

Harmonization of Arabesque and Javanese Aesthetics in the Interior Ornaments of the Syech Zayed Mosque in Surakarta, Indonesia

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Abstract

The Sheikh Zayed Mosque in Surakarta is one of the icons of contemporary Islamic architecture in Indonesia, representing the intersection of Middle Eastern and local Nusantara cultures. Despite adopting the architectural concept of the Sheikh Zayed Mosque in Abu Dhabi, the mosque incorporates different local elements into its decorative elements and interior ornamentation. This study analyze the shape of harmony between Arabesque aesthetics as the key feature of Islamic decorative art and local Javanese values present in the mosque's interior ornaments.

The study employed a descriptive qualitative method, as well as aesthetic and visual cultural studies. Data were collected by observation, documentation, literature studies, and visual analysis, with purposive sampling used for observation approaches. To validate the data, triangulation techniques and informant reviews were used. The approach applied was an interactive analysis technique.

The findings show that the interior ornaments of the Sheikh Zayed Mosque in Surakarta combine Arabesque geometric patterns, calligraphy, and floral motifs with visual elements similar to traditional Javanese motifs such as kawung, plant tendrils, and the principle of visual balance that distinguishes Javanese aesthetics. This combination creates a harmonious visual identity and reflects the process of cultural acculturation, strengthening universal values of Islam without sacrificing local identity.

Keywords: Harmonization, Interior Ornaments, Arabesque Ornaments, Javanese Ornaments, Zayed Mosque, Surakarta, Indonesia.

Introduction

The Zayed Mosque in Surakarta is a modern mosque located in Surakarta, Central Java. It was designed by merging Arabesque and Javanese architectural elements, resulting in a one-of-a-kind and captivating architectural masterpiece. The Arabesque and Javanese interior ornamentation of the Zayed Mosque in Surakarta exemplifies the harmony between two distinct cultures. Mosque architecture is a reflection of Islamic culture, combining universal religious

principles with local culture (Saviola et al., 2025). Mosques, throughout their history, have served not just as places of worship but also as a means for representing a community's cultural, social, and aesthetic identity. As a result, each mosque has a different visual character, reflecting the cultural background of the place where it was built. This phenomenon demonstrates that Islamic architecture is dynamic and adaptive to the cultural environment without abandoning the fundamental values of Islamic teachings.

In Indonesia, the process of encountering Islam and indigenous culture has been continuous since Islam's spread began. Mosque architecture and ornamentation are among the most apparent examples of acculturation. Various mosques in Java showcase a combination of Islamic creative elements with Javanese cultural values, as manifested by their architectural shapes, spatial layouts, and decorative elements (Adityaningrum & Setyaningsih, 2020). The Javanese people's ability to incorporate Islamic values into pre-existing artistic traditions creates a distinct visual identity.

A similar occurrence can be witnessed in the Sheikh Zayed Mosque in Surakarta, which was built as a symbol of Indonesia's friendship with the UAE (Wibowo & Nurjayanti, 2025). This mosque adopts the architectural concept of the Sheikh Zayed Mosque in Abu Dhabi, which is regarded as a monumental masterpiece of modern Islamic architecture (Aisyah et al., 2024). The inside of the structure is dominated by huge domes, magnificent columns, arches, calligraphy, and arabesque ornamentation, all of which have Middle Eastern influences (Kamal et al., 2020). Arabesque ornaments are an important part of the mosque's visual character since they represent the Islamic art traditions that originated in the Middle East.

Arabesque is a style of Islamic decorative art characterized by the use of geometric motifs, vines, and floral shapes placed in a repetitive and symmetrical pattern (Alashari et al., 2020). In Islamic art, arabesques serve not only as decorative components but also as intellectual symbols of monotheism, cosmic order, and the boundless power of God (Ahmad et al., 2018). The continuous repetition of patterns emphasizes the ideas of unity and harmony that are central to Islamic aesthetics. As a result, arabesques are commonly employed as a visual medium to create a spiritual ambiance in prayer spaces. According to Burckhardt (2009), Islamic ornamentation should not be understood solely as a decorative element, but rather as a visual language that reflects spiritual principles through order, harmony, and symbolic expression. Therefore, the use of arabesque patterns in mosque interiors not only represents aesthetic beauty but also embodies Islamic philosophical values.

However, the interior of the Sheikh Zayed Mosque in Surakarta does not fully reflect Middle Eastern aesthetics. Several decorative elements reflect adaptations to the Indonesian cultural setting, particularly Javanese culture. The mosque's interior design incorporates local values through the use of motifs such as kawung batik patterns, plant vines inspired by Javanese carving traditions, and concepts of balance and visual harmony. The existence of these elements reveals that the Sheikh Zayed Mosque in Surakarta was built not just to replicate the original architecture in Abu Dhabi, but also to portray an identity relevant to the Indonesian cultural context (Oktavian & Hidayati, 2024).

From an aesthetic perspective, the combination of Arabesque and local Javanese values represents an interesting shape of visual harmony to study. Arabesque aesthetics is founded on the principles of order, repetition, and abstraction of natural shapes, whereas Javanese aesthetics emphasizes balance, harmony, serenity, and the symbolic meanings inherent in each motif. These two traditions work together to generate beauty that is not only visually appealing but also carries philosophical and spiritual meaning. As a result, the confluence of these two elements has the potential to create a new visual identity that enriches the treasury of contemporary Islamic architectural art in Indonesia.

Although previous studies have discussed the architectural characteristics of the Sheikh Zayed Mosque in Surakarta, limited attention has been given to the role of interior ornamentation as a medium where Arabesque aesthetics and Javanese cultural values interact. Therefore, understanding how these ornamental elements create visual harmony is essential to reveal the cultural negotiation occurring within contemporary Islamic architecture in Indonesia.

Based on this description, this study focuses on analyzing the shapes of Arabesque ornamentation applied to the interior of the Sheikh Zayed Mosque in Surakarta, identifying the Javanese aesthetic values present in its ornamental elements, and examining how these two elements interact and shape a visual harmony. This analysis is intended to explain the acculturation process that occurs in the mosque's interior design while also revealing its aesthetic and symbolic meanings.

The describe of this study is to describe the characteristics of Arabesque ornamentation in the interior of the Sheikh Zayed Mosque in Surakarta, identify elements of local Javanese aesthetics present in the mosque's ornamentation, and examine the shapes of harmony that occur between these two traditions in the construction of the building's visual identity. Theoretically, this research is expected to enrich the study of Islamic ornamental art, Javanese cultural aesthetics, and the phenomenon of acculturation in contemporary architecture. In practical terms, the research findings can be used as a reference by scholars, architects, interior designers, and mosque managers to create designs that combine local cultural knowledge with universal Islamic values, producing architectural works with strong character, significance, and cultural relevance.

This research focuses on the inner decoration of the Sheikh Zayed Mosque in Surakarta by investigating the features of arabesque designs, the representation of Javanese aesthetic principles, and the relationship between these two visual styles in influencing the mosque's modern Islamic identity.

Theoretical Framework

Aesthetic Theory

Aesthetics in architecture refers to the study of beauty, visual perception, and the relationship between form, meaning, and cultural values. Architectural aesthetics is concerned not only with visual appearance but also with the symbolic meanings contained within a space. Nasr (1987) explains that Islamic aesthetics emphasizes harmony, balance, and order as manifestations of spiritual values. Therefore, mosque ornamentation can be understood as an aesthetic medium that reflects both religious principles and cultural identity.

Arabesque and Javanese Aesthetic Concepts

Arabesque is a distinctive element of Islamic decorative art characterized by geometric patterns, floral motifs, symmetry, and continuous repetition. These characteristics represent the concepts of unity, order, and infinity in the Islamic artistic tradition (Ahmad et al., 2018; Alashari et al., 2020). Meanwhile, Javanese aesthetics emphasize harmony, balance, order, and the symbolic relationship between humans and nature (Pitana, 2023). In Javanese architectural expressions, decorative elements represent local cultural values through motifs, spatial composition, and symbolic meaning (Adityaningrum & Setyaningsih, 2020).

Cultural Harmonization in Architecture

The interaction between Arabesque and Javanese aesthetics can be understood through the concept of cultural hybridity, where different cultural elements interact and create a new identity without losing their original characteristics (Bhabha, 2012). In the context of the Sheikh Zayed Mosque in Surakarta, this process can be observed through the integration of Islamic ornamental principles with local Javanese aesthetic values, resulting in a visual identity that reflects universal Islamic traditions while also expressing local culture (Oktavian & Hidayati, 2024; Wibowo & Nurjayanti, 2025).

Literature Review

Harmonizing Islamic architectural aesthetics and local cultural values is a crucial issue in contemporary architectural research. According to Burckhardt (2009), Islamic architectural ornamentation reflects the relationship between visual order, symbolic meaning, and spiritual values, while Ahmad et al. (2018) explain that Islamic decorative elements

emphasize repetition, unity, and harmony. Similarly, Kamal et al. (2020) describe the Arabesque as an important ornamental element in Islamic architecture through a combination of geometric, floral, and repetitive patterns that reinforce the visual identity of Islamic buildings. In the Indonesian context, Adityaningrum and Setyaningsih (2020) explain that mosque architecture in Java reflects the interaction between Islamic principles and local cultural expressions through architectural forms, spatial layouts, and ornamental elements. Pitana (2023) further highlights that Javanese architectural expressions emphasize balance, harmony, and a symbolic relationship with nature. These findings suggest that Islamic architecture develops through a continuous interaction between universal religious characteristics and local cultural identities.

Research on the Sheikh Zayed Mosque in Surakarta primarily addresses its architectural characteristics, religious tourism, and cultural representation. According to Adinugraha and Shulthoni (2024), the mosque represents the transformation of religious tourism in Solo by functioning as both a worship space and a cultural destination. Wibowo and Nurjayanti (2025) describe the mosque as a representation of the cultural relationship between Indonesia and the United Arab Emirates through the expression of Islamic ornamentation, while Oktavian and Hidayati (2024) identify architectural elements and local adaptations within the building. These findings indicate that the Sheikh Zayed Mosque represents an interaction between global Islamic architectural identity and local cultural context, which can be understood as a process of cultural negotiation (Bhabha, 2012). However, existing research provides limited discussion on the harmonization of Arabesque aesthetics and Javanese aesthetic values, particularly in interior ornamentation. Therefore, this study fills this knowledge gap by examining how the interior ornamentation of the Sheikh Zayed Mosque in Surakarta combines Arabesque characteristics with local Javanese values to create a contextual contemporary Islamic architectural identity.

Research Methodology

This study employed a qualitative research method with a descriptive-analytical approach. Data Sources: Primary data: Data obtained through direct observation at the Sheikh Zayed Mosque and interviews with interior design and architecture experts. Secondary data: Data obtained through literature review, articles, and books related to the research topic.

In this study, data were collected using several techniques, including direct observation, interviews, and a literature review. Direct observation was employed to obtain a realistic depiction of the interior design of the Sheikh Zayed Mosque in the field (Novita & Nurjayanti, 2026; Rois & Aziz, 2025; Adinugraha & Shulthoni, 2024). To obtain more detailed and thorough information, informants with knowledge in interior design and architecture were interviewed. Furthermore, a literature survey was conducted to improve the theoretical framework, notably in terms of Arabesque aesthetics and Javanese cultural values, which are the study's main focus.

This study used descriptive, comparative, and interpretive methods to analyze the data. The purpose of the descriptive study was to describe the interior design elements of the Sheikh Zayed Mosque in detail, as well as the Arabesque aesthetic characteristics that were used. A comparative analysis was conducted to investigate the relationships and discrepancies between the mosque's interior design elements and local Javanese values. Meanwhile, interpretive analysis was employed to comprehend the meanings inherent within the interior design in light of the confluence of culture and aesthetics.

The research instruments employed were an observation checklist, interview guides, and field notes. The observation checklist is provided as a guide for documenting key findings at the research site. The interview guide was used as a reference to acquire information from relevant informants. Field notes were used to document all findings during the observation and interview processes.

Thematic analysis and categorization helped to support data analysis techniques. Thematic analysis was utilized to identify patterns or themes that emerged from the data on the interior design of the Sheikh Zayed Mosque and the Arabesque style. Categorization analysis

involves grouping data based on similarities, such as Javanese cultural values and mosque design.

Interviews were conducted to obtain more in-depth information regarding the cultural meaning, historical background, and interpretation of interior ornaments. Informants were selected using a purposive sampling method, a technique for selecting participants intentionally based on specific criteria relevant to the research objectives. These selection criteria included individuals having direct involvement with the Sheikh Zayed Mosque, knowledge of Islamic art and architectural ornaments, an understanding of Javanese cultural values, and experience in observing or interacting with mosque interiors. A total of nine informants participated in this study, consisting of mosque administrators, Islamic cultural observers, experts, and visitors. Semi-structured interviews were conducted using an interview guide containing questions about the meaning of ornaments, cultural adaptation, and perceptions of aesthetic harmony.

Table 1: Demography of the Informants

Source: Author

No	Informants	Gender	Occupation	Domicile
1	P1	Male	Grand Imam	Surakarta
2	P2	Male	Director	Surakarta
3	P3	Male	Treasurer	Surakarta
4	P4	Male	Department of Study and Material	Surakarta
5	P5	Male	Visitor	Jepara
6	P6	Male	Visitor	Demak
7	P7	Female	Visitor	Surabaya
8	P8	Female	Visitor	East Kalimantan
9	P9	Male	Observer of Islamic Culture	Surakarta

As a result, this research provides comprehensive and diversified information regarding the harmonization of the interior design of the Sheikh Zayed Mosque by integrating Arabesque aesthetics and local Javanese values.

Research Findings

The findings of this study indicate that the interior ornaments of the Zayed Mosque in Surakarta are harmoniously balanced between Arabesque and Javanese styles. This mosque's interior embellishments feature distinct and intriguing motifs such as geometric, floral, and calligraphy. These motifs are used throughout the interior of the mosque, including the walls, floors, and the ceilings. The geometric motifs employed in the interior ornamentation of the Zayed Mosque in Surakarta exhibit complex and intriguing patterns. This pattern is made up of many geometric shapes, including triangles, squares, and circles. The floral motifs employed are also distinctive, unlike those found in other mosques. These motifs include numerous types of flowers, such as roses and jasmine flowers. The interior ornaments of the Zayed Mosque in Surakarta feature calligraphy motifs of outstanding beauty. This calligraphy includes numerous Qur'anic verses and hadith from the Prophet Muhammad SAW. This calligraphy is employed throughout the mosque's interior, including the walls and ceilings.

Analysis of the Dome Ornaments of the Mosque

The dome is a dominating architectural element with significant symbolic value in mosques. Inside the Sheikh Zayed Mosque in Surakarta, the dome not only covers the main room but also acts as a visual focal point, providing an artistic and spiritual ambiance within the prayer space. The ornamentation adorning the dome's inner surface demonstrates a strong blend of Middle Eastern Islamic artistic traditions with aesthetic values acceptable within the context of local Indonesian culture, particularly Javanese.

The dome's interior is decorated with a series of Arabesque designs that run radially from the center to the corners. This radial composition gives the appearance that the entire

pattern originates at a central point and then expands gracefully in all directions. In design theory, a radial pattern is a compositional shape that generates a strong visual focus while also expressing a sense of balance and order. This pattern is emphasized on the dome of the Sheikh Zayed Mosque with precisely calibrated symmetry, resulting in a unified visual unity.

The primary motifs are stylized tendrils of plants, leaves, and flowers. These plant shapes are not shown accurately, but rather converted into beautiful shapes based on Islamic art ideas. This stylization is a crucial feature of the Arabesque, which evolved in response to Islamic art's tenet of aniconism, which is the avoidance of naturalistic images of living creatures in prayer places. As a result, natural features are transformed into abstract, symbolic, beautiful patterns.



Fig. 1: Plant Motifs on Mosque Roofs

Source: Author's data

The inclusion of plant motifs on domes is highly significant in Islamic heritage. Plants are frequently associated with the picture of Paradise (jannah), which is depicted in the Quran as a garden surrounded by rivers. Thus, the usage of floral themes on domes might be interpreted as a visual symbol of beauty, life, and God's mercy. The eternally extending tendrils also represent humanity's never-ending spiritual evolution in its effort to become closer to Allah.

In addition to floral motifs, the dome's ornamental structure exemplifies the notion of repetition, or continuous pattern repetition. This repetition establishes a visual rhythm that offers a dynamic yet harmonious impression. In Islamic aesthetics, repetition represents the order that God created in the universe. The infinitely repeating pattern represents the concept of infinity, drawing the human mind's attention to Allah SWT's magnificence and eternal existence. The recurring pattern on the dome promotes a contemplative experience for worshippers, connecting the visual and spiritual aspects.

The dome's interior is predominantly white, gold, and cream. White symbolizes cleanliness, purity, and peacefulness, whereas gold represents splendor and majesty. In Islamic art, gold is frequently used to depict divine majesty and illumination. The combination of these two hues creates a spiritual and grandiose feeling. The reflection of light from the gold ornamentation adds to the visual effect, making the dome appear bright and radiant.

From a Javanese aesthetic standpoint, the curvature of the dome's plant tendrils resembles the lung-lungan pattern, which is common in traditional Javanese carving. The lung-lungan motif is a decorative pattern in the shape of plant tendrils that has evolved throughout time and is widely used to embellish traditional houses, furniture, and carved artwork. In Javanese tradition, this motif represents life, growth, fertility, and continuation. The visual similarities between the arabesque and lung-lungan motifs facilitate a harmonious procedure that keeps the dome's adornment true to Javanese aesthetic values.

Beyond the formal similarities, there are philosophical parallels. Arabesque aesthetics stress order, unity, and balance as a reflection of monotheism. Meanwhile, Javanese aesthetics acknowledge the concept of harmony, as reflected by the concepts of harmony, harmony, and

balance. Both traditions see order as the ideal shape of beauty. The dome's symmetrical patterns and harmonious composition exemplify both Islamic aesthetic principles and the Javanese philosophy of harmony.

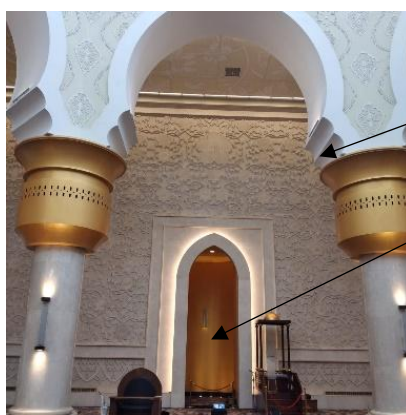
According to cultural hybridity theory, the dome ornamentation of the Sheikh Zayed Mosque in Surakarta represents a convergence of worldwide Islamic identity and local cultural identity. The Arabesque pattern remains an important aspect stressing Islam's universal character, but the visual values, which are strongly tied to Javanese heritage, allow the local community to acquire a sense of ownership over the building. The dome serves not only as an architectural and decorative element but also as a symbol of cultural dialogue, demonstrating how universal Islamic principles may coexist with local cultures without losing their respective identity.

