Transforming Islamic Education Learning: Innovative Strategies for Generation Z Educators in Facing Generation Alpha Learners

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ABSTRACT

This article discusses the transformation of Islamic Religious Education learning by Generation Z educators in dealing with Generation Alpha students born after 2010. This research aims to identify innovative learning strategies that are relevant to the interactive, visual, and fast learning characters of Generation Alpha. The research method used is qualitative with a case study approach through interviews and observations of PAI educators from Generation Z. The results of the study show that strategies such as gamification are relevant to Generation Alpha learners. The results show that strategies such as gamification, interactive videos, and project-based learning are effective in increasing student engagement. However, challenges such as limited infrastructure, the gap between religious materials and fast learning styles, and maintaining the authenticity of Islamic values are still obstacles. In conclusion, educators need to act as innovative facilitators in creating meaningful learning experiences, and education policies need to support the development of PAI curricula that are adaptive to generational dynamics in the digital era.

Keywords: generation alpha, generation Z, learning transformation

INTRODUCTION

In the growing digital era, learners' learning patterns have undergone significant changes. Generation Alpha, born after 2010, grew up in a highly connected environment, where interaction with digital devices is a major part of their daily lives [1]. They adapt more quickly to technology-based learning than conventional textual methods. On the other hand, educators from Generation Z, who are beginning to dominate the world of education, face the challenge of adapting teaching methods to Generation Alpha's more visual, fast-paced, experiential mindset and learning needs. In the context of Islamic Religious Education, the biggest challenge is how to convey Islamic values in an interesting and relevant way for learners who are used to practical and interactive approaches [2]. Traditional approaches that only focus on memorization and lectures need to be combined with innovative strategies such as gamification, interactive videos, and experiential learning to be more effective in building understanding and appreciation of religious values for Generation Alpha. Therefore, the transformation of PAI learning is an urgeneration need to remain relevant to the times and the characteristics of today's learners [3].

The changing learning patterns of Generation Alpha learners have been the concern of many studies. According to McCrindle and Fell in Understanding Generation Alpha, this generation is known as the "first

digital generation" who have been exposed to technologies such as artificial intelligenerationce (AI), social media, and online-based learning since birth [4]. They are more likely to learn through visual, interactive and experiential approaches. Meanwhile, several studies show that educators from Generation Z face challenges in adapting teaching methods to Generation Alpha's more flexible and technology-based learning style [5], [6]. Therefore, technology integration in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) becomes one of the important solutions. The use of interactive videos, gamification, and AI-based learning applications can increase students' motivation and understanding of religious concepts [7]. Furthermore, some studies show that the application of blended learning methods, which combine traditional methods with digital technology, can increase student engagement in understanding Islamic values. Thus, the transformation of PAI learning is an urgenerationt need to remain relevant to the times and the characteristics of today's learners [8].

This research aims to identify the challenges that Generation Z educators face in teaching Generation Alpha learners in the digital era. Along with the development of technology, educators need to understand the obstacles and limitations they face in adjusting learning methods to remain effective and interesting for learners who have different characteristics from previous generations. In addition,

this study also aims to analyze Generation Alpha's learning patterns and how technology affects the way they understand Islamic Religious Education (PAI) materials. This generation tends to have a more interactive, visual and experiential learning style, which requires an in-depth understanding of the most appropriate approach for them. Based on this analysis, this research also seeks to formulate implementation strategies for technology-based learning that can be applied in teaching Islamic Religious Education. With the right strategy, it is expected that religious learning can be delivered in a way that is more relevant, interesting, and easily understood by students in this digital era.

Transformation of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning is a must in the digital era, especially in dealing with Alpha Generation students who have unique characteristics in the way they learn and interact with information. Conventional methods that rely on lectures and memorization are no longer effective enough in conveying Islamic values to a generation that grows up in a fast-paced, interactive, and technology-based digital ecosystem. As educators of Generation Z, PAI teachers are faced with the challenge of adjusting teaching strategies to be more innovative and in line with Generation Alpha's more visual and experiential learning style [6].

Therefore, approaches that integrate technology in learning, such as gamification, interactive videos, and artificial intelligenerationce-based learning, become a solution that is not only relevant but also able to increase learners' understanding and engagement. By applying innovative and adaptive strategies, PAI learning will not only be more interesting but can also shape a generation that has a strong Islamic understanding in the midst of the times [5].

