

Transitioning from Screen to Scripture: Reclaiming Gen-Z through Islamic Education and Moral Development in Indonesian Educational Institutions

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Article Info	Abstract
<p>Article History</p> <p>Received: 16 January 2025</p> <p>Revised: 10 February 2025</p> <p>Accepted: 21 June 2025</p> <p>Published: 29 June 2025</p> <p>Keyword: Islamic Religious Education; Islamic Character; Generation Z; Teaching Methods; Technology</p> <p>Copyright (c) 2025 Sarinah Sarinah, Abdul Fattah, Maria Ulviani</p> 	<p>The emergence of digital culture has profoundly impacted the attitudes, behaviors, and value systems of Generation Z, resulting in a moral disparity between conventional religion doctrines and modern youth experiences. As Indonesian adolescents increasingly engage with screen-based environments, worries grow over the erosion of Islamic character and ethical sensibility. This study examines the critical question of how Islamic Religious Education (PAI) might respond to this moral drift and effectively recapture the spiritual and ethical identity of Generation Z students. The study especially investigates the influence of PAI on the development of Islamic character in students at SMP Unismuh Makassar, while also identifying the principal problems and strategic solutions for its implementation. This qualitative study employs interviews, observations, and documentation as data collection methods. The research participants are PAI educators and students from SMP Unismuh Makassar. The data were evaluated using the steps of reduction, display, and conclusion drawing, with triangulation utilized for validation. The results indicate that PAI plays a crucial role in the internalization of Islamic values, including discipline, honesty, respect, and religious commitment, among pupils. Nonetheless, challenges such as antiquated teaching methods, restricted instructional time, and insufficient incorporation of digital resources impede its effectiveness. The study introduces a hybrid paradigm that integrates classical Islamic education with digital engagement tactics, enhancing its relevance for digitally native learners. In summary, enhancing Islamic Religious Education necessitates pedagogical innovation, the use of educational technology, and improved collaboration among educators, parents, and the school community to facilitate significant character development in the digital age.</p>
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Introduction

The rapid advancement of technology, science, and digital communication has fundamentally reshaped the way societies function and interact, especially among the younger generation. Today's youth, particularly those classified as Generation Z, individuals born after 1997, are growing up in an era marked by hyper-connectivity, instant information access, and the normalization of digital interactions in every aspect of life (Deepa K C & Aiswarya Shelby, 2024). Unlike previous generations, Generation Z is the first to be born into a world fully immersed in digital culture, where smartphones, social media platforms, and online learning are not simply tools but integral components of their daily experiences (Noor Halimatusyakdia et al., 2024). This generation navigates a reality in which the boundaries between the virtual and physical worlds are increasingly blurred.

Technological development has undeniably provided immense benefits. It has enhanced access to knowledge, revolutionized education, facilitated scientific and medical advances, and connected individuals across geographic and cultural boundaries (Petrova & Pervukhina, 2022). Yet, alongside these benefits lies a complex set of challenges, particularly concerning the moral and ethical development of youth. The abundance of digital content, much of which is unregulated, can be overwhelming and difficult to discern. In many instances, the digital space becomes a medium through which misleading information, harmful ideologies, and morally ambiguous content proliferate. This can negatively influence the cognitive and moral development of adolescents who are still in the process of identity formation.

Numerous studies highlight that Generation Z is increasingly exposed to value systems that may conflict with traditional, local, or religious norms. Hedonism, hyper-individualism, materialism, secularism, and even ideological radicalism have become more accessible and appealing to some youth due to their heavy engagement with social media and internet platforms (Palupi, 2020; Rais et al., 2018; Tirtoni, 2022). These tendencies threaten the cultural and spiritual underpinnings that have traditionally supported moral behavior in Indonesian culture. Consequently, the significance of education, especially religious education grounded in the tenets of religious moderation, becomes increasingly vital in mediating and counteracting these pressures. Religious moderation fosters the perpetuation of tolerance, equilibrium, and peace within Indonesia's multifaceted society (Yusuf & Mukhlis, 2024).