Based on this analysis, it is clear that the dome ornamentation of the Sheikh Zayed Mosque in Surakarta serves more than just decorative purposes. It is an aesthetic medium, a spiritual symbol, and an example of cultural acculturation. Combining Arabesque elements with Javanese aesthetics, the dome enhances the mosque's visual character and reflects the balance between worldwide Islamic traditions and local culture. Thus, the dome of the Sheikh Zayed Mosque in Surakarta can be viewed as a tangible manifestation of the convergence of two aesthetic traditions, resulting in a new kind of beauty rich in visual, philosophical, and cultural significance.

Mihrab Ornament of the Sheikh Zayed Mosque in Surakarta

The mihrab is the most sacred element in the main mosque hall, marking the direction of the Qibla and providing attendees with visual orientation during prayer. The mihrab in Islamic architecture serves not only as a practical guide to Mecca's Kaaba, but also as a center of spiritual and artistic symbolism representing humanity's relationship with God. As a result, the mihrab is nearly always a prominent architectural feature in terms of shape, ornamentation, and decoration.

The mihrab, which serves as the major focal point of the prayer hall of the Sheikh Zayed Mosque in Surakarta, is designed with a majestic composition. Visually, the mihrab is a harmonious combination of Arabic calligraphy, Islamic geometric elements, and floral arabesque ornamentation set symmetrically. The centering of ornamentation on the mihrab establishes a distinct visual hierarchy, naturally bringing the congregation's attention to the Qibla. This illustrates that the mihrab's aesthetic function is inextricably linked to its spiritual function as a site of prayer focus.



Part of Mosque Colum
Architecture Structure of Zayed Mosque Mihrab
In the shape of an Arabic curve

Fig. 2: Architecture Structure of Zayed Mosque Mihrab

Source: Author's data

Analysis of Shape and Visual Composition

Formally, the mihrab is composed on the basis of bilateral symmetry. The right and left sides feature similar shapes, sizes, and decorative patterns. This symmetry conveys a sense of stability, peace, and order. According to Islamic aesthetic theory, visual order is a

manifestation of Allah SWT's created order of the cosmos. Geometry, proportion, and balance are visual means of reflecting God's perfection in creation.

The arches of the mihrab shape an inward-pointing niche. This shape not only marks the direction of prayer (qibla) but also adds visual depth. Symbolically, the mihrab niche is frequently viewed as a meditation spot where people might embark on a spiritual journey closer to God. Throughout the history of Islamic architecture, the mihrab niche has been one of the most ornately ornamented elements compared to other parts of the mosque.



1. The mihrab wall features Arabic calligraphy of the Asma'ul Husna (the Beautiful Names of Allah), combined with Javanese floral ornamentation.
2. Traditional Arabic geometric ornamentation.

Fig. 3. Motif Dan Ornamen Pada Dinding Mihrab Masjid Zayed.

Source: Author's data

Calligraphy as a Center of Spirituality

Arabic calligraphy is a prominent feature of the mihrab, adorning both its top and surrounding area. Calligraphy has a specific role in Islamic art because it serves as a visual medium for God's messages, as recorded in the Quran. Unlike Western art, which frequently uses human figures as the focal point of artistic expression, Islamic art regards calligraphy as the pinnacle of aesthetics, as it directly relates to divine revelation.

The presence of calligraphy in the mihrab serves two purposes. First, it serves as a platform for preaching, reminding the congregation of the Quran's teachings. Second, it adds visual value to the prayer space. This combination of religious and artistic functions is a distinguishing feature of Islamic adornment. Calligraphy is not only read but also appreciated as a sort of visual art that creates a spiritual environment within the mosque.



Fig. 4: Calligraphy and Flora Ornaments on the Mihrab Wal

Source: Author's data

Geometric Motifs and Philosophical Meanings

The calligraphy is framed by perfectly ordered and repeating geometric patterns. These geometric shapes are a defining feature of Islamic art, which developed as a visual representation of the universe's order. Geometry in Islamic art is more than just decorative; it represents wholeness, balance, and the connectivity of all creation with the Creator.

The geometric patterns on the mihrab of the Sheikh Zayed Mosque in Surakarta show a continuous recurrence of shapes, resulting in a harmonic visual rhythm. This repetition conveys an impression of infinity, an important element in Islamic aesthetics. When the congregation sees these patterns, their focus shifts from a single shape to a broader reflection on the greatness and eternity of God.



Fig. 5: Typical Arabic Geometric Ornaments on the Mihrab Wall.

Source: Author's data

Floral Arabesque Motifs and Symbols of Paradise

In addition to geometry, the mihrab is embellished with floral arabesque motifs that include stylized plant tendrils, leaves, and flowers (Azmi & Hendra, 2025). These patterns evolve endlessly, with no obvious beginning or end. This is a feature of arabesque, which is commonly utilized to decorate prominent mosques around the Islamic world.

Plants are often associated in Islamic tradition with the Garden of Paradise (jannah). As a result, the floral motifs on the mihrab might be regarded as visual representations of Allah's promises of life, grace, and beauty to believers. The mihrab's floral adornment serves not only as a beautiful feature but also as a symbolic means for connecting the prayer space to Islamic spiritual values.

Harmonization with Javanese Aesthetic Values

From a Javanese cultural perspective, the visual principles used to create the mihrab are comparable to Javanese aesthetic concepts such as balance (*imbang*), harmony (*selara*), and order (*tertiba*). The symmetrical composition of the mihrab symbolizes the value of harmony that underpins many traditional Javanese artworks (Oktavian & Hidayati, 2024).

The plant tendril motifs of the Arabesque are visually similar to the *lung-lungan* motifs found in traditional Javanese sculptures. In Javanese tradition, these patterns represent ever-growing life, fertility, and a peaceful relationship between humans and the environment. This similarity illustrates that, despite its origins in Middle Eastern Islamic traditions, the mihrab ornamentation still resonates with local Javanese aesthetics.

Furthermore, the Javanese tendency to perceive specific areas as foci of symbolic orientation is analogous to the mihrab's role in mosque design. Thus, the ensuing harmony is both visual and philosophical.

Analysis of Column Ornaments at the Sheikh Zayed Mosque in Surakarta

Columns are architectural elements in mosques that serve both structural and decorative purposes. Columns structurally support the weight of the building, while visually shaping its character, creating visual rhythm, and reinforcing its architectural identity. In Islamic architectural heritage, columns are viewed not only as structural elements but also as a vehicle for creative expression endowed with symbolic value. Columns have often been ornamented with various shapes of ornamentation, such as geometric, floral, calligraphic, and

muqarnas motifs, to increase the aesthetic value of the building since the early development of Islamic architecture.

In the interior of the Sheikh Zayed Mosque in Surakarta, the major columns in Surakarta's Sheikh Zayed Mosque are one of the most outstanding parts because of their monumental size and rich ornamental details. The column style is reminiscent of the Sheikh Zayed Mosque in Abu Dhabi, which is notable for its use of white marble and floral patterns created by the inlay process. These columns exude grandeur, elegance, and sacredness, heightening the spiritual atmosphere of the prayer space.

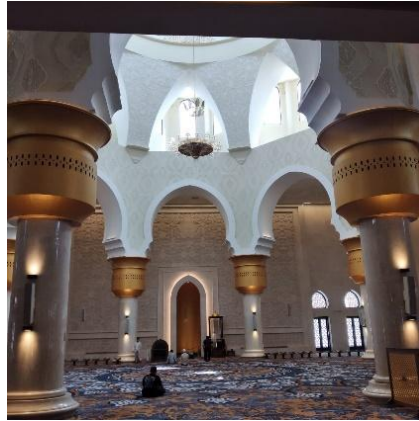


Fig. 6: Column Structure of Zayed Mosque
Source: Author's data

Analysis of the Columns' Visual Shape and Structure

Formally, the columns of the Sheikh Zayed Mosque are cylindrical and rise vertically. This vertical design conveys a sense of strength, stability, and monumentality. In design theory, vertical lines are frequently connected with power, grandeur, and a sense of direction toward something higher. In the context of a mosque, this vertical posture can be interpreted as a representation of the relationship between mankind and God.

The uniform placement of the columns establishes a strong visual rhythm in the area. The repetition of the column shape from one side to the other imparts a sense of order, which is a major feature of Islamic architecture. This rhythm not only offers visual beauty, but it also provides a spatial experience that draws the worshipper's attention to the center of the prayer space. This principle of order is an example of Islamic aesthetics, which values balance and unity.

Floral Arabesque Motifs on the Column Body

The column body is decorated with floral arabesque designs, including symmetrical plant tendrils, leaves, and flowers. These motifs are made by inlaying colored stone into a marble surface, resulting in a sumptuous and sophisticated visual appearance.

Arabesques are distinguished by their interwoven, perpetually spreading tendrils that lack a defined beginning and end. This pattern is a defining feature of Islamic art, intended to evoke the feeling of infinity. In Islamic aesthetics, the repetition of plant patterns represents the order of God's creation as well as the continuation of life from a divine source.

The floral and leaf motifs on the column also represent the concept of paradise (jannah) in the Islamic religion. Gardens, flowers, and plants are used as visual metaphors in Islamic art to represent the beauty and calm of heaven that God promised humanity. As a result, the presence of floral designs on the column not only decorates the area but also works as a medium for creating a spiritual and contemplative environment.

Column Capitals and the Date Palm Symbol

The capitals are one of the most remarkable characteristics of the columns at the Sheikh Zayed Mosque. These decorative shapes resemble gold-coated date palm leaves. This shape is an artistic rendition of the date palm, which has historical and cultural significance in Islam.

The date palm is one of the most frequently referenced plants in the Quran, serving as a symbol of life, blessings, and prosperity. In the context of mosque embellishment, date palm fronds on column capitals can be understood as a symbol of spiritual progress, God's wealth of grace, and a long life.

The gold hue employed on the column capitals heightens the sense of nobility and majesty. In Islamic art, gold is frequently connected with light, glory, and the presence of divine values. The combination of the date palm frond shape and gold makes the column capitals an effective visual element in creating the mosque's spatial character.



Fig. 7: Colum upper part (Colum head)

Source: Author's data

Harmonization with Javanese Aesthetics

When viewed from a Javanese cultural lens, the floral motifs covering the columns resemble the lung-lungan motif, which is commonly found in traditional Javanese sculptures. The lung-lungan motif is a decorative design resembling a continuously growing plant vine that represents life, fertility, and harmony between humans and nature. The visual similarities between arabesques and lung-lungans suggest an artistic junction that enables cultural harmony. Although they come from separate traditions, both rely heavily on plant shapes for inspiration. The distinction lies in their style of processing, with arabesques being more abstract and geometric, whilst Javanese ornaments have a more distinct organic character. Furthermore, the principles of repetition and balance portrayed in the arrangement of column ornaments are consistent with the concept of harmony in Javanese culture. In Javanese aesthetics, beauty is achieved when all elements are harmonized and harmoniously arranged. This value is obvious in the consistent positioning of motifs, color harmony, and the interaction between columns.

Analysis of the Carpet Ornamentation of the Sheikh Zayed Mosque in Surakarta

Carpets are an interior element that greatly influences the visual character, comfort, and spiritual environment of a prayer space. They are elements that are directly exposed to the congregation's worship activities, as opposed to permanent architectural elements such as domes, columns, and mihrabs. As a result, carpets serve not only as prayer mats, but also as an artistic medium that enhances the religious experience and creates spatial order.

Carpets are often regarded as an essential component of interior design in mosque buildings. The carpets' motifs, colors, patterns, and visual arrangement are intended to assist the prayer space's functionality while also reinforcing the building's aesthetic identity. The carpets in the Sheikh Zayed Mosque in Surakarta have a significant Islamic ornamental character due to their methodical employment of geometric, floral, and repetitive motifs.



Fig. 8: Ornaments on the Zayed Mosque Carpet
Source: Author's data

Visual Element Analysis of the Carpet

The carpet at the Sheikh Zayed Mosque in Surakarta is dominated visually by a repeating pattern that is set longitudinally after the prayer rows. The congregation is assisted in forming an ordered prayer line by this composition, which also produces a powerful visual rhythm.

The carpet's design is dominated by lines. These lines produce a consistent geometric pattern and serve as row borders. A sense of order and visual discipline is produced by the employment of repeated lines. According to design theory, a rhythm that leads the eye in a systematic way can be produced by regularly repeating visual components.

In addition to lines, geometric shapes are used as decorative accents in particular areas. These motifs have been styled to reflect the features of Islamic adornment rather than having a realistic appearance. Arabesque, which emphasizes abstraction and the creation of ornamental patterns over realistic portrayal, is characterized by this processing of shape.

Arabesque Characteristics in Carpet Ornamentation

Carpets exhibit arabesque characteristics through interwoven plant patterns, continuously developing tendrils, and repetitive motifs with no apparent beginning and end (Cetin & Kamal, 2011). Arabesque is a major kind of ornamentation in Islamic art, characterized by a blend of floral and geometric motifs as well as complex, repeated rhythms. According to Burckhardt (2009), arabesques serve not only as an ornament, but also as a visual depiction of cosmic unity and order in Islamic philosophy.

The arabesque pattern is manifested on the carpet of the Sheikh Zayed Mosque in Surakarta as a continuous, flowing arrangement of patterns. No single theme takes center stage; instead, all of the patterns work together to create a cohesive visual unity. This character exemplifies the principle of unity in diversity, which is central to Islamic aesthetics.

The continual repetition of patterns gives the sensation of infinity. In Islamic art, the concept of infinity is frequently interpreted as a sign of God's infinite might. The recurrent pattern enables the observer to consider the order and majesty of God's creation without the need to represent human shapes or live creatures realistically (Grabar, 1992).

The Spiritual Function of Carpets in Worship Spaces

Carpets at mosques not only serve as decoratives, but also contribute to the creation of a spiritual atmosphere. Regular and harmonious patterns provide a visual environment that reinforces the solemnity of worship. The employment of repeated themes helps to eliminate visual distractions, allowing the congregation's attention to be directed more toward the activity of prayer. From an Islamic aesthetic standpoint, beauty is viewed not just as something physically appealing, but also as a means of drawing people closer to God. According to Nasr (1987), Islamic art uses order, balance, and harmony of shape to convey spiritual reflection.

These concepts are abundantly obvious in carpet designs that maintain continuous pattern regularity throughout the prayer space. Furthermore, dividing patterns based on row serves both social and spiritual benefits. Socially, these patterns enable the congregation to shape neat and aligned rows. Spiritually, the regularity of the rows represents all Muslims' equality before God, regardless of social, economic, or cultural background.

Harmonization with Javanese Aesthetic Values

When analyzed from a Javanese cultural perspective, repetitive patterns found on carpets resemble the visual concepts inherent in traditional batik art. Various Javanese batik motifs, including kawung, parang, and ceplok, are combined in a regular pattern repetition to create a harmonic visual rhythm. This similarity exemplifies the fusion of Arabesque and Javanese aesthetics. Both see order, balance, and pattern consistency as sources of beauty. In Javanese culture, repeated motifs serve not only as decorative elements but also as philosophical symbols of life order, societal harmony, and natural balance. The principle of harmony, which underpins aesthetics, is also visible in the selection of carpet colors. The colors utilized are often not overly clashing, resulting in a relaxing and comforting ambiance. This inclination is consistent with the concept of *alus* in Javanese culture, which regards gentleness, tranquility, and harmony as ideal aesthetic qualities.

Analysis of the Quranic Manuscript as an Interior Element and Cultural Symbol

In addition to the dome, mihrab, columns, and carpet, this study discovered a major object that contributes to the visual and spiritual identity of the Sheikh Zayed Mosque in Surakarta: a big Quranic manuscript on display within the mosque grounds. This manuscript is not just a religious collection but also a visual portrayal of Islam with aesthetic, educational, and symbolic significance. The huge Quranic Manuscript was handwritten by a team from the Wonosobo University of Quranic Science (UNSIQ) and donated to the Sheikh Zayed Mosque in Surakarta to promote Islam and Quranic literacy. When opened, the document measures around 3.2 meters and weighs more than 500 kg. In addition to its monumental size, the text has handwritten Quranic calligraphy and ornamental embellishments on each page. Its existence makes it a visually appealing object that draws the attention of tourists and worshippers.

Visual Analysis of the Mushaf

The big mushaf combines calligraphy and illuminated decoration, a traditional style in Islamic manuscript art. The core element is calligraphy, which contains Quranic passages, and the surrounding decoration enhances and underlines the text's holiness. The ornamentation surrounding the text is of an arabesque nature, with flower motifs, plant tendrils, and symmetrical geometric designs. This composition exemplifies the ideas of balance and order, which are central to Islamic art. There are no figurative elements; therefore, the visual emphasis is solely on the beauty of the revelation as expressed in the writing and ornamentation.



Fig. 9: The place of Al-Qur'an Mushaf seen from above
Source: Author's data



Fig. 10: Front View of the Al-Quran Mushaf place
Source: Author's data

From a design standpoint, the pages show a unity of text and adornment. Ornamentation does not dominate the mushaf's contents, but rather helps to improve legibility and the aesthetic value of the calligraphy. This harmonious relationship between calligraphy and decorative design has been a defining feature of Islamic mushaf art since the classical period.

Calligraphy as the Pinnacle of Islamic Aesthetics

Calligraphy is regarded as the highest art shape in the Islamic tradition since it is directly tied to God's revelation as contained in the Quran. Unlike fine art, which concentrates on the representation of human shapes, Islamic art uses calligraphy as its major medium of artistic and spiritual expression. The existence of the Grand Mushaf in the Sheikh Zayed Mosque in Surakarta demonstrates that Islamic aesthetics are conveyed not just through the building's construction and ornamentation, but also through reverence for sacred texts. Thus, the Mushaf serves as a visual symbol, reinforcing the mosque's religious identity.

Harmonizing with Local Javanese Values

From a Javanese cultural perspective, Mushaf is strongly tied to the long-standing Javanese practice of manuscript veneration (Widodo et al., 2023). Various ancient manuscripts, such as the *serat*, *babad*, and *keraton* (palace) manuscripts, are regarded not only as sources of information but also as cultural items with symbolic and spiritual significance. Furthermore, the ornamentation of the Mushaf resembles the ornamental concepts developed in Javanese decorative art, including the use of symmetrical, repetitive, and regular patterns. This arrangement is interpreted in Javanese aesthetics as a symbol of life's harmony and balance. As a result, despite its beginnings in artistic traditions, the visuals of the mushaf are intimately related to Javanese aesthetic perspectives. This intimacy is obvious in the creation process, which included Wonosobo-based artists and scholars. This fact illustrates that the mushaf not only represents global Islamic culture but also the role of local communities in the creation of highly valued works of religious art.

The Symbolic Meaning of the Mushaf in Mosque Interiors

Symbolically, the Grand Mushaf represents the center of Islamic teachings, the Quran. The dome represents God's majesty, the mihrab represents worship orientation, and the Mushaf represents the source of wisdom, life guidance, and divine revelation. The inclusion of the Grand Mushaf within the Sheikh Zayed Mosque in Surakarta emphasizes the mosque's role as a center of Islamic instruction, rather than only a place of worship. The Mushaf is a visual medium that reminds visitors of the necessity of reading, interpreting, and applying the Quran in their daily lives.

Discussion

The findings of this study have shown that the interior ornamentation of the Sheikh Zayed Mosque in Surakarta exemplifies a strong harmony between the Arabesque aesthetic as a global Islamic cultural identity and local Javan aesthetic standards (Cahyani & Hidajat, 2025).

This harmony is obvious not just in the employment of decorative themes, but also in the visual and philosophical ideas that guide the mosque's interior design. These findings suggest that cultural adaptation in contemporary Islamic architecture involves integrating aesthetic qualities with similar meaning and purpose, rather than directly combining motifs.

One of the main findings is of Arabesque motifs in numerous interior elements, including the dome, mihrab, columns, and carpets. Arabesque motifs, which include plant tendrils, geometric patterns, and calligraphy, reflect the distinctive characteristics of Islamic art, which evolved around the concepts of repetition, symmetry, rhythm, and infinity (Ensaif & Kishor, 2024). This discovery is consistent with Burckhardt's belief that Arabesques are a visual embodiment of the concept of monotheism, displayed through patterns that grow without bounds and reflect cosmic order. Thus, the interior embellishment of the Mosque functions as both a decorative feature and a symbolic medium for communicating Islamic spiritual values.

In the dome ornamentation, the study found that the radial pattern developing from a central point throughout the dome depicts the unity and oneness of God. The recurrence of symmetrically organized floral motifs conveys a sense of infinity, which is a significant feature of Islamic art. These findings support Grabar's view that repetition in Islamic adornment serves to shift human attention away from tangible items and toward deeper spiritual meditation. In other words, the dome's beauty derives not just from its visual appeal, but also from its potential to deliver a religious experience for the congregation.

Aesthetic harmony is seen in the mihrab ornament, which combines calligraphy, geometry, and arabesques to provide the focal point of the prayer orientation. Calligraphy is used to express religious messages, while geometry and arabesques add to the sacred environment by creating visual order and harmony. This discovery lends credence to Nasr's claim that Islamic art is primarily a means of expressing spiritual reflection through organized and harmonious visual shapes. The mihrab of Surakarta's Sheikh Zayed Mosque not only indicates the direction of the Qibla, but it also acts as a symbolic place that ties aesthetic aspects to the congregation's spiritual experience.

The interior columns show a remarkable balance between artistic traditions and local culture. The floral Arabesque motifs on the columns are visually similar to the lung-lungan motif in Javanese carving. Despite their differing cultural backgrounds, they both employ plant shapes to represent life and growth. This closeness implies an aesthetic intersection that facilitates a natural process of cultural adaptation. These findings suggest that cultural harmonization does not always necessitate significant shape modification, but can instead be achieved through shared symbolic concepts across two distinct cultural traditions.

In carpet ornamentation, the study discovered that the concepts of repetition and pattern regularity are closely similar to the pattern repetition method found in Javanese batik art. Visually, the Arabesque patterns on the rugs provide a rhythm that reinforces the regularity of the prayer lines. However, from a cultural standpoint, these repeated principles are related to the concept of regularity created in Javanese aesthetics. These findings show that Islamic and Javanese civilizations harmonize conceptually as well as visually.

The study found that the mosque's interior design incorporates Javanese aesthetic values such as harmony, balance, and order (Pitana, 2023; Asran et al., 2026). In Javanese culture, beauty is measured not only by visual splendor but also by the establishment of harmony among various elements that make up a unity. This principle is obvious in the design of spatial composition, the positioning of ornaments, the use of color, and the interaction of interior elements. The Sheikh Zayed Mosque in Surakarta combines Middle Eastern aesthetics with local characteristics in its overall composition of the space.

The findings of this study can be explained through the theory of cultural hybridity proposed by Bhabha (2012). According to him, the confluence of two cultures does not always result in one culture dominating the other, but rather creates a third space that allows for the development of new cultural shapes. This third space is evident in the emergence of a visual identity at the Sheikh Zayed Mosque in Surakarta, which retains the Arabesque character as a representation of global Islamic art while also being acceptable and meaningful to the Javanese community due to its closeness to local aesthetic values.

This study also supports prior research that concluded that Surakarta indicates Indonesia's cultural relationship with the United Arab Emirates. However, unlike prior studies, which focused mostly on architectural elements and cultural diplomatic symbols, this study shows that cultural harmonization happens at the level of interior decorating. Thus, ornamentation serves not just as a decorative feature but also as a medium of cultural communication that unites global Islamic identity with local Javanese wisdom.

Overall, the research findings indicate that the harmonization of the interior ornamentation of the Sheikh Zayed Mosque in Surakarta does not occur through a direct blending of shapes, but rather through the integration of aesthetic values with similar meanings. Arabesque aesthetics encompasses the principles of order and infinity, whereas Javanese aesthetics embodies harmony, balance, and alignment. The confluence of these two objectives results in a distinct visual identity that not only maintains the mosque's religious character but also demonstrates contemporary Islamic architecture's ability to accept local cultures while maintaining its universal identity. Thus, the Sheikh Zayed Mosque in Surakarta can be considered a real example of how interior ornamentation can be used to facilitate cultural discourse, resulting in shapes of beauty that are inclusive, contextualized, and meaningful.

