proportional random sampling technique so that each class had an equal chance of being represented[40]. The determination of the number of samples was carried out using the Slovin formula with an error rate of 5%, so that a proportional and representative sample size was obtained[41]. Students are between 15-16 years old and have a relatively homogeneous Arabic learning background, because all of them come from state madrassas who have known the basics of Arabic since the MTs level.

The research instrument consists of two types of tests that were developed objectively. First, the Pegon Arabic literacy test which consists of 20 multiple-choice questions to measure students' ability to recognize Pegon letters, write words, and read simple sentences in the Pegon Banten script. Second, a text comprehension test *Qotrul Ghaits* There are 25 multiple-choice questions to measure literal, interpretive, and applicative understanding of religious texts in the form of Pegon. Both instruments have undergone a content validity test by two lecturers who are experts in Arabic and Islamic philology from IAIN Sultan Amai Gorontalo as well as an empirical reliability test using the Cronbach's Alpha method with the help of SPSS version 25[42]. The test results showed a reliability value of 0.87 for the Pegon literacy test and 0.89 for the text comprehension test *Qotrul Ghaits*, which means they both have a high level of reliability and are worth using.

The research procedure is carried out in three main stages. The first stage is preparation, including licensing to madrasah heads and Arabic teachers, as well as a pilot test on 20 students outside the research sample to ensure the clarity of the question items. The second stage is data collection, namely the implementation of the two tests in their respective classrooms with a time of 90 minutes, accompanied by Arabic teachers to maintain the validity of the implementation. The third stage is data analysis, which is carried out through normality tests (Kolmogorov Smirnov), linearity, Pearson Product Moment correlation, and determination coefficient (R^2) to measure the contribution of Pegon literacy to text comprehension *Qotrul*[43]. Data analysis is assisted by SPSS version 25 to ensure accurate and measurable results.

All research activities are carried out by paying attention to the principles of academic ethics and scientific integrity. Each respondent received an explanation of the purpose of the study and provided informed consent before taking the test. The identity of students is kept confidential, and the results of the research are only used for scientific purposes and the development of Arabic language learning in madrasas. The researcher also guarantees objectivity in data collection and processing without manipulation of results or partiality on a particular subject[44]. Thus, this research not only fulfills the methodological aspect, but also upholds the code of ethics of educational research based on the values of honesty, responsibility, and respect for students.

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Results

This study aims to determine the relationship between Pegon Arabic literacy and the understanding of *Qotrul Ghaits text* in students of class X MAN 1 Gorontalo City. Based on the data obtained, an analysis was carried out on two main variables: Pegon literacy and understanding of *the Qotrul Ghaits* text. Both tests showed results indicating a significant positive relationship between the two, which was evidenced by the results of statistical tests conducted using SPSS version 25.

Pegon Literacy Score Distribution

The average Pegon literacy test score obtained by students was 72.4 with a standard deviation of 8.5, indicating that the ability to read and write Pegon characters in most students is at a good level. Table 1 illustrates the distribution of students' Pegon literacy scores, with approximately 41.67% of students obtaining scores between 70 to 84, while 30% of students obtaining scores between 55 to 69. Only 11.66% of students obtained a score below 55, indicating a difference in the ability to recognize and write the Pegon script.

Table 1: Distribution of Pegon Literacy Score

| Score	Frequency	Percentage (%)
85-100	10	16.67
70-84	25	41.67
55-69	18	30.00
40-54	7	11.66

Qotrul Ghaits *Text Comprehension Score Distribution*

Qotrul Ghaits *text comprehension test* showed an average score of 76.1 with a standard deviation of 7.3. Most of the students, i.e. 46.67%, obtained a score between 70 to 84, which indicates a good understanding of the text. Table 2 shows the distribution of text comprehension scores, with only 8.33% of students achieving a score below 55, indicating difficulties in understanding the text.

Table 2: Distribution of Qotrul Ghaits *Text Comprehension Score*

Score	Frequency	Percentage (%)
85-100	12	20.00
70-84	28	46.67
55-69	15	25.00
40-54	5	8.33

Picture 1 : *Manuskrip Arab Pegon Banten*
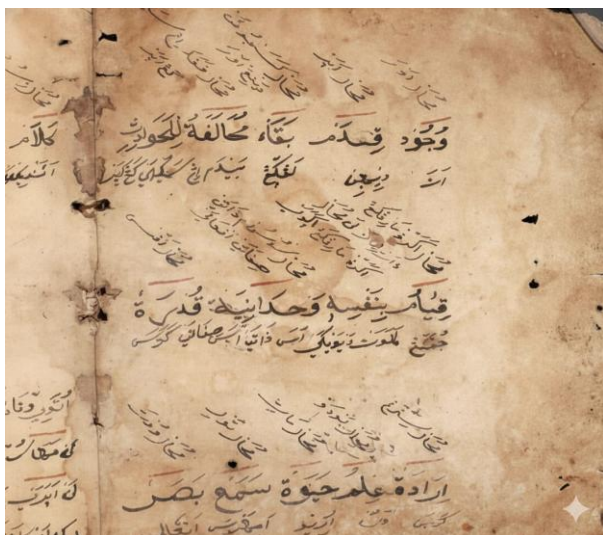
Picture 2 : *Kitab Qotrul Ghaits*

The manuscript image of the Arabic Pegon text used in this study illustrates the distinctive graphemic features of Pegon, which blends Arabic script with the local phonology of Banten. In the photo, the Qotrul Ghaits text is shown to be written using a consistent Pegon system, particularly in the representation of sounds not found in the standard Arabic alphabet, such as the characters used for the /ga/, /pa/, and /nga/ phonemes. These graphemic forms are a crucial characteristic of Pegon, enabling non-Arabic learners to associate written symbols with phonetic patterns familiar to their local language. Thus, the manuscript image serves not only as visual documentation but also as empirical evidence that the comprehension test materials used in this study were derived from an authentic Pegon text historically employed in the teaching of classical Islamic works in pesantren.

The presence of this Pegon manuscript further explains why Pegon literacy has a significant relationship with students' comprehension of the Qotrul Ghaits text. The graphemic structure of Pegon displayed in the image plays an important role in facilitating the decoding of meaning for students who already possess basic Arabic literacy but benefit from the phonetic alignment provided through Pegon. The manuscript image demonstrates how classical texts are transformed into a writing medium that is more accessible to modern madrasah students, thereby bridging the gap between Arabic linguistic structures and their native language. This corresponds directly with the quantitative findings of the study, in which Pegon literacy contributed 50.7% to the variance in text comprehension. In other words, the more familiar students are with Pegon graphemes as shown in the image the more effectively they can interpret religious texts accurately and contextually.

Pearson Correlation Test Results

The Pearson correlation test showed a strong positive relationship between Pegon literacy and the understanding of *the Qotrul Ghaits* text. The value of $r = 0.712$ indicates that there is a significant relationship between the two variables, with a value of $p = 0.000$ ($p < 0.05$). This means that the higher the students' ability to read and write Pegon, the better their understanding of religious texts written in the Pegon script.

Graph 1 illustrates the relationship between Pegon literacy and the understanding of *Qotrul Ghaits* texts in the form of scatter plots. This graph shows a tendency that students with higher Pegon literacy scores tend to obtain better scores in *the understanding of the Qotrul Ghaits* text. This shows that Pegon literacy plays a role as a factor that facilitates the understanding of Pegon-based religious texts.
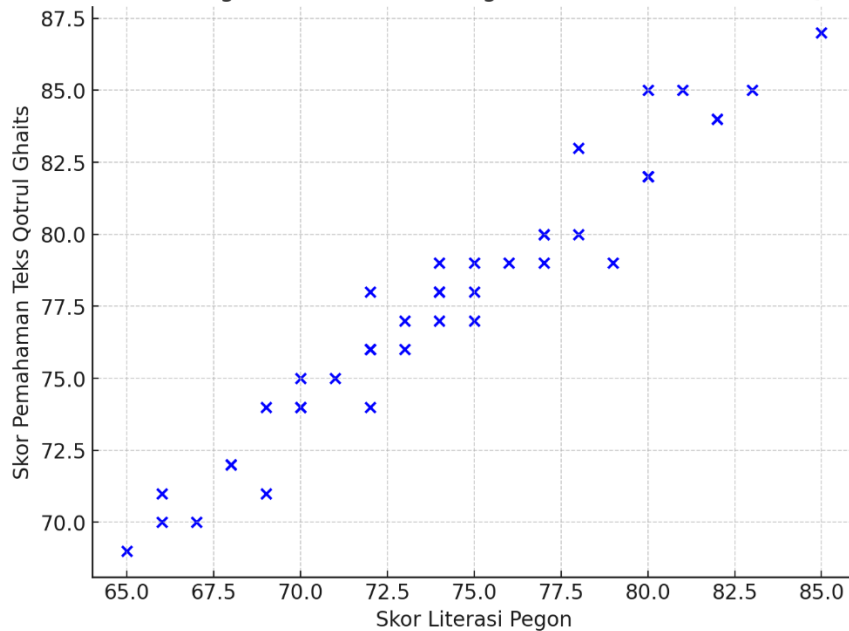
.

Figure 1: Scatter plot relationship between Pegon literacy and *Qotrul Ghaits text comprehension*

Coefficient of Determination Test (R²)

The results of the determination coefficient test ($R^2 = 0.507$) showed that 50.7% of the variation in the understanding *of the text of Qotrul Ghaits* can be explained by Pegon's literacy. This means that Pegon literacy has a considerable influence on students' understanding of the text. However, about 49.3% of other variations are influenced by other factors, such as learning motivation, previous religious experiences, and other external factors that can affect students' comprehension of the text.

The results of this study show that Pegon Arabic literacy has a significant relationship with the understanding of *the Qotrul Ghaits text* in grade X students of MAN 1 Gorontalo City. Learning that integrates the Pegon script in the context of Arabic language education has proven to be effective in improving students' understanding of classical religious texts that use the Pegon script. These findings confirm the importance of Pegon literacy as one of the strategies in learning Arabic based on local wisdom and strengthening the archipelago's Islamic cultural identity.