Islamic Religious Education, known as *Pendidikan Agama Islam (PAI)*, plays a key part in the character formation of Muslim students in Indonesia (Somad, 2021). Its responsibility extends beyond the mere transmission of theological or doctrinal knowledge; it is charged with cultivating spiritually grounded, morally upright, and socially responsible individuals. When implemented properly, PAI aims to cultivate Islamic characteristics, including honesty, integrity, empathy, accountability, humility, and respect (Noor Halimatusyakdia et al., 2024). These attributes are crucial for Generation Z to traverse the moral intricacies of contemporary life while adhering to Islamic ethical principles.

Moreover, PAI plays a crucial role in fostering spiritual intelligence, which is characterized as the capacity to implement spiritual ideals in decision-making and conduct (Razali, 2023; Suraji & Sastrodiharjo, 2021). In a time when mental health

challenges, existential dread, and social isolation are increasingly prevalent among adolescents, spiritual intelligence emerges as a significant asset for resilience, emotional equilibrium, and the construction of meaning (Arif, 2019; Harahap et al., 2023). PAI serves as a fundamental educational foundation for equipping pupils with moral guidance and psychological resilience.

Nonetheless, despite the commendable aims of PAI, various implementation obstacles persist. A significant concern is the persistent dependence on conventional, lecture-centric pedagogical approaches that may not engage contemporary digital-native learners. Numerous students perceive these methods as tedious and uninspiring, particularly in contrast to the engaging and graphically dynamic content available online (Rahmawati et al., 2023). A significant impediment is the inadequate incorporation of technology in religious education. Despite students' engagement with digital platforms, numerous PAI classrooms remain devoid of digital media, online tools, or interactive applications that could augment learning and relevance (Amrullah et al., 2024).

Furthermore, students frequently encounter disjointed or conflicting interpretations of religious doctrines, resulting in confusion or apathy (Guessoum, 2018). This is especially troubling in a digital environment when misinformation regarding religion is prevalent and readily available with minimal effort. The discrepancies between educational delivery and the real-world setting of students must be rectified for PAI to retain its efficacy and significance.

The current literature confirms the strategic importance of PAI in influencing the character of Muslim students (Mutholingah & Qomarudin, 2022). Nonetheless, a significant deficiency exists in research examining the perception and internalization of PAI by Generation Z in the digital era. Although research has investigated general character education and spiritual development, there is a paucity of studies that specifically address the intersection of Islamic Religious Education and the challenges presented by the hyper-digitalized, morally pluralistic context in which Generation Z exists (Nafsaka et al., 2023).

Moreover, numerous prior studies assume a normative viewpoint, highlighting the objectives PAI ought to fulfill, while insufficiently examining the actual experiences of students and teachers or the contextual obstacles to implementation in authentic classroom environments (Rafliyanto & Mukhlis, 2023b; Wahid et al., 2024). There is a deficiency of empirical information about the potential of innovative instructional methods or digital technology to augment the efficacy of PAI. These research deficiencies must be rectified to enhance both policy and practice in religious education in Indonesia and abroad (Pramodana et al., 2024).

This study seeks to investigate the role of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) in fostering Islamic character development among Generation Z students at SMP Unismuh Makassar. It aims to elucidate the function of PAI in facilitating students' internalization and application of Islamic ideals in their daily lives within the intricacies of the digital era (Alam, 2016; Noviani et al., 2022). The study investigates the obstacles educators encounter in the efficient implementation of PAI and proposes prospective options for enhancement, such as pedagogical innovation and technological integration (Alhashmi, 2021; Fandir, 2024).

This research aims to enhance understanding of PAI's operational dynamics through a qualitative case study involving interviews, observations, and document

analysis, with the goal of fortifying its effectiveness for a generation facing unparalleled cultural and technological challenges.