Conclusion

This study examined the harmonization of Arabesque aesthetics and local Javanese values in the interior ornamentation of the Sheikh Zayed Mosque in Surakarta. The purpose of this study is to examine the interior ornamentation of Surakarta's Sheikh Zayed Mosque through the lens of Arabesque aesthetics and local Javanese values. Based on the visual analysis and cultural interpretation of the dome, mihrab, column, and carpet ornaments, it is feasible to conclude that the interior of the Sheikh Zayed Mosque in Surakarta is dominated by Arabesque ornamentation, as evidenced by floral motifs, geometric patterns, calligraphy, symmetry, repetition, and the principle of visual order, all of which are characteristic of Islamic art. The Arabesque aesthetic is embodied in the dome ornament by radial patterns and floral motifs that represent monotheism, cosmic order, and infinity. The mihrab ornament is a combination of calligraphy, geometry, and Arabesque, functioning as both a visual orientation center and a spiritual emblem in the prayer area. Meanwhile, the column ornaments feature floral motifs that visually resemble plant motifs in Javanese art tradition, while the carpet ornaments demonstrate the use of repetition and order principles to support the function of worship while strengthening the space's aesthetic character.

The dome's ornamentation displays harmony through geometric arabesque patterns, floral motifs, symmetry, and repetition, which align with the Javanese **lung-lungan** motif that symbolizes growth and harmony with nature. The mihrab section combines Arabic calligraphy, geometric patterns, and floral arabesque elements with the Javanese principles of balance and order. The ornamentation on the pillars reflects the similarity between floral arabesque patterns and Javanese plant motifs, while the carpet's ornamentation demonstrates harmony through repetitive patterns and visual rhythms related to the aesthetics of Javanese batik.

The results of this study indicate that local Javanese values are not present in the shape of direct reproduction of traditional motifs, but rather in the aesthetic principles that shape the ornaments. Values such as harmony, balance, order, and the relationship between humans and nature are related to principles also found in Arabesque aesthetics. These similarities enable a process of cultural harmonization while preserving each tradition's distinctiveness. This study indicated that Arabesque aesthetics and native Javanese values harmonize at three levels. First, the visual similarities between plant tendril shapes, repeated patterns, and symmetrical compositions. Second, at the philosophical level, shared values of order, balance, and unity. Third, at the cultural level, worldwide Islamic aesthetics are adapted to the Javanese cultural setting, resulting in a contextual and easily accepted visual identity by the local community.

According to the perspective of cultural hybridity theory, the interior of the Sheikh Zayed Mosque in Surakarta serves as a meeting place for worldwide Islamic identity and local Javanese culture. This meeting results in a new artistic shape that does not demonstrate the domination of one culture, but rather establishes a complementary relationship. The interior

ornamentation of the Sheikh Zayed Mosque in Surakarta serves as both a decorative and spiritual element. It also represents cultural dialogue, demonstrating the ability of contemporary Islamic architecture to integrate universal Islamic values with local wisdom. Academically, this research contributes to the study of art, interior design, and Islamic architecture by demonstrating how ornamentation may be a valuable tool in understanding the process of acculturation and cultural harmonization. The findings of this study further support the notion that the identity of contemporary Islamic architecture is influenced not only by religious and aesthetic characteristics, but also by cultural exchanges that occur in the environment in which the structure is located. As a result, the Sheikh Zayed Mosque in Surakarta stands out as a prime example of the successful fusion of Arabesque aesthetics with local Javanese values, resulting in a place of worship with visual, spiritual, and cultural meaning simultaneously.

The strength of this study lies in its emphasis on interior ornamentation as a representation of cultural interaction, which provides a deeper understanding of how Islamic architectural identity can develop through the relationship between universal religious values and local cultural expressions. However, this study has limitations because the analysis is limited to certain interior ornaments such as domes, mihrabs, columns, and carpets without examining other architectural aspects such as exterior elements, spatial layout, landscape design, and environmental features. Furthermore, the interpretation of the meaning of the ornaments is primarily based on visual analysis and cultural interpretation, which could be further developed through interdisciplinary research involving the fields of architecture, anthropology, and cultural studies.

Implications

This study contributes to the understanding of Islamic architectural ornamentation by demonstrating that the interior design of Sheikh Zayed Mosque Surakarta reflects a harmonious integration of Arabesque aesthetics and Javanese cultural values. The findings highlight that cultural adaptation in Islamic architecture extends beyond the adoption of decorative motifs to include shared aesthetic principles such as harmony, balance, and symbolic meaning. These results may serve as a reference for architects, interior designers, cultural researchers, and mosque managers in developing architectural designs that preserve universal Islamic values while respecting local cultural identities.

Future Research Directions

Future studies are encouraged to investigate other architectural elements beyond interior ornamentation, including exterior façades, spatial organization, landscape design, lighting systems, and environmental design of contemporary mosques. Comparative research involving mosques from different regions of Indonesia and other Muslim-majority countries may further reveal diverse patterns of interaction between Islamic architectural traditions and local cultural identities. In addition, interdisciplinary studies integrating architecture, anthropology, visual culture, and digital heritage documentation are recommended to deepen the understanding of cultural harmonization in Islamic architecture and contribute to the sustainable preservation of religious and cultural heritage.

Author Contributions

Conceptualization: S.S., A.W., N.Y., E.Y., & E.S.M.; Data curation: S.S., A.W., N.Y., E.Y., & E.S.M.; formal analysis: S.S., A.W., N.Y., E.Y., & E.S.M.; Funding acquisition: S.S.; Investigation: S.S., A.W., N.Y., E.Y., & E.S.M.; Methodology: S.S., A.W., N.Y., E.Y., & E.S.M.; Project administration: S.S.; Resources: S.S., A.W., N.Y., E.Y., & E.S.M.; Software: Not applicable; Supervision: S.S.; Validation: S.S., A.W., N.Y., E.Y., & E.S.M.; Visualization: A.W., E.Y.; Writing – original draft: S.S., A.W.; Writing – review & editing: S.S., A.W., N.Y., E.Y., & E.S.M. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

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Data Availability Statement

The data presented in this study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request. The data are not publicly available due to research confidentiality and participant privacy considerations.

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Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest in conducting this research.

Declaration of Generative AI and AI-Assisted Technologies in the Writing Process

During the preparation of this manuscript, the authors used ChatGPT to improve the clarity of the language, refine academic writing, and enhance the organization of the manuscript. After using this tool, the authors carefully reviewed, revised, and verified all content and take full responsibility for the accuracy, originality, and integrity of the published article.

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