

ISLAMIC TEACHING FOR GENERATION Z: INCLUSIVE AND CREATIVE APPROACHES IN THE BOOK "ISLAM FOR GEN-Z"

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze the inclusive and creative approach in Islamic education for Generation Z based on the book Islam for Gen-Z by Hatim Gazali. The method used is qualitative research with a content analysis approach and literature review. This study found that Generation Z, who live in the digital and diversity era, understand religious teachings better through an open and interactive approach. Inclusive education allows students to be actively involved, respect differences in views, and appreciate Islamic values such as justice, tolerance, and equality. In addition, the use of digital technology, such as social media, supports student engagement and makes learning more relevant. The results of the study indicate that the inclusive approach is effective in deepening religious understanding in Generation Z, despite challenges, such as conservative resistance and the need to improve educator skills.

Keywords: Generation Z, Islamic Education, Inclusive Approach, Digital Technology

Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan for menganalisis pendekatan inklusif dan kreatif dalam pendidikan Islam bagi Generasi Z berdasarkan buku Islam for Gen-Z karya Hatim Gazali. Metode yang digunakan adalah penelitian kualitatif dengan pendekatan analisis konten dan kajian pustaka. Penelitian ini menemukan bahwa Generasi Z, yang hidup di era digital dan keberagaman, lebih memahami ajaran agama melalui pendekatan yang terbuka dan interaktif. Pendidikan inklusif memungkinkan siswa for terlibat aktif, menghargai perbedaan pandangan, dan mengapresiasi nilai-nilai Islam seperti keadilan, toleransi, dan kesetaraan. Selain itu, penggunaan teknologi digital, seperti media sosial, mendukung keterlibatan siswa dan menjadikan pembelajaran lebih relevan. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa pendekatan inklusif efektif dalam memperdalam pemahaman agama pada Generasi Z, meskipun terdapat tantangan, seperti resistensi konservatif dan kebutuhan peningkatan keterampilan pendidik.

Kata Kunci: Generasi Z, Pendidikan Islam, Pendekatan Inklusif, Teknologi Digital

INTRODUCTION

With the progression of time, generational shifts bring new challenges to Islamic education. Generation Z, characterized by unique traits such as dependence on digital technology, a preference for freedom of expression, and a tendency to be critical of traditional values, requires an educational approach distinct from previous generations. They are not merely passive recipients of religious teachings but active participants seeking meaning in religious life amidst

a pluralistic and dynamic modern society. In this context, Islamic education must address not only theological dimensions but also sociological, psychological, and technological aspects relevant to the daily lives of this generation. (M. Yasir Arafat , 2021, 15)

Generation Z, encompassing individuals born between the mid-1990s and early 2010s, represents a generation that has grown amidst rapid technological advancements and significant social changes. Surrounded by digital devices and the internet, their interaction patterns, as well as their methods of learning and understanding the world around them, are profoundly shaped by these influences. In the context of education, particularly Islamic education, the primary challenge lies in delivering Islamic values in ways that are both relevant and acceptable to this highly digitally connected generation. (Siti Nurul Aini, 2021, 28)

In an increasingly pluralistic and complex world, Islamic education must adapt to the needs and unique characteristics of Generation Z. Numerous studies indicate that this generation tends to value active engagement and hands-on experiences more than passive learning methods. (Rizky Aditya , 2022, 45). Therefore, conventional approaches that often emphasize memorization and repetition may no longer be effective in conveying Islamic teachings to them. This is where *Islam for Gen-Z*, authored by Hatim Gazali, makes a significant contribution. (Hatim Gazali, 2022, 10)

The book *Islam for Gen-Z* by Hatim Gazali emerges as a response to this challenge. Gazali recognizes that conventional Islamic educational methods often rely on textual and normative approaches, which may be difficult for Generation Z to comprehend or accept. Consequently, he seeks to present a perspective that is more contextual, inclusive, and adaptable to the changing times. The inclusive approach offered by Gazali enables Generation Z to perceive Islam as a teaching open to dialogue, adaptable to modern contexts, and supportive of their creativity. This involves, for instance, emphasizing that Islamic teachings are capable of addressing global issues such as environmental sustainability, social justice, and digital ethics, which are highly relevant to the younger generation. (Hatim Gazali, 2022, 45)

Creativity is also a key element in the approach proposed by Gazali. He advocates for the use of technology and digital media in Islamic teaching, making the learning process more interactive and engaging for Generation Z. Methods such as the use of videos, mobile applications, and social media platforms serve as effective tools to bring Islamic teachings closer to this generation. (Hatim Gazali , 2022, 30). This approach also reflects how Islamic values can be applied in the context of their daily lives, making them more relevant and easier to understand. (Aminah Shahrul, 2023, 12)

Gazali also recognizes that contemporary issues such as climate change, social justice, and ethical challