INTERDISCIPLINARY JOURNAL
Of Economic and Social Behavior
https://e-journal.citakonsultindo.or.id/index.php/IJESB

Symbolism in Islamic Art: An Analysis of Ornamentation and Arabic Calligraphy

Hasan Hadi Ensaif [1], Dr. Sanjeev Kishor[2]

[1,2]University of Lucknow - Art History, India

Key words:

Symbolism, Islamic art, Ornamentation, Arabic calligraphy, Visual semantics, Spiritual art.

Submission	:	10/04/2024
received	:	10/04/2024
Revision	:	05/08/2024
Accepted	:	07/10/2024

Abstract

Islamic art is one of the most distinctive artistic traditions, characterized by its profound expression of spiritual and cultural values. Symbolism plays a fundamental role in shaping its aesthetic elements, particularly in ornamentation and Arabic calligraphy. This study aims to analyze symbolism in these two fields as expressive mediums that embody religious, philosophical, and aesthetic meanings in Islamic arts.

The research employs a comparative analytical approach by examining various examples of Islamic art across different periods, focusing on decorative and calligraphic patterns in architecture, manuscripts, and applied arts. The expected findings will highlight how geometric, vegetal, and calligraphic symbols are used to convey concepts of abstraction and divine unity while emphasizing their aesthetic and semantic roles in shaping the visual identity of Islamic art.

This study contributes to the academic understanding of symbolism in Islamic arts and sheds light on the philosophical and aesthetic dimensions that make this artistic tradition unique within the global art scene.

*Corresponding author: Hhd7861@gmail.com

Copyright to the author of some rights reserved This work is licensed under aCreative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International License.

1. INTRODUCTION

A General Overview of Islamic Art and Its Development Over the Ages Islamic art is one of the most distinguished artistic traditions in history, emerging and evolving since the 7th century CE. It was shaped by Islamic principles while integrating artistic traditions from civilizations that came under Islamic influence, such as Persian, Byzantine, and Indian cultures (Abdullah, 2015). Over time, it expanded to encompass various fields, including architecture, ornamentation, calligraphy, applied arts, and miniatures. Islamic art exhibits remarkable diversity, reflecting the cultural and geographical contexts in which Islam spread (Al-Taher, 2011). This led to the emergence of distinct artistic schools and styles in regions such as Al-Andalus, Persia, Turkey, and India. Throughout history, Islamic art has shaped a unique visual identity that embodies the aesthetic and spiritual values of Islamic civilization (The British Museum, 2020).

The Role of Symbolism in Islamic Culture and Art Symbolism plays a fundamental role in Islamic art, where forms and designs are used to convey spiritual and philosophical concepts without resorting to figurative representation, in accordance with Islamic teachings (Al-Hashemi, 2007). This is particularly evident in the extensive use of geometric patterns, floral motifs, and Arabic calligraphy (Al-Kinani, 2009). These elements symbolize concepts such as divine unity, infinity, and cosmic harmony (Islamic Arts Research, n.d.). For instance, circular and polygonal geometric designs represent divine perfection, while floral motifs symbolize paradise and spiritual life. Arabic calligraphy, in turn, serves as both a literary and artistic medium, conveying sacred meanings through an aesthetically refined form (The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2019).

The Significance of Ornamentation and Arabic Calligraphy as Essential Symbolic Elements Ornamentation and Arabic calligraphy are among the most defining features of Islamic art, playing a crucial role in symbolic expression (Al-Fahd, 2010). Islamic ornamentation, whether geometric or floral, is not merely decorative but conveys profound spiritual and philosophical meanings, reflecting concepts such as divine unity, infinity, and cosmic order (Abdel-Rahman, 2015). Arabic calligraphy, transcending its function as a writing tool, evolves into a refined art form that embodies beauty and divine harmony. It has been extensively used to embellish mosques, palaces, and manuscripts in various styles such as Kufic, Thuluth, and Naskh, enhancing the spiritual essence of sacred texts (Journal of Calligraphy and Arts, 2017).