Further, this study enhances the discourse on religious education by providing context-specific insights into the character development of Generation Z in Indonesia, a demographic poised to influence the nation's destiny. The results are anticipated to guide educational stakeholders, politicians, and religious educators in reconfiguring Islamic education to be both spiritually rooted and pedagogically flexible. This research ultimately promotes a more adaptive, comprehensive, and transformative model of PAI to help Generation Z become morally upright, critically aware, and socially constructive individuals.

Research Method

This study utilizes a qualitative research methodology using a case study framework, concentrating on SMP Unismuh Makassar as the research location (Miles et al., 2014; Sugiyono, 2008). The school was chosen for its formal incorporation of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) into the curriculum and its significance in addressing character development among Generation Z pupils. The main participants in this study are PAI teachers and Generation Z students engaged in the PAI learning process at the school. The participants were selected purposefully due to their direct involvement in teaching and learning activities that exemplify the development of Islamic character (Mardiana & Anggraini, 2019).

The study employed a synthesis of in-depth interviews, participant observation, and document analysis to get comprehensive and contextual data. Comprehensive interviews were performed with PAI educators and chosen students to examine their viewpoints, experiences, and insights regarding the role of Islamic Religious Education in fostering Islamic principles, including discipline, honesty, responsibility, and spiritual awareness (Cresswell, 2015). The interviews yielded significant insights into the pedagogical tactics employed by educators and the students' reactions to the religious education they receive.

Observational techniques were utilized to meticulously analyze the classroom dynamics during PAI classes (Roberson et al., 2021). This involved examining the pedagogical techniques employed by instructors, student engagement, and the transmission and assimilation of character qualities during classroom interactions. The observations provided a clear insight into the application of theory within the educational setting.

Alongside interviews and observations, documentation methods were utilized to examine instructional materials, lesson plans, teaching syllabi, school regulations, and student portfolios (Fitriyani et al., 2023). These materials supplied crucial contextual information and acted as corroborative sources to enhance the credibility of conclusions obtained from interviews and observations.

The data analysis adhered to the interactive paradigm established by Miles and Huberman, comprising three fundamental stages: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drafting. During data reduction, raw data were methodically sifted to discern themes pertaining to teaching methodologies, character development, and implementation obstacles (Zulkarnain et al., 2024). During the data presentation phase, findings were structured into coherent narratives, enhanced by tables and figures as needed, to emphasize major patterns and correlations. Ultimately,

conclusions were derived from the analyzed data, and their validity was substantiated by verification processes (Elihami & Melbourne, 2022).

To assess the reliability of the data, triangulation was performed by cross-referencing information from several data sources and methodologies. Additionally, member checking was utilized by providing participants with transcripts and preliminary findings for validation, ensuring that the interpretations appropriately represented their experiences. This rigorous scientific methodology seeks to provide a thorough understanding of the influence of Islamic Religious Education on the moral and spiritual identity of Generation Z students at SMP Unismuh Makassar.

Result and Discussion

The Beneficial Influence of Islamic Education on the Moral Identity Formation of Gen-Z

The outcomes of this research highlight the crucial importance of Islamic Religious Education at SMP Unismuh Makassar in forming the moral identity and Islamic character of Generation Z pupils (Munief Fajri et al., 2024). As adolescents increasingly encounter value fragmentation in the digital era, PAI serves as a strategic teaching tool to foster ethical awareness and spiritual foundation. The research data, obtained through comprehensive interviews with educators and learners, alongside classroom observations, indicate that PAI transcends mere religious information transmission, significantly influencing the affective and behavioral aspects of student development (Uswatun Khasanah, 2024).

Educators collectively underscored that Islamic education functions as a moral compass for pupils, especially in fostering fundamental qualities such as honesty or *ṣidq*, accountability or *amānah*, patience or *ṣabr*, humility or *tawāḍu'*, and respect for others *iḥtirām* (Muzawir Munawarsyah, 2023; Uswatun Khasanah, 2024). These ideals are intentionally integrated into the PAI curriculum through instructional content concerning *akhlāq* or ethics, *sīrah nabawīyyah* or Prophetic history, Islamic law, and acts of devotion or *'ibādah*. Beyond the theoretical foundation, educators endeavor to exemplify these ideals via their conduct, rendering their pedagogical function both instructional and motivating (A'yun et al., 2022).

Student comments corroborate the teachers' perspectives. The majority of the kids indicated that PAI had substantially impacted their comprehension of suitable conduct in many social settings, including both school and home, as well as in wider community contacts (Sadri et al., 2024). A number of kids reported increased awareness of daily prayers, the use of courteous language with peers and elders, and involvement in school-affiliated religious activities. These behavioral changes indicate that PAI significantly influences the moral awareness of students, directing them to conform their actions to Islamic ethical standards (Ika Kurnia Sofiani et al., 2024; Khanafi et al., 2025).

Observational data corroborate these findings. Educators saw that, over time, pupils who initially displayed apathy or misbehavior began to demonstrate improved discipline, heightened attention during lessons, and increased participation in religious extracurricular activities (Mutu et al., 2005). Daily Qur'an recitation or *tahfidz*, Friday charitable initiatives, and student-led Islamic study groups or *halaqah* have established environments for the practical assimilation of

religious principles. These activities not only reinforce the curriculum but also foster a school environment favorable to value development (Muttaqin et al., 2024).

A significant discovery from the study is the incorporation of PAI in both academic and extracurricular areas, thus promoting a comprehensive approach to character education. This integrative methodology guarantees that religious principles are not limited to textbooks but are actively experienced, embodied, and reinforced through practical applications. Educators have emphasized the importance of collaboration with parents, school counselors, and religious leaders to maintain consistency between school and home settings. This alignment is particularly crucial for Generation Z, who frequently contend with conflicting influences from peers, media, and online subcultures (Andriyani, 2018; Kolb, 2023).

Furthermore, PAI's influence on moral identity development is amplified by the sense of belonging it fosters among students. A sense of belonging to an Islamic educational community and adherence to consistent ethical principles seem to foster a more stable moral identity (Tranggono et al., 2023). Unlike the fractured identities sometimes observed in digital-native adolescents, students participating in active PAI programs had a heightened sense of purpose and religious self-awareness.

Finally, the statistics indicate that PAI at SMP Unismuh Makassar substantially enhances the moral and spiritual growth of Generation Z students. Its strength resides in the dynamic amalgamation of values-driven instruction, experiential learning, and collaborative educational frameworks. This multi-faceted approach demonstrates that Islamic education is essential in fostering morally upright, socially accountable, and spiritually conscious persons in the modern age.

Pedagogical Approaches and Their Influence on Character Development

The efficacy of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) in cultivating the character of Generation Z students at SMP Unismuh Makassar is profoundly affected by the pedagogical approaches employed by instructors (Yeaman et al., 2022). This study's findings emphasize that the choice and implementation of instructional tactics are essential in promoting students' moral awareness, involvement, and internalization of Islamic principles. The disparity between conventional and contemporary teaching methods is apparent through student evaluations and classroom observations (Arroisi et al., 2023).

Educators utilizing interactive and technology-enhanced approaches, such as instructional Islamic videos, group discussions, moral problem debates, and gamified learning, observed significantly elevated levels of student engagement and excitement (Doolittle et al., 2023; Dyah et al., 2024). These strategies correspond with the learning preferences of Generation Z, digital natives familiar with dynamic, graphic, and interactive content. A teacher noted that integrating concise, relevant video snippets on Islamic ethics enhanced students' emotional connection to the subject, facilitating their engagement with abstract moral notions in a concrete and approachable way.

Conversely, didactic and lecture-intensive approaches frequently encountered apathy. Many students indicated that these tactics rendered the subject matter irrelevant to their actual experiences. These findings align with extensive educational research that attacks the passive characteristics of rote learning,

particularly in the context of character education, which necessitates reflection, conversation, and practical application (Pandiangan, 2023).