So, the novelty in this research lies in the cross-generational focus that examines the interaction between Generation Z educators and Generation Alpha learners in the context of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning in the digital era, an approach that is still rarely discussed specifically. This research presents a new perspective by showing how Generation Z educators who are familiar with technology are able to integrate digital media such as gamification, interactive videos, and project-based learning to transform the delivery of Islamic values to be more relevant to Generation Alpha's visual, interactive, and fast-responding characteristics. Another novelty is the emphasis on the role of the teacher as a facilitator and designer of learning experiences, rather than a mere deliverer of material, as well as its relevance to the need for PAI curriculum development that is adaptive and responsive to infrastructure challenges, learning style gaps, and the importance of maintaining the authenticity of Islamic values in an all-digital era.

RESEARCH METHODS

This research focuses on the transformation of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning conducted by Generation Z educators in dealing with Generation Alpha students. The main focus is to explore Generation Alpha learning patterns, innovative strategies applied in PAI learning, and challenges faced by educators. The object of the research includes PAI teachers from Generation Z who teach in elementary schools, as well as Generation Alpha students who are in a technology-based learning environment. The research was conducted in several schools that have integrated technology in the learning process.

This research used a qualitative approach with a descriptive method to gain an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon of PAI learning transformation. This approach allows researchers to comprehensively analyze the context, experiences, and teaching strategies. The data used consisted of primary and secondary data. Primary data was obtained through in-depth interviews with generation Z teachers, observation, and documentation of learning activities. Meanwhile, secondary data was collected from literature relevant to digital generation learning.

The main informants in the study are Islamic Religious Education teachers from Generation Z, who have experience in teaching Generation Alpha students using innovative learning approaches. In addition, Generation Alpha students were also involved as supporting informants to obtain learners' perspectives on the learning process they experienced. The research process was conducted through several stages, namely planning, data collection, data analysis, and reporting. In the data collection stage, researchers used semi-structured interview techniques to explore the experiences and views of teachers and students. Observations were made to document how innovative strategies were implemented in practice.

Data analysis was conducted thematically through four stages: data reduction, categorization, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. Data obtained from interviews, observations and documentation were first reduced to filter out the most relevant information. Next, the data was categorized into main themes, such as Generation Alpha's learning patterns, innovative learning strategies, and challenges faced by teachers. After that, the data was presented in the form of narrative descriptions to clearly describe the phenomenon under study. The final result of this analysis is expected to provide new insights related to a more adaptive PAI learning model, as well as practical recommendations for Generation Z educators in developing more effective learning methods in the digital era.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION
1. Generation Alpha Learning Style

The results show that Generation Alpha learners have learning style characteristics that are strongly influenced by the development of digital technology. They tend to be more critical, responsive to visual, audio-visual and interactive learning approaches. Generation Alpha grew up in

a fast-paced and connected environment, so they prefer to learn through engaging media such as short videos, educational games, and app-based learning platforms as well as open learning by utilizing digital platforms. They also exhibit high multitasking skills, but with relatively short attention spans, which requires educators to create learning strategies that are dynamic and not monotonous.

The research also reveals that Generation Alpha highly values personalization in learning. They are more engaged when the material is relevant to their daily lives and presented contextually. This opens up opportunities for Generation Z educators to integrate more flexible and creative pedagogical approaches, such as project-based learning, gamification and digital collaboration. Educators who are also digitally literate, such as Generation Z, have an advantage in adopting this technology as an integral part of the learning process of Islamic Religious Education (PAI), so as to bridge the needs of students with Islamic values in a contextual and fun way.

In the context of Islamic Education, this transformation of learning styles requires educators to innovate not only in methods, but also in the delivery of values. Learning that focuses on interactive discussions, actual Islamic case studies, and the integration of social media as a means of educational da'wah are effective approaches. This study confirms that the success of PAI learning in the Generation Alpha era is largely determined by the ability of Generation Z educators to understand the character of digital-native learning, and translate it into strategies that touch the cognitive, affective, and spiritual aspects of students.