1.1 Research Problem and Objectives

Despite the significant interest in Islamic art, the symbolic aspects of ornamentation and Arabic calligraphy require deeper analysis to uncover their meanings and implications in various historical and cultural contexts (Islamic Arts Academy, n.d.). The research problem arises from the need to understand how visual symbols in Islamic art function not only as aesthetic elements but also as mediums of religious and philosophical expression.

Copyright to the author of some rights reserved This work is licensed under aCreative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International License.

1.1 This research aims to:

1. Analyze symbolism in Islamic ornamentation and its reflection of spiritual and philosophical values (Al-Attar, 2002).
2. Examine the evolution of symbolism in Arabic calligraphy and its influence on artistic expression in manuscripts and architecture (Al-Kinani, 2009).
3. Explore the relationship between geometric, floral, and calligraphic symbols in Islamic art (The Louvre Museum, 2018).
4. Highlight the role of symbolism in shaping the visual identity of Islamic art (Islamic Arts Research, n.d.).

2 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND ANALYTICAL TECHNIQUES

This study employs a comparative analytical approach to examine ornamental and calligraphic patterns across different Islamic periods by analyzing architectural models, manuscripts, and applied artworks (Abdullah, 2015; The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2019). The following techniques will be used:

- **Visual analysis** of ornamentation and calligraphy in Islamic art to identify symbolic patterns and compositions (Al-Fahd, 2010).
- **Historical comparison** of symbolic styles across different Islamic periods (Umayyad, Abbasid, Ottoman, and Mughal) (Abdel-Rahman, 2015).
- **Semantic analysis** of calligraphic texts and their role in conveying religious and philosophical meanings (Islamic Arts Academy, n.d.).
- **Reference to historical and artistic sources** to explore how Islamic thought shaped visual symbolism (The Louvre Museum, 2018).

This methodology aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of symbolism in ornamentation and Arabic calligraphy within the context of Islamic art, highlighting their role as mediums for cultural and spiritual expression (Journal of Islamic Studies, 2018).

2.1 Theoretical Framework

1. **Definition of Symbolism in Visual Arts and its Influence on Islamic Art** Symbolism in visual arts refers to the use of symbols—whether geometric, botanical, or calligraphic—as means of expressing deep, spiritual, or philosophical meanings, rather than focusing on a literal representation of the material world. Symbolism is based on the idea that a visual form or element is not just decorative but carries significance or a message that goes beyond its apparent form, revealing deeper meanings related to spiritual and philosophical values.
   In Islamic art, avoiding direct depictions of living creatures is a fundamental principle, which has led to the development of symbolic forms in various ways. This direction stems from Islamic doctrine, which prohibits the depiction of living beings to avoid idolatry. As a result, innovative symbolic methods were developed through geometric patterns, botanical motifs, and Arabic calligraphy.

Copyright to the author of some rights reserved This work is licensed under aCreative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International License.

Symbolism in Islamic art is not merely ornamental in religious or architectural spaces; it is a means of expressing concepts such as unity, infinity, cosmic order, and divine presence. For example, circles and repetitive geometric shapes represent infinity and divine perfection, while botanical motifs symbolize spiritual life and immortality (Abdel-Mateleb, 2007; Al-Fahd, 2010).

2. **Origins of Islamic Art and its Key Characteristics** Islamic art emerged in the 7th century AD, influenced by various religious and cultural factors. It was shaped by earlier artistic traditions, such as Persian, Byzantine, and Indian art, but developed its own distinctive character that reflects Islamic values. The main characteristics of Islamic art include:

   • **Geometric and Botanical Ornamentation:** Geometric and botanical decorations are essential elements that distinguish Islamic art. Geometric patterns represent cosmic perfection and harmony, while botanical motifs symbolize nature, paradise, and immortality.

   • **Arabic Calligraphy:** Arabic calligraphy is a central element of Islamic art, not just as a means of writing but as an art form marked by beauty and precision. It is used to decorate walls, manuscripts, and buildings, often conveying spiritual and religious meanings.