Discussions

The results of this study provide significant empirical evidence on the relationship between Pegon Arabic literacy and text comprehension *Qotrul Ghaits*, fill the gap that exists in Pegon literacy research in Indonesia. Previously, research on Pegon was more focused on historical and cultural aspects, as revealed by Elmubarok (2020) and Sulistiani et al. (2023), but not many have examined the relationship between Pegon literacy and the understanding of religious texts in the context of modern education [11]. This study answers this gap by using a correlational quantitative approach that examines the significant relationship between Pegon literacy and text comprehension in madrasah students. Thus, this research not only enriches the theoretical study of Islamic literacy in the archipelago, but also provides concrete evidence of Pegon's contribution to Arabic language education in madrasas.

The results of the Pearson correlation test showing the value r = 0.712 confirm that Pegon literacy has a strong influence on students' understanding of the text *Qotrul Ghaits*. This confirms the hypothesis that Pegon's reading and writing skills directly contribute to students' ability to understand the meaning of Arabic texts. This is in line with research conducted by Hasanuddin (2022), which revealed that reading and writing skills in local scripts can accelerate students' understanding of religious texts [45]. In other words, Pegon literacy not only serves as a linguistic skill, but also as a means to increase the depth of understanding of Islamic teachings contained in classical texts.

This research also supports the theory that literacy based on local culture is able to improve cognitive skills in understanding religious texts. According to Creswell (2018), teaching that is based on local context can strengthen students' understanding of the text because they can relate the teaching material to their own knowledge and experience [46]. The results of this study show that Pegon literacy provides this advantage by

associating students' Arabic language learning with their cultural identity. Pegon-based learning allows students to more easily associate symbols in Arabic texts with meanings that are closer to their daily lives.

On the other hand, the results of the determination coefficient test ($R^2 = 0.507$) showed that Pegon literacy played a significant role in explaining the variation in students' understanding of the text *Qotrul Ghaits*. This also indicates that Pegon literacy is one of the key factors in understanding Arabic texts among madrasah students. Despite this, about 49.3% of variations in text comprehension are still influenced by other factors such as learning motivation, religious experience, and teaching quality. Therefore, although Pegon literacy has a great influence, other external factors still play an important role in the process of understanding religious texts, which is in line with previous research by Nopirianti et al. (2024) which stated that social factors and the educational environment also affect student learning outcomes [7].

Overall, the findings of this study fill the existing research gap by providing quantitative evidence on the influence of Pegon literacy on the understanding of religious texts, especially in the context of madrasah education. With this evidence, it is hoped that it can encourage the integration of the Pegon script in the Arabic curriculum in madrassas throughout Indonesia, as well as strengthen students' understanding of religious texts written in Arabic. It also provides a solid basis for further research on the application of local culture-based literacy in Arabic language learning in Indonesia.

Conclusions

This study confirms that there is a positive and significant relationship between Pegon Arabic literacy and understanding *of Qotrul Ghaits texts* in grade X students of MAN 1 Gorontalo City (r = 0.712; p < 0.05). The determination value ($R^2 = 0.507$) showed that about 50.7% of the variation in text comprehension was explained by Pegon's literacy ability. Thus, the formulation of the problem is answered: the increase in Pegon literacy goes hand in hand with the increase in understanding of the classical religious texts in the Pegon script. Conceptually, these results strengthen Pegon's position not just as a legacy writing system, but as a relevant pedagogical variable in Arabic learning in modern madrasas.

Going forward, these findings mean that the integration of Pegon materials and exercises needs to be positioned as a strategic part of the Arabic curriculum at the MA/MTs level. Teachers can use Pegon texts (including *the Pegon version of Qotrul Ghaits*) as a linguistic-cultural bridge to accelerate access to meaning, while fostering contextual religious literacy. Since 49.3% of the variation in understanding is still influenced by other factors, reinforcement programs should not be single: learning motivation, religious reading experience, and teaching quality need to be optimized together so that the learning impact is more comprehensive.

Practical recommendations include: (1) the development of a gradual Pegon teaching module (from the introduction of grapheme transliteration to sentence/theme comprehension), (2) teacher training on task-based Pegon teaching strategies and formative assessments, (3) the provision of a bank of validated Pegon literacy and text comprehension, (4) the use of simple digital media (interactive sheets, online quizzes) for intensive exercise, and (5) the arrangement of special "Pegon clinical" time in the school week for remedial and enrichment. At the school policy level, support in the form of allocation of hours, learning resources, and collaboration with Islamic boarding schools/Pegon manuscript libraries will strengthen implementation.

For scientific development, further research is recommended to expand the context (across madrasas/regions), add mediation/moderation variables (motivation, Arabic vocabulary, reading habits), and try longitudinal designs or controlled experiments to test causality. The study of instruments can also be deepened for example by item analysis and *item response theory*—so that the measurement of Pegon literacy and text comprehension is more precise. With these steps, the use of Pegon as a learning medium will be more systematic, measurable, and have an impact on the quality of students' religious literacy.

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