2. **Innovative Strategies by Generation Z Educators for Generation Alpha**

Research shows that Generation Z educators, who were born and raised with the development of digital technology, have a high tendency to utilize digital media and devices in the learning process. In the context of Islamic Religious Education (PAI), they adopt innovative strategies such as the use of short da'wah videos, interactive infographics, digital quizzes, and AI and AR (Augmented Reality) based applications to enrich the learning experience. Generation Z educators also utilize social media, such as TikTok or Instagram, as platforms for delivering Islamic values that are creatively packaged and attractive to Generation Alpha.

Another strategy identified in this study is the application of project-based learning and digital collaborative learning methods. Generation Z educators often encourage Generation Alpha learners to actively create Islamic educational content, such as vlogs about morals in everyday life or digital campaigns with tolerance themes. Thus, the learning process is not only one-way, but involves learners' activeness in exploring and

retelling PAI materials according to their style. This has been proven to increase concept understanding as well as the depth of spiritual reflection in learners. Therefore, generation Z educators must also always be updated with applications that can support deep understanding for learners.

Other findings reveal that Generation Z educators tend to be more adaptive and reflective of Generation Alpha learners' needs. They conduct regular learning evaluations by involving digital feedback from learners, understanding the characteristics of each learner, and using learning data to design more contextualized and personalized materials. This approach makes PAI learning more relevant, inclusive and sustainable. This research emphasizes that the success of Generation Z educators' innovative strategies is largely determined by their ability to establish emotional connections with Generation Alpha learners through authentic, creative, and technology-friendly approaches.

3. **Challenges in learning transformation by Generation Z to Generation Alpha**

The research revealed that one of the main challenges Generation Z educators face in transforming PAI learning is the gap between the depth of religious material and the fast and instant learning style of Generation Alpha learners. Generation Alpha tends to prefer practical, visual, and instant learning, and relies on AI, while PAI materials require deep understanding, spiritual reflection, and value habituation. This often leads to a lack of interest or engagement from learners in materials that are considered "heavy" or not directly applicable to their daily lives.

Another challenge is the limited infrastructure and support of the education system in accommodating the digital innovations brought by Generation Z educators. Although these educators are highly skilled in using technology, many schools or madrasahs do not have adequate facilities such as stable internet access, multimedia devices, or supportive online learning platforms. This condition limits educators' creativity and causes a gap between the potential of innovation and the reality of implementation in the field.

In addition, Generation Z educators also face the challenge of maintaining a balance between traditional Islamic values and the modern approaches they use. It is not uncommon for strategies that are too "pop culture" to be taken less seriously or less religiously by certain parties. Therefore, educators are required to have cultural sensitivity and spiritual intelligenerationce in packaging PAI materials to remain relevant without losing the essence. This study concludes that the transformation of PAI learning requires holistic support not only from educators, but also from education policy, parents, and the school

environment in order to be able to answer the challenges of the times wisely and effectively.

The results show that Generation Z educators develop innovative and technology-based learning strategies to address the learning needs of Generation Alpha students in the context of Islamic Religious Education (PAI). These approaches include the use of interactive digital media, gamification, project-based learning, and integration of Islamic content into social media platforms. On the other hand, they also face challenges such as limited infrastructure, differences in the depth of religious material with Generation Alpha's fast and visual learning style, and the demand to maintain a balance between traditional values and modern approaches [9].

Compared to previous studies that tend to focus on the importance of digitizing education in generationeral, this study more specifically raises the dynamics of interaction between the character of Generation Z educators and Generation Alpha students in the context of religious learning. In contrast to previous generations who were more conservative in delivering PAI materials, Generation Z is more open and adaptive to technology-based creative approaches. This provides a new color in the discourse of Islamic education, where religiosity is not only delivered through lectures, but also through digital media that is familiar to students [10].

The results of this study mark a paradigm shift in PAI learning from models that tend to be rigid and one-way, towards models that are participatory, creative, and contextual. This shows that religious education is no longer just a verbal transfer of values, but must also be able to shape spiritual experiences that are relevant to the digital lives of students. This transformation is a sign that Islamic spirituality also needs to be present in digital spaces to remain meaningful and grounded in the midst of changing times [11].