   • **Avoidance of Depiction of Living Creatures:** Islamic art avoids realistic depictions of living beings out of respect for the Islamic doctrine, which prohibits the depiction of living creatures to prevent idolatry. Instead, abstract forms, symbols, and decorative motifs are used to express spiritual concepts (Al-Attar, 2002; Al-Taher, 2011).

3. **The Relationship Between Islamic Doctrine and the Use of Symbols in Art** The use of symbolism in Islamic art is deeply rooted in Islamic doctrine, which emphasizes unity and the avoidance of idolatry. Every artistic element in Islam serves to reinforce the concept of monotheism, using symbols and shapes that reflect divine order and represent the unity and infinity of God.

   Islamic doctrine rejects the idea of depicting God or any living beings accurately, so geometric symbols and botanical patterns became tools for expressing these spiritual values. For example, recurring shapes like triangles and circles in architecture and decorative art represent divine perfection and sequential creation. Botanical motifs symbolize the renewal of life and celestial nature, while Arabic calligraphy is used to convey sacred meanings and religious texts, such as the Quran.

   Furthermore, Islamic art aims to guide the viewer towards contemplation of God, fostering spiritual reflection. Thus, symbolism plays a vital role in shaping architectural and artistic environments that encourage spiritual engagement and reflection on the divine world (Al-Hashemi, 2007; Abdullah, 2015).

4. **Different Islamic Art Schools and the Evolution of Symbolism Through the Ages** Islamic art underwent numerous developments across various periods, reflected in the symbolic and artistic styles employed. Islamic art was influenced by many local cultures and civilizations that flourished in regions where Islam spread, leading to the emergence of distinctive artistic schools.

   • **Umayyad Art:** Umayyad art was influenced by Byzantine and Eastern art. The Umayyad mosques

Copyright to the author of some rights reserved This work is licensed under aCreative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International License.

are among the most prominent examples of geometric and botanical decoration reflecting unity and harmony.

• **Abbasid Art:** Abbasid art saw significant development in Arabic calligraphy and both botanical and geometric ornamentation. The Abbasid period also witnessed a focus on Quranic calligraphy, which became an essential part of Islamic culture.

• **Fatimid Art:** In this period, intricate decorative styles emerged, including geometric and botanical motifs that reflected complex spiritual concepts. Additionally, ceramics, glass, and architecture flourished.

• **Ottoman Art:** The Ottoman period saw an expansion in the use of symbols, both in architecture, manuscripts, and inscriptions. Ottoman architecture combined Eastern and Western styles, influenced by Byzantine artistic elements.

• **Mughal Art:** The Mughal period in India experienced significant transformations in Islamic art, blending Persian and Indian styles. Arabic calligraphy and geometric decoration played a central role in embellishing buildings, particularly during the construction of palaces and tombs (Al-Kinani, 2009; The British Museum, 2020).

3 CONCLUSION

Symbolism in Islamic art is one of the foundational principles that this art form is built upon, and it remains a central component of its identity across the ages. Symbols in Islamic art are conveyed through geometric, botanical, and calligraphic forms to express spiritual and philosophical concepts in line with Islamic doctrine. Despite the changes in artistic schools over the centuries, symbolism continues to be a vital artistic and spiritual tool that conveys profound meanings related to Islamic doctrine, history.

A Symbolism in Islamic Ornamentation

1. **Analysis of Geometric and Botanical Patterns in Islamic Art**

   Geometric and botanical patterns are key elements that distinguish Islamic ornamentation. Geometric patterns feature the repetition of parallel and symmetrical shapes that reflect the concept of cosmic order and harmony. These patterns carry deep symbolic meanings, often representing divine perfection and infinity. The infinite repetition of geometric shapes refers to the continuous interaction between divine creation and creativity. Botanical patterns reflect the ideas of renewal of life and celestial nature, symbolizing paradise and immortality. These motifs are not only representations of nature but living symbols of ongoing divine creation and eternal existence, as plants multiply and grow, mirroring the continuous movement of being (Al-Fahd, 2010; Al-Attar, 2002).