Value-oriented methodologies proved especially efficacious in promoting critical thinking among students about ethical dilemmas. Students were encouraged to contemplate current ethical challenges, including peer pressure, online conduct, and academic integrity, through organized group discussions (Faizah et al., 2021). These debates cultivated empathy and ethical reasoning, allowing students to consider situations from various viewpoints and apply Islamic concepts in context. Project-based learning facilitated student collaboration on projects with explicit ethical objectives, such as organizing charity drives or environmental awareness campaigns, so augmenting their sense of social responsibility and teamwork (Howard, 2018).

Experiential learning enhances character development by connecting theory with practice. Engagements include community visits, social service, and simulations of zakat distribution or dispute mediation, which allowed students to actualize Islamic teachings in practical contexts. These interactions fostered characteristics such as patience, accountability, and compassion, while also imparting essential life skills, including communication, leadership, and civic responsibility (Sveshnikova et al., 2022).

The findings indicate that pedagogical innovation, especially those incorporating technology, values education, and experiential learning, is crucial for effectively fostering the Islamic character of Generation Z. These methodologies address the cognitive and emotional requirements of modern pupils, so converting religious education into a transforming and pertinent learning experience.

Structural and Contextual Challenges in the Implementation of Islamic Education

The execution of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) at SMP Unismuh Makassar, although usually significant, is hindered by many structural and contextual problems that influence its overall efficacy (Kahfi, 2022). The impediments revealed through interviews, classroom observations, and document analysis illustrate greater systemic and pedagogical challenges prevalent in numerous Islamic educational institutions in Indonesia.

A significant difficulty is the constraint of teaching time. PAI is generally allocated a very little segment of the weekly schedule in relation to fundamental disciplines like mathematics or science (Abdullah, 2023). Consequently, educators frequently have difficulties in addressing the comprehensive breadth of the curriculum, especially in domains necessitating contemplation, dialogue, and ethical application. This temporal limitation hinders prospects for comprehensive examination of ethical dilemmas, contextualized case analyses, or experiential learning endeavors. One teacher noted, "The time is too short. We frequently expedite significant subjects, and there is never sufficient opportunity for pupils to contemplate or engage in discussions regarding practical applications (Khoiri & Tobroni, 2024). As a result, the enhancement of character values is often cosmetic rather than transformative.

A notable concern is the restricted utilization of educational technologies. Despite the initiation of digital tool integration by certain educators, including video

presentations and mobile applications, their deployment remains sporadic and insufficiently advanced. Numerous educators identified insufficient access to appropriate technology infrastructure, such as projectors, internet connectivity, or interactive learning platforms, as an impediment to implementation. Moreover, not all educators have undergone adequate training in digital pedagogy, so constraining their capacity to develop engaging, technology-enhanced learning environments. In an era where Generation Z students are profoundly engaged in digital culture, this disparity engenders a disjunction between their quotidian media experiences and the structure of religious instruction. Students familiar with rapid, graphic, and interactive content may perceive traditional delivery techniques as unengaging and less pertinent (Nurlaila, 2018).

An further contextual problem is the variety of pupils' religious backgrounds and proficiencies. Students enter the classroom with disparate degrees of Islamic knowledge, shaped by variations in familial environment, previous religious instruction, and individual drive. Certain students have committed segments of the Qur'an to memory and engage actively in mosque activities, whereas others had minimal exposure to formal Islamic education. This variability necessitates tailored instructional strategies and culturally sensitive pedagogy; nevertheless, educators frequently perceive limitations imposed by curriculum mandates and insufficient time to address these differences individually. In the absence of inclusive strategies, students may become disengaged if they feel either overwhelmed or insufficiently challenged.

