

THE URGENCY OF ISLAMIC RELIGIOUS EDUCATION FOR GENERATION Z

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ABSTRACT

Education plays a significant role in shaping individual personalities, society, and civilization. Education is not solely related to the knowledge imparted but also involves the formation of character, moral values, and skills needed to understand and successfully practice something new that has been learned. Education can also bring you closer to spiritual or religious values. This journal article aims to make Generation Z aware of the importance of Islamic religious education in the current digital era so that they are not easily influenced by the negative things they get from their gadgets. The research method applied in writing this journal article is a qualitative approach and literature analysis methods related to the urgency of Islamic religious education for the Zoomer Generation. This research was done by reading and analyzing relevant journals and scientific literature. The research results show a decline in Generation Z's interest in studying Islamic religious education caused by the presence of modern technology in their lives today. They feel that Islamic religious education is boring and makes them out of date, so most of them do not have the confidence to study it because they are afraid of being looked down upon by the people around them. This kind of understanding arises from their minds due to a lack of knowledge about the importance of Islamic religious education in their lives, and they also do not know the purpose and impact of this education. Therefore, this journal article aims to straighten Generation Z's understanding of the importance of Islamic religious education, especially in their current era. Providing Islamic religious education to Generation Z has a very crucial role in shaping their character. This will help them understand moral and ethical values, develop mental and emotional resilience, strengthen leadership, and build a healthy social life.

Keywords: Digital era; Generation Z; Islamic education.

INTRODUCTION

Education aims to develop the mental and intellectual maturity of children or students. This level of maturity can be measured by their independence and ability to make the right decisions (Fachri 2014). Therefore, it is important for Islamic religious education to be an effort to form and nurture children or students so that they always have a deep understanding of Islamic teachings and can realize goals. This will enable them to practice Islam and make it the basis of their lives (Hidayat et al. 2023).

However, looking at the current situation in the digital era, interest in Islamic religious education is very minimal, especially among Generation Z. This is due to several factors, such as cultural changes, easy access to information, identity crisis, lack of capable religious education, and intense media influence. However, it should be noted that not all individuals from Generation Z have a low interest in Islamic religious knowledge. Some remain very interested and involved in their Islamic practices. Various factors, such as family background, social environment, and personal experiences, can influence interest and involvement in religion.

Several verses in the Qur'an emphasize the importance of learning Islamic religious knowledge, one of which is Surah Muhammad (47:19):

﴿فاعلم أنه لا إله إلا الله واستغفر لذنبك وللمؤمنين والمؤمنات والله يعلم متقلبكم ومثوبكم﴾

“So know that there is truly no god (worthy of worship) except Allah and ask forgiveness for your sins and for (the sins of) the believers, men and women. Allah knows where you work and where you live.”

This verse emphasizes the importance of knowing faith and forgiveness of sins. This shows that deepening religious knowledge is the key to understanding faith and gaining forgiveness from Allah subhanahu wata'ala. One example of related research that has ever existed has been discussed in the journal "The Role of Islamic Religious Education in Building the Character of Generation Z" written by Mulyadi, Elza Rahilla AlHadjrath, Putri Wulan Hutami, and Mizla Agustin (Mulyadi, Elza Rahilla AlHadjrath, Putri Wulan Hutami 2023).

Differences from previous studies Similarities: Both journals highlight the importance of character education in shaping individuals, although in different contexts. The latest journal highlights the significance of Islamic religious education in character and moral formation. In contrast, the previous journal discusses the role of Islamic religious education in shaping the character of college students. Second, Both journals acknowledge the role of technology in shaping the younger generation. The latest journal discusses how Generation Z is very familiar with technology and gadgets, while the previous journal discusses the use of technology in character learning methods. Third, Both highlight the role of Islam in shaping individual character and morality. The latest journal discusses the urgency of Islamic religious education for Generation Z. In contrast, the previous journal discusses the role of Islamic Spirituality UKM and Islamic Religious Education courses in shaping the character of college students.

Differences: First, the latest journal emphasizes the urgency of Islamic religious education for Generation Z in general, while the previous journal more specifically discussed the Islamic Religious Education learning system in higher education and the role of Islamic Spirituality Student Activity Units in student character building. Second, although both discuss character building, the methods used differ slightly. The latest journal focuses more on teaching moral and ethical values in general. In contrast, the previous journal focuses more on habituation through Islamic Spirituality Student Activity Units and Islamic religious education in higher education. Third, the latest journal focuses more on the impact of technology on Generation Z in general. In contrast, the previous journal focuses more on using technology in character learning methods in higher education. Fourth, the latest journal emphasizes the urgency of Islamic religious education as a solution to Generation Z's moral and spiritual challenges. In contrast, the previous journal focuses more on the concrete role of education.

This journal article aims to provide a deep understanding of Islamic teachings to Generation Z and integrate Islamic values with modern life. The hope of writing this journal article is to help them understand the essence of these teachings in their lives, strengthen their religious beliefs and commitments, help shape strong characters based on Islamic values, and encourage them to develop creativity and innovation in understanding and applying Islamic teachings in their context so that they can become agents of positive change in society.



RESEARCH METHODS

The research method used in this study is a qualitative approach and literature research method related to the urgency of Islamic religious education for the Zoomer Generation. This research was conducted by reading and analyzing journals and relevant scientific literature. *Qualitative research methods* are a scientific approach that uses observation, interview, and text analysis techniques to understand human phenomena. This approach emphasizes interpretation, context, and complexity and produces descriptive data that can provide a deeper understanding of research subjects' values, beliefs, and experiences. Setyosari, in Abdul Samad's research, explains that qualitative research is a type of research conducted by researchers through the collection, processing, analysis, and interpretation of research data previously obtained through various techniques. Some techniques include observation, content analysis, and other appropriate methods to explore and find data (Somad 2021). Content analysis or analysis of literature study data in English is called library research, which discusses in depth the contents of written or printed information in print or online media (content analysis) (Mursalin 2022). According to Embun, quoted by Hisan Mursalin, the literature review is the process of reviewing written works as the only source of information, including previous research related to the same issue. This research is conducted by observing existing writings without further observations or field experiments (Mursalin 2023).

This approach was chosen because it allows researchers to explore and understand the meaning and perceptions in academic journals relevant to the research topic. Researchers collect information by reading and reviewing journals and related scientific literature. From the literature identified, a selection is made based on inclusion criteria such as relevance to the research topic, trust in the source, and completeness of the information. Then, the articles are analyzed for their content by looking for patterns, themes, and trends that emerge about the urgency of Islamic religious education for the Zoomer Generation. This process involves grouping and categorizing the information found. Furthermore, researchers present an analysis relevant to the research topic and provide adequate explanations. This research method uses an in-depth literature analysis to contribute significantly to understanding the phenomena related to the urgency of Islamic religious education for the Zoomer generation.

RESULTS AND DISSCUSION

Getting to Know Islamic Religious Education

As we know, Islamic religious education has two meanings: "Education" and "Islamic Religion." According to Ibn Khaldun's view, education is formed to create a cultured society that preserves community life. For him, education is not only about the learning process in a particular space and time but also about how humans are aware of understanding, applying, and researching a civilization in society (T. Saiful Akbar 2015). He also realized that education is about distributing information and involves forming character, moral values, and skills needed to succeed in life. Al-Ghazali believes that education is an educator's effort to change bad behavior and instill good morals to strengthen their relationship with Allah and achieve happiness in this world and the hereafter (Hamim 2017).

Based on these views, education has a very significant role in shaping the personality of individuals, society, and civilization. Education is not merely related to the knowledge conveyed but also involves the formation of character, moral values, and skills needed to understand and succeed in practicing something new that has been learned. Education can also bring us closer to spiritual or religious values.

Furthermore, Darajat (1992) stated that religious intermediaries influence education's journey because religion is considered a motivation in life and an essential tool in self-development and control. Understanding and practicing religion is knowledge and strengthening faith (Firmansyah, 2019). Therefore, Islamic religious education is a deliberate effort to help individuals understand, believe in, and practice Islamic teachings based on the Qur'an and the Hadith of the Prophet Muhammad SAW through guidance, instruction, or training by predetermined goals (Elihami & Syahid, 2018).

In Arifin's view, three aspects of values are contained in the goals of Islamic education. First, the formation of individuals to become servants of Allah who dedicate themselves entirely to Him. Second, having educational values that guide them to adhere to the guidance of the Qur'an and Hadith firmly. Third, it is related to motivation and discipline based on the teachings of the Qur'an, which mentions good deeds and evil deeds (Ahyat 2017).

Through this observation, Islamic religious education has a significant role in education, including character and moral formation and strengthening spiritual values. The main objective of Islamic religious education is to educate, direct, and guide students to become Islamic individuals, namely having good faith, obedience, and morals in various aspects of life. The concept of insan kamil is the highest achievement, and it includes Islamic religious education, where a person can become a functional human being for the whole community.

Getting to Know Zoomer Generation

A generation is a group of individuals who share a similar age range and have witnessed significant historical events together during the same time. In general, a generation refers to a group of individuals who were born and lived at relatively the same time, usually between the ages of 20 and 30. These generations often have unique characteristics, experiences, and values that may influence how they think, act, and interact in society.

In the book *Grown Up Digital* by Nur Zazin and Muhammad Zaim, Tapscott explains in detail the four generations born after World War II. The first generation is called the Baby Boom, born between 1946 and 1964. The second generation is Generation X, born between 1965 and 1976. The third generation is Generation Y, born between 1977 and 1997. Finally, Generation Z was born between 1998 and now (Kristyowati 2021). Currently, the Indonesian population consists of four generations with different characteristics and characters.

Table 1. Learning methods for Baby Boomers, X, Y and Z generations

Generation	Digital revolution	Digital technology	Internet	Technology
Baby boomers	This generation existed before	In the village, where there is	There is no internet	Traditional, telegrams and letters



	the digital era was discovered	no electricity and TV	network access yet	
x	Have been faced with the development of the digital revolution	Currently in the process of using mobile technology	Internet use in early adulthood	Video Games, Videos, and TV
y	Developing during the digital revolution	Using digital technology	The beginning of the use of internet networks in the younger generation	Web and web games, pc
z	Present in a century that has known the world of travel	Digital technology has become a very important thing in life	Born in an era where the internet is very adequate	Very familiar with the increasingly sophisticated advances in technology and communications

Source:(Ivanova and Smrikarov 2009)

We can see that Generation Z is a generation that is faced with the advancement of the times and technology, where the world of the internet has entered and permeated society (Ozkan and Solmaz 2015). Therefore, Generation Z is also known as the NET generation. Generation Z, or Gen NET, is a generation that is very dependent on technology systems; this generation has the ability to use various sources of information spread across social media, never being separated from smartphones, and never missing news or news circulating on social media. Generation Z can quickly get any information through the gadgets they use. Since childhood, they have been accustomed to technology and gadgets, indirectly affecting their personalities. The intensive use of smartphones has changed Generation Z and made it different from previous generations. The intensive use of smartphones by Generation Z is not addictive behavior, but they use smartphones because they have become an essential part of their lives. However, it is possible that intensive use of smartphones by Generation Z can also lead to addictive behavior.

Research on the literature review shows an unfavorable relationship between smartphone addiction and academic achievement. This relationship occurs when the higher the level of addiction, the lower the academic success. Several studies also show that excessive smartphone addiction can interfere with Generation Z's spiritual concentration in worship. They may be more likely to consume entertainment content or interact on social media than with their creator.

According to Oumou Aziza Abbas Sissoko, as quoted by Wahyu Taufiqur Rohman et al., it is essential to balance the narcissistic behavior of Generation Z by providing Islamic religious education values to Muslim teenagers (Revelation of Taufiqur Rohman, M.Sugeng Solehudin 2023). Islamic religious education plays a vital role in shaping the character of Generation Z. It helps Generation Z

understand moral and ethical values, develop mental and emotional resilience, strengthen leadership, and build a healthy social life (Mulyadi, Elza Rahilla AlHadjrath, Putri Wulan Hutami 2023).

The urgency of Islamic religious education for the Zoomer generation

The development of science and technology in the digital era has resulted in essential changes in everyday life. Digital technology has become a foundation that facilitates various aspects of human life (Ainun et al. 2024). Generation Z faces unprecedented challenges and opportunities in an era of globalization and ever-evolving technological transformation. As a generation living amid an unlimited flow of information, Generation Z is often faced with complex questions about identity, morality, and the purpose of life. In this context, the role of Islamic religious education is vital. Islamic religious education is about teaching religious rituals and becomes a strong foundation for forming character and providing direction in everyday life.

Here are some reasons related to the urgency of Islamic religious education for Generation Z: First, identity and inner peace. Generation Z, who grew up in an increasingly multicultural environment and are continuously exposed to the flow of information from the internet, find themselves at the crossroads between individual identity and various external influences. In this context, Islamic religious education becomes essential in their journey to understand and strengthen their Muslim identity. Through learning about Islamic values, inherited teachings, and practices, they gain knowledge and build solid beliefs and deep inner peace. By understanding religious teachings in-depth, Generation Z can answer questions about their identity more confidently and maintain inner balance in the face of the ever-growing complexity of the modern world.

Second, morals and ethics. In an age where information flows rapidly and diversely, Generation Z faces a significant challenge in maintaining their morals and ethics. Islamic religious education is an essential source of strength in strengthening this generation's moral and ethical foundations amidst the inevitable noise of information. Islamic values such as honesty, justice, compassion, and patience are indispensable guidelines in their daily lives. By understanding and applying these principles, Generation Z can form a strong character and maintain their integrity amidst the constant temptations from the outside environment. Islamic religious education is not only a theoretical lesson but also a way to strengthen the moral and ethical qualities that are very important for this generation's sustainable development and success in facing the complexities of the modern world.

Third, tolerance and intercultural understanding. Generation Z lives in an era where cultural and religious diversity is a hallmark of global society. Although Islam may be the majority in some regions, many individuals from Generation Z grow up and develop in culturally and religiously diverse environments. Therefore, Islamic religious education becomes increasingly important to promote a deeper understanding of tolerance, mutual understanding, and intercultural cooperation. With a proper understanding of Islamic teachings encouraging tolerance and diversity, Generation Z can learn to appreciate cultural and religious differences as richness, not as a source of conflict. Thus, Islamic religious education is about strengthening religious identity, building bridges between communities, and promoting peace and harmony in this increasingly diverse society.

Fourth is mental resilience. Generation Z faces increasingly complex mental challenges in facing the dynamics of a rapidly changing world. Islamic religious education plays a vital role in building the necessary mental toughness. In an era of uncertainty, Islamic teachings become a solid foundation for Generation Z to find inner and emotional strength. This generation can face pressure and challenges more resiliently by understanding concepts such as fortitude, patience, and sincerity taught in Islam. A religious approach emphasizing inner peace and emotional stability is valuable for Generation Z in facing complex and uncertain situations. Islamic religious education provides spiritual understanding and becomes a source of invaluable mental and emotional strength for a generation currently navigating this sea of uncertainty. Therefore, Islamic religious education is urgently needed for Generation Z to form strong identities, morals, ethics, tolerance, mental resilience, and spiritual knowledge and skills. Moreover, keep Generation Z away from things that might harm them or keep them away from things that are not wanted.

This presentation also shows that Islamic religious education drastically affects the progress and improvement in the rules of life of Generation Z. This is one of the efforts to instill noble character and change the characteristics of Generation Z. In such a way, this is a positive result that can change the history of life in the next generation.

CONCLUSION

Generation Z is a generation born in a very sophisticated era, where the internet world has penetrated all levels of society; this generation is also known as the Net Generation, which is a generation that is very dependent on the technology system. They can use various sources of information spread across social media; they are also never separated from gadgets and never miss the latest news or news.

Frequent smartphone use by Generation Z can lead to addictive behavior. Research shows that there is a negative relationship between smartphone addiction and academic achievement. The higher the level of addiction, the lower the academic success. Another study also showed that excessive smartphone addiction can interfere with their spiritual concentration in worship because they are more likely to spend time interacting in the entertainment world than to deepen their religious understanding.

Based on the research, it can be concluded that providing Islamic religious education to Generation Z has a crucial role in shaping their character. This will help them understand moral and ethical values, develop mental and emotional resilience, strengthen leadership, and build a healthy social life. The goal of Islamic religious education is to shape students into servants of Allah with strong faith and educational values based on the Qur'an and hadith.

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