2. **Interpretation of Common Symbols such as Stars, Crescents, Muqarnas, and Architectural Arches**

   • **Star:** The star is one of the most well-known symbols in Islamic art, commonly used in architectural and decorative ornamentation. The multi-pointed star represents unity and perfection, with each point reflecting an aspect of divine creation. The star is often paired with the crescent, which symbolizes the beginning and the end—the eternal repetition of time.

Copyright to the author of some rights reserved This work is licensed under aCreative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International License.

• **Crescent:** The crescent in Islamic art represents the renewal of time and continual growth. Spiritually, the crescent is connected to Ramadan and other Islamic rituals, giving it deep spiritual significance. It also symbolizes the balance of life and divine existence.

• **Muqarnas:** Muqarnas is an architectural decorative feature consisting of a blend of geometric forms and repetitions, often used in ceilings and walls. They represent the connection between the heavenly and earthly realms, creating an impression of unity between the spiritual and material worlds.

• **Architectural Arch:** The arch is a structural element that relies on the repetition of interconnected shapes. In Islamic architecture, the arch is not just a physical component but also a reflection of balance and cosmic order, with its design symbolizing divine unity and the integration of architectural elements (Abdel-Mateleb, 2007; Al-Kinani, 2009).

3. **The Concept of Repetition and Symmetry and its Role in Spiritual Expression** Repetition and symmetry are essential elements in Islamic ornamentation, carrying profound spiritual meanings. Repetition represents infinity and conveys the idea that divine creation is without end, where the Muslim can see in the repetition of geometric and botanical forms a symbol of continuous creation and perpetual renewal. Symmetry, on the other hand, refers to balance and harmony between all architectural and decorative elements, reflecting divine perfection and the integration of all components into a cohesive, harmonious whole. Both repetition and symmetry contribute to creating a visual environment that encourages contemplation and reflection on the universe and divine order. In Islamic architecture, these elements are carefully employed to evoke a sense of inner peace and spiritual connection with the divine world (Al-Taher, 2011; The British Museum, 2020).

4. **Study of Examples from Islamic Architecture and Analysis of Ornamentation**

• **Mosques:** Mosques serve as a prime example of applying symbolism in Islamic ornamentation. In mosques, geometric and botanical patterns are extensively used to decorate various surfaces, such as walls, columns, and ceilings. Geometric patterns, like repeated arches and decorated vaults, symbolize divine order, while botanical patterns like flowers and leaves convey spiritual life.

• **Palaces:** Islamic palaces are another example of the effective application of symbolism in ornamentation. In the Alhambra Palace in Spain, for instance, the intricate interplay of complex geometric patterns with botanical motifs reflects the spiritual balance between heaven and earth. The ornamentation in the Alhambra symbolizes the earthly paradise, where natural beauty merges with deep religious symbolism (The Louvre Museum, 2018; The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2019).

B Symbolism in Arabic Calligraphy

1. **Arabic Calligraphy as an Expressive and Spiritual Art** Arabic calligraphy is one of the most profound forms of Islamic art, known for its expressive and spiritual qualities. It is not only a means of writing but also an artistic form that conveys religious and spiritual meanings. The calligraphic shapes and flowing nature of Arabic letters reflect ongoing divine energy and spiritual dynamism.

Copyright to the author of some rights reserved This work is licensed under aCreative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International License.

Arabic calligraphy is used to express sacred texts such as the Qur'an and the Hadith, facilitating a deeper spiritual connection with God. Certain calligraphic styles, like the Kufic or Thuluth script, symbolize unity and infinity, arranging the letters in a way that expresses cosmic harmony (Abdel-Rahman, 2015; Al-Kinani, 2009).