Confronting these difficulties necessitates a comprehensive approach. Initially, it is crucial to optimize the utilization of available instructional time, which may entail simplifying content, emphasizing fundamental values, and implementing flipped-classroom or blended learning models that extend education outside the classroom (Jima'ain, 2023). Secondly, extensive professional development programs are necessary to improve instructors' proficiency in the effective use of digital resources. Workshops, collaborative learning, and institutional assistance can enable PAI educators to create captivating, student-focused lessons that integrate conventional subject with contemporary methods. Ultimately, advocating for inclusive and varied pedagogical practices is essential. Educators must be prepared to navigate heterogeneous classrooms, modify teaching strategies, and guarantee that all students—irrespective of their backgrounds—feel acknowledged, encouraged, and suitably challenged.

The obstacles encountered in the adoption of PAI at SMP Unismuh Makassar are not solely technological or logistical, but are intricately linked to the greater educational ecosystem (Mansyur, 2022). Addressing these challenges necessitates institutional dedication, pedagogical innovation, and ongoing collaboration among stakeholders to guarantee that Islamic education stays pertinent, inclusive, and transformative for Generation Z learners.

Impact of Islamic Religious Education on Student Behavior

The influence of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) at SMP Unismuh Makassar beyond mere cognitive knowledge acquisition and profoundly affects students' behavior and daily practices (Hasibuan et al., 2024). Evidence from classroom observations, student interviews, and teacher testimonials suggests that

PAI has facilitated significant beneficial behavioral changes in essential moral areas, including discipline, honesty, and social empathy (Suhara et al., 2024). These alterations demonstrate PAI's efficacy in both conveying religious concepts and fostering ethical behaviors that are evident in students' interactions and decision-making processes.

Discipline surfaced as a significant behavioral result, especially in relation to religious activities that prioritize timeliness and routine. Students indicated an increased consistency in performing daily prayers or *ṣalāh*, fasting during Ramadan, and participating in religious activities (Andrei, 2023). Educators observed that these techniques resulted in enhanced time-management abilities, increased timeliness in class attendance, and heightened attentiveness to academic obligations. A teacher noted, "*Students who consistently engage in religious rituals are generally more structured and responsible in their academic and extracurricular endeavors.*"

Integrity was another essential principle emphasized through both direct instruction and the classroom environment (Maulida & Suprpto, 2023). Students were urged to uphold the principle of candor in academic integrity, including abstaining from cheating during examinations and maintaining honesty in peer relationships. Educators fostered an atmosphere in which students felt secure to own errors and articulate their thoughts without the apprehension of severe criticism. These methods developed a classroom environment founded on trust and honesty, which permeated all facets of student life .

The cultivation of social empathy was arguably the most evident behavioral effect noted. Initiatives like charity fundraisers for disadvantaged communities, disaster relief efforts, and community clean-ups allowed students to actively participate in acts of compassion and service. These activities cultivated a sense of communal responsibility and togetherness, emphasizing the Islamic principle of *ukhuwah* (brotherhood). Students reported a heightened sense of connectedness to others in need and showed increased willingness to dedicate their time and resources to community welfare (Lesmana et al., 2023).

In a nutshell, PAI at SMP Unismuh Makassar has demonstrated a significant impact on cultivating ethical and socially responsible behavior among students. Through the integration of Islamic ideals into daily practices, PAI has effectively cultivated a generation of learners who are both spiritually cognizant and morally active within their social contexts.

Strategic Innovations for Revitalizing Islamic Religious Education in the Digital Era

To maintain the relevance and efficacy of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) in cultivating the moral and spiritual identity of Generation Z, strategic improvements in pedagogy and policy are necessary (Banda, 2025). The changing educational environment, influenced by digital transformation and dynamic learner profiles, necessitates a proactive response from educators, institutions, and families. This study delineates three fundamental pillars for rejuvenating PAI: creative pedagogical approaches, increased parental engagement, and professional development for educators, thereby establishing a synergistic framework to enhance the impact of religious education in the digital era (Joshi, 2022).

Innovative pedagogical approaches are essential for accommodating the learning preferences and anticipations of Generation Z, who are inherently attracted to interactive, visual, and participatory materials. Educators must transcend conventional lecture-based instruction and integrate multimedia resources, including educational video platforms, interactive learning applications, and simulation-based ethical decision-making situations (Teoh & Neo, 2006). These tools enhance student engagement and facilitate experiential learning, wherein principles like integrity, empathy, and accountability are contextualized inside real-life scenarios. Virtual reality (VR) and digital storytelling can replicate historical Islamic events or ethical challenges, allowing pupils to internalize values through immersive encounters .

Parental involvement is equally crucial, functioning as a fundamental support structure for the reinforcement of Islamic principles beyond the classroom (Rahmat, 2018). When parents actively participate in their children's moral development, by exemplifying virtuous behavior, discussing ethical ideas at home, or engaging in school activities, the internalization of values becomes more comprehensive and coherent (Fadhli, 2018). Joint parent-student religion workshops, family service projects, and home-based character challenges can connect classroom learning with domestic practice, cultivating a consistent moral atmosphere.

A vital domain for enhancement is Teacher Training and Capacity Building. Educators must possess both technological competencies and pedagogical techniques essential for delivering impactful PAI in the digital era (Rafliyanto & Mukhlis, 2023a). Training programs must emphasize not just the successful use of technology but also the design of learner-centered, value-rich courses that amalgamate Islamic teachings with modern concerns. Ongoing professional development, collaborative engagement among peers, and access to digital educational materials will bolster teacher confidence and inventiveness, hence enhancing student outcomes.

Overall, rejuvenating PAI in the digital age necessitates a cohesive strategy that harmonizes technology advancement with human-centered pedagogy and community engagement. These innovations serve as both answers to the challenges of contemporary schooling and fundamental elements in cultivating a resilient and ethically anchored Generation Z. When deliberately reinvented, Islamic Religious Education possesses significant potential to cultivate ethically responsible persons adept at negotiating the difficulties of the modern world.

Conclusion

This study affirms that Islamic Religious Education (PAI) at SMP Unismuh Makassar is crucial in forming the character of Generation Z by instilling Islamic ideals. The findings indicate that PAI, implemented through various religious activities and values-oriented teaching methods, significantly fosters essential moral attributes such as discipline, honesty, and social responsibility. These principles are integrated not just within the formal curriculum but also through extracurricular activities and the interpersonal exemplification by educators. By doing so, PAI achieves its primary objective: to cultivate students who are both intellectually proficient and ethically principled, as well as spiritually aware.

Nonetheless, despite its beneficial effects, the study also highlights some significant difficulties that impede the effective application of PAI. A principal impediment is the restricted time designated for religious education in the school timetable. This limitation frequently constrains the profundity of learning and curtails opportunities for critical discourse, contemplation, and practical implementation. Consequently, students may find it challenging to thoroughly understand and assimilate the comprehensive ethical and spiritual aspects of Islamic teachings.

A significant concern is the inadequate incorporation of technology into the educational process. In the contemporary digital world, where Generation Z students are adept with digital technologies, the lack of interactive and media-rich learning settings may lead to diminished engagement and restricted relevance. This technological disparity diminishes the capacity of PAI to connect with students in a manner consistent with their actual experiences. The study underscores the significance of educational innovation in addressing these difficulties. The integration of digital media, interactive learning apps, and experiential learning methodologies—such as simulations, case studies, and practical projects—can augment the relevance and accessibility of Islamic teachings. These methodologies provide students significant possibilities to relate abstract religious notions to quotidian moral choices.

Furthermore, enhancing cooperation between educational institutions and families is essential. Parental engagement in promoting Islamic beliefs at home enhances the education provided at school, fostering a cohesive moral atmosphere. Collaborative programs, workshops, and family-oriented religious activities can enhance coherence and support in the character development of students.

In summary, by adopting innovation and enhancing school-family collaborations, Islamic Religious Education can achieve greater effectiveness, engagement, and transformation. When these techniques are executed judiciously, PAI will be poised to cultivate a cohort of students who embody Islamic ideals while being equipped to confront contemporary issues with integrity, compassion, and confidence.

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