PAI learning that integrates a digital approach is able to increase the engagement and understanding of Generation Alpha students. This is due to Generation Alpha's tendency to grow up in a digital environment and get used to visual media and fast interaction. Thus, the use of gamification, interactive videos, and project-based learning is more effective than the conventional lecture method. The new story is that the transformation of religious learning is not only possible, but also necessary, when teachers are able to package spiritual values in a format that suits the daily world of digital-native learners. Therefore, the success of religious learning no longer depends solely on the content, but also on the form and manner of delivery

Generation Z educators tend to be more technologically prepared and have high creativity in adapting digital media into PAI learning. Strategies such as gamification encourage active participation, interactive videos make it easier to understand abstract Islamic concepts, and project-based learning allows students to apply Islamic values in real-life contexts. In addition, the research also found that Generation Alpha learners are more enthusiastic and engaged when the teaching and learning process is dynamic, visual, and experiential, compared to passive learning models.

These results are influenced by several important factors, including: the characteristics of Generation Alpha who are very familiar with technology from an early age, as well as their tendency to respond better to visual stimulus and interactive experiences than text or verbal lectures. On the other hand, Generation Z educators are also digitally-ready and adaptable to new learning trends. Another supporting factor is the flexibility of technology-based learning methods that allow for personalization and creativity in delivery. However, infrastructure gaps and the availability of digital resources are still obstacles that affect the success of the implementation of this method evenly.

The strengths of this study lie in its contextual and actual focus on generational dynamics in PAI learning, as well as the use of a qualitative approach that allows in-depth exploration of teachers' practices and experiences. It is also practically relevant as it provides concrete solutions to the challenges of teaching religion in the digital era. However, the drawback is that the scope of the research is limited to a certain area and number of respondents, so the generationeralizability of the results is still limited. In addition, the research has not fully explored the deeper theological dimensions in the packaging of Islamic values through digital media.

This research is in line with several previous studies that emphasize the importance of technology integration in modern learning, especially in the context of generationeral education. However, the novelty of this research can be seen from its focus on PAI and cross-generational dynamics, which are still rarely discussed. Unlike previous studies that tend to focus on digitalization in generationeral or on improving teachers' skills, this study highlights how Generation Alpha's learning style requires a contextual and visual approach to religious learning. In some aspects, this research criticizes the traditional approaches that are still widely maintained in PAI, thus providing fresh alternatives that can enrich the practice of Islamic education in the future.

The implication of this result is the importance of repositioning the role of PAI educators, no longer simply as material deliverers, but as learning facilitators who are able to design meaningful, interesting, and character-building learning experiences [12]. The curriculum and

teacher training also need to adapt to the needs and characteristics of the digital-native generation so that Islamic values can be instilled effectively. On the other hand, schools and educational institutions need to support this innovation with policies that support the integration of technology in religious learning.

This phenomenon occurs due to a unique generation gap, where Generation Z educators are at the intersection of traditional values and digital advancements, while Generation Alpha is the first generation born fully into the connected world. The technological readiness and open mindset of Generation Z educators are the key factors that drive the birth of adaptive learning strategies. On the other hand, Generation Alpha's learning character that requires a fast, visual and personalized approach also encourages innovation in learning methods naturally [13].

CONCLUSION

This study found that the innovative strategies developed by Generation Z educators in PAI learning were significantly able to adapt to the characteristics of Generation Alpha learners who are digital-native, visual, and like interactive and personalized learning approaches. Approaches such as the use of social media, gamification, interactive videos, and project-based learning are proven to increase learners' engagement and understanding of PAI materials. On the other hand, the main challenges faced include limited technological infrastructure, the gap between in-depth religious material and Generation Alpha's fast learning style, and the need to maintain the authenticity of Islamic values amidst digital and modern approaches.

The main contribution of this research is to provide a real picture of cross-generational learning dynamics, especially between Generation Z educators and Generation Alpha learners, in the context of religious education. This research opens the insight that Islamic education learning can be transformed to be more contextual, creative, and relevant to the lives of today's learners, without losing the essence of Islamic values. This research also provides a conceptual basis for the development of teacher training, adaptive curriculum design, and educational policies that are more inclusive of technological developments and intergenerational character differences.

However, this study has limitations, especially in that the scope is still limited to teacher observations and experiences in a particular school environment, without comparing in depth between different regions, levels of education or religious institutions. Therefore, further research is recommended to quantitatively explore the effectiveness of this innovative strategy and its impact on the affective and spiritual aspects of learners in the long term. Future research could also expand the scope to the role of parents and communities in supporting the transformation of holistic PAI learning.

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