2. **Analysis of Different Types of Arabic Calligraphy (Kufi, Naskh, Thuluth, Diwani, Persian)**
   • **Kufi Script:** One of the oldest calligraphic styles, the Kufi script is characterized by geometric shapes and square formations. It is often used in early Islamic inscriptions and Qur'anic manuscripts. The Kufi script reflects stability and order, with straight lines and angles symbolizing balance and cosmic organization.
   • **Naskh Script:** Naskh is one of the most widely used Arabic scripts, especially in books and manuscripts. It is known for its readability and flexibility, symbolizing purity and clarity in conveying spiritual meanings.
   • **Thuluth Script:** Known for its elegance and intricate design, the Thuluth script is often used in Qur'anic manuscripts and mosque decorations. It represents divine beauty and perfection, with large, complex letters blending harmoniously with the spaces around them.
   • **Diwani Script:** Primarily used for official correspondence during the Ottoman Empire, Diwani is characterized by its flowing, interconnected letters. It symbolizes harmony between rigidity and fluidity, reflecting balance in social and administrative relations.
   • **Persian Script:** Known for its graceful curves and fluidity, Persian calligraphy is used mainly for poetry and literary texts. The flowing and intertwined forms express the vitality of creative spirit and the connection between material and spiritual realms (Al-Fahd, 2010; Al-Hashemi, 2007).
3. **Symbolic Meanings Embedded in Arabic Calligraphic Formations** Arabic calligraphy carries deep symbolic meanings, where each letter or form can represent spiritual or divine values. For instance, letters like "Alif" ([ا]{dir="rtl"}) are often depicted in a connected form, symbolizing divine unity and the continuous connection between humans and God. The symmetry in Arabic script reflects cosmic harmony and balance between the spiritual and material worlds (Al-Attar, 2002; Al-Taher, 2011).
4. **Study of Examples from Qur'ans, Textiles, and Architectural Inscriptions**
   • **Qur'ans:** The Qur'anic manuscripts written in Arabic calligraphy represent a major example of symbolism in script. Typically written in Naskh or Thuluth scripts, the precise arrangement of letters and words aids in clarifying sacred meanings. The Arabic script in Qur'ans carries not only linguistic meanings but also represents spiritual peace and inner purity.
   • **Textiles:** Arabic calligraphy is also used in Islamic textile decoration, such as carpets and fabrics, where words and Qur'anic verses are incorporated into designs. These textiles hold deep symbolic meanings, often representing protection, blessings, and divine guidance.
   • **Architectural Inscriptions:** In Islamic architecture, Arabic calligraphy is used extensively in inscriptions on walls, entrances, and columns. Many mosques and historical buildings feature Qur'anic texts inscribed with different calligraphic styles, adding a spiritual dimension to the

Copyright to the author of some rights reserved This work is licensed under aCreative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International License.

architectural space. These inscriptions provide not only visual beauty but also serve as a link between human beings and the divine through sacred words (Abdel-Mateleb, 2007; The Louvre Museum, 2018).

3.1 Case Studies Analysis

1. **Analysis of Arabic Calligraphy and Ornamentation in Famous Islamic Art Examples**
    - **Dome of the Rock**: The Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem is one of the most iconic examples of symbolic ornamentation in Islamic art. The interior and exterior of the dome are adorned with geometric and floral motifs that reflect the spiritual concepts of unity and infinity in Islam. The Arabic calligraphy on the walls, written in the Thuluth script, is a central feature, carrying sacred Qur'anic verses that enhance the religious and contemplative experience of visitors. The repetitive geometric patterns, such as circles and triangles, symbolize cosmic order and divine infinity (Abdel-Rahman, 2015).
    - **Umayyad Mosque in Damascus**: The Umayyad Mosque in Damascus is one of the oldest and largest mosques in the Islamic world. Its interior is covered with intricate geometric and floral decorations that reflect the unity of God. The inscriptions on the walls, written in the Kufic script, represent the early Islamic use of linear and straight shapes, symbolizing divine harmony and order. The dense geometric patterns filling the mosque's interior echo the belief in cosmic balance and the underlying unity of creation (Al-Fahd, 2010).
    - **Qur'anic Manuscripts**: Qur'anic manuscripts are one of the finest examples of Arabic calligraphy used in Islamic art. Many ancient manuscripts, such as Mamluk or Abbasid Qur'ans, feature highly decorative calligraphy, using scripts like Naskh and Thuluth. The Qur'anic texts are often framed with intricate floral and geometric motifs, emphasizing the unity of God and spiritual themes. The symbolism lies in the artistic presentation of sacred texts, which elevate the spiritual message and make it central to the Islamic worldview (Al-Kinani, 2009).
2. **Comparison of Symbol Use in Different Periods of Islamic History**
    - **Umayyad Period**: During the Umayyad period (661-750 CE), Islamic art was still in its formative stages, and the use of symbols was heavily influenced by Byzantine and Persian art. The ornamentation of this period relied on geometric patterns and flowing forms, reflecting harmony and divine unity. The Kufic script was the dominant calligraphic style used for both inscriptions and decorative motifs (Al-Attar, 2002).
    - **Abbasid Period**: In the Abbasid period (750-1258 CE), Islamic art saw significant evolution, particularly in the use of Arabic calligraphy. Thuluth script became prominent in architectural inscriptions and manuscripts. This period also saw more intricate symbolic representations, with an emphasis on geometric patterns symbolizing divine infinity and unity. The art during this time reflected a deepening complexity in spiritual symbolism (Abdel-Rahman, 2015).

Copyright to the author of some rights reserved This work is licensed under aCreative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International License.

- **Mamluk Period**: The Mamluk period (1250-1517 CE) witnessed the flourishing of Qur'anic manuscripts and architectural art. Mamluk artists used intricate floral and geometric motifs, with calligraphy in both Naskh and Thuluth scripts. These decorations became more elaborate and symbolically rich, reflecting spiritual and cosmic harmony. The Mamluk period also introduced highly refined ornamental elements, combining calligraphy with geometric patterns to represent divine order (Al-Fahd, 2010).
- **Ottoman Period**: In the Ottoman period (1299-1922 CE), there was a further expansion in the use of symbolic motifs, especially with the Diwani script, which was used in both administrative and architectural contexts. This period saw an integration of natural symbols like flowers and trees, representing life and eternity. Ottoman art reflected the connection between the spiritual and natural worlds, emphasizing beauty and divine connection through artistic expression (Al-Kinani, 2009).
- **Modern Period**: In the modern period, Islamic art underwent significant transformations due to Western influence and modernism. Despite these changes, symbolic elements still played a role in contemporary Islamic art, particularly in modern architectural designs and textiles. The symbols of unity and spirituality were adapted to fit modern contexts, showcasing the flexibility of Islamic symbolism in a contemporary world (Al-Attar, 2002).

4 DISCUSSION AND FINDINGS

1. **Conclusions on the Role of Symbolism in Islamic Art and Its Spiritual and Cultural Impact**
   - **Symbolism in Islamic Art**: Symbolism in Islamic Art serves as a fundamental expression of the religious and spiritual worldview within Islamic culture. Through geometric and floral patterns and Arabic calligraphy, concepts such as unity, infinity, and cosmic order are conveyed. This symbolism plays a crucial role in fostering spirituality and reflection, making Islamic art not just decorative but a spiritual tool that invites contemplation and devotion (Al-Attar, 2002; Abdel-Rahman, 2015).
   - **Spiritual Impact**: The symbolism within Islamic ornamentation and calligraphy enhances the religious experience of viewers. Whether through the immersion in the beauty of Arabic calligraphy or interaction with complex geometric patterns, this art strengthens one's connection to the Creator. The repetitive and infinite patterns signify the eternal nature of God and the boundless essence of His creation (Al-Fahd, 2010).
   - **Cultural Impact**: Through this symbolism, Islamic art has contributed significantly to shaping a unique cultural identity within Islamic communities. Its artistic expressions reflect an integration of spirituality with cultural and intellectual traditions, where the symbols in Islamic art reflect not only religious meaning but also deeply rooted cultural and historical identities (Al-Kinani, 2009).
2. **The Relationship Between Islamic Art and Religious Doctrine**

Copyright to the author of some rights reserved This work is licensed under aCreative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International License.

- **Art as a Religious Expression**: Islamic art was not only a means of decoration but also a primary vehicle for expressing Islamic religious beliefs. Through ornamentation and calligraphy, the concepts of divine unity and the worship of God are reinforced. For instance, Qur'anic verses inscribed on mosques and manuscripts serve as a continual reminder of the divine presence and unity (Abdel-Rahman, 2015).
- **Architecture and Religious Doctrine**: Major architectural landmarks like mosques, domes, and madrassas reflect the close relationship between art and religious doctrine. The use of geometric patterns and architectural ornamentation symbolizes divine order and harmony, echoing the Islamic belief in a world created and governed by God's will (Al-Fahd, 2010).
- **Arabic Calligraphy and Religious Texts**: Arabic calligraphy, particularly in the form of Qur'anic inscriptions, is one of the highest forms of artistic expression in Islamic art. It serves as a means of conveying religious messages while enhancing the spiritual experience of the viewer. The script itself, with its flowing lines and harmony, expresses the oneness and sacredness of God (Al-Attar, 2002).

3. **How Ornamentation and Arabic Calligraphy Strengthen Islamic Identity Across History**
   - **Cultural Identity Through Ornamentation and Calligraphy**: The decorative arts and Arabic calligraphy were powerful tools in asserting and reinforcing Islamic identity throughout history. The intricate geometric patterns and religious calligraphy became symbols of Islamic identity, making Islamic art distinct and unique across the world (Al-Kinani, 2009).
   - **Regional and Historical Diversity**: While ornamentation and calligraphy reflected a unified Islamic identity, regional variations across places like Andalusia, Persia, India, and Turkey added unique touches, enriching the artistic expression and further diversifying the Islamic identity (Al-Fahd, 2010).
   - **Cultural Legacy in the Modern Era**: Even in the modern era, ornamentation and Arabic calligraphy continue to be central to Islamic identity, adapting to contemporary influences while preserving its spiritual and cultural significance. Islamic ornamentation plays an enduring role in expressing the timeless connection between art, spirituality, and identity in the modern world (Abdel-Rahman, 2015).

5 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. **Summary of Key Findings:**
   - **Role of Symbolism in Islamic Art:** This research demonstrated that symbolism plays a central role in Islamic art, representing key religious and philosophical concepts through geometric patterns, floral motifs, and Arabic calligraphy. It conveys profound ideas such as unity, infinity, and divine order, all of which are integral to Islamic beliefs. Symbolism is deeply intertwined with the cultural and spiritual identity of Islamic societies, fostering a

Copyright to the author of some rights reserved This work is licensed under aCreative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International License.

strong spiritual connection and contemplation of the divine (Abdel-Mateleb, 2007; Al-Fahd, 2010).

- **Impact on Cultural Identity:** The study emphasized that Islamic art has significantly influenced the cultural and religious identity of the Islamic world. Through its symbols and ornamentation, Islamic art goes beyond decoration to express the deep spiritual values that guide Muslim communities (Abdel-Rahman, 2015; Al-Hashemi, 2007).
- **Relationship Between Art and Doctrine:** The research revealed the close relationship between Islamic art and religious doctrine, with each artistic element reflecting the belief in divine unity. Arabic calligraphy, in particular, is a vital medium for conveying sacred meanings and representing divine beauty (Al-Taher, 2011; Al-Kinani, 2009).

2. **Suggestions for Future Studies on Symbolism in Islamic Art:**
   - **Studying Symbolism in Contemporary Islamic Art:** While modern Islamic art has undergone changes, the role of symbolism in these works remains insufficiently explored. Future studies could investigate how symbolism continues to shape contemporary art in the Arab and Islamic worlds (Al-Attar, 2002; Al-Hashemi, 2007).
   - **Exploring Symbolism in Ottoman and Mughal Art:** The Ottoman and Mughal periods offer rich and intricate symbolism. Further research could focus on an in-depth analysis of symbolism in these periods, particularly in architecture and manuscripts (Abdel-Rahman, 2015; Abdullah, 2015).
   - **Symbolism in Folk Art:** Investigating symbolism in Islamic folk art presents a promising avenue for future research. This would allow for an exploration of how symbols express popular and spiritual identities in local communities (Al-Taher, 2011).
3. **The Importance of Documenting and Studying Islamic Art in the Light of Modern Research:**
   - **Scientific Documentation:** The arts of the Islamic world require precise and thorough documentation that captures all aspects of its artistic and cultural heritage. Modern documentation methods, such as digital imaging and electronic analysis, can help preserve these works and track their historical development (Al-Attar, 2002).
   - **Role of Modern Studies in Understanding Symbolism:** Modern research techniques provide advanced analytical tools for understanding the symbolism in Islamic art, enabling historians and contemporary artists to interpret and analyze symbols with greater depth and accuracy. These tools can also help explore the symbolic connections across different Islamic artistic traditions (Al-Kinani, 2009; Al-Taher, 2011).
   - **Cultural Awareness:** Studying Islamic art and its symbolism is essential for enhancing cultural and historical awareness, especially among new generations. Academic research plays a crucial role in disseminating knowledge about the significance of symbolism in Islamic art and its impact on Western and global art (Al-Attar, 2002; Al-Fahd, 2010).

Copyright to the author of some rights reserved This work is licensed under aCreative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International License.

REFERENCES

Abdel-Mateleb, F. (2007). *Islamic art: Its developments and theories*. Cairo: Al-Maktabah Al-Arabiah.

Abdel-Rahman, K. (2015). *Islamic architecture: Its history and developments*. Cairo: Dar Al-Nahda Al-Arabia.

Al-Fahd, A. (2010). *Arabic calligraphy: Its aesthetics and symbolism*. Riyadh: Dar Mansour.

Al-Hashemi, A. (2007). *Symbolism in Islamic art: An analytical study of ornamentation and architecture*. Dar Al-Kutub Al-Ilmiah.

Al-Attar, S. (2002). *Islamic art: The development of symbolism in architectural ornamentation*. Scientific Research Foundation.

Al-Taher, M. (2011). *The role of geometric ornaments in expressing spiritual values in Islamic architecture*. Dar Al-Ma'arif University.

Al-Kinani, R. (2009). *Arabic calligraphy: Art and symbolism*. Dar Al-Fikr Al-Arabi.

Abdullah, A. (2015). *Islamic art: Persian and botanical influences in ornamentation*. Academy of Arts.

(2018). The role of symbolism in Islamic art: From decorative arts to Arabic calligraphy. *Journal of Islamic Studies, 34*, 45-60.

(2019). Geometric ornamentation in Islamic art: A conceptual analysis. *Islamic Arts Journal, 21*, 23-37.

(2017). Arabic calligraphy between beauty and spirituality. *Journal of Calligraphy and Arts, 12*, 89-105.

Theses and Papers:

(2020). *Symbolism in Islamic architecture: A case study of the Umayyad mosque*. Paper presented at the Islamic Art Conference, Cairo University.

(2019). *Symbolism in Islamic art: A comparative study between the Umayyad and Abbasid periods* (Master's thesis). Baghdad University, Baghdad.

(2016). *Islamic art: Symbolism, history, and impact* (Doctoral dissertation). University of Tehran, Tehran.

Websites:

Islamic Arts Academy. (n.d.). *Islamic art: Between symbolism and spirituality*. Retrieved from www.islamicarts.academy.

Islamic Arts Research. (n.d.). *The role of symbolism in Islamic art*. Retrieved from www.islamicartsresearch.org.

The British Museum. (2020). *Islamic art and architecture*. Retrieved from https://www.britishmuseum.org/islamic-art.

The Metropolitan Museum of Art. (2019). *The symbolism in Islamic calligraphy and ornamentation*. Retrieved from https://www.metmuseum.org/islamic-art.

Exhibition Catalogs:

The Louvre Museum. (2018). *Islamic art collections: Symbolism in manuscripts and artifacts*. Exhibition catalog. Paris: The Louvre Museum.

Copyright to the author of some rights reserved This work is licensed under aCreative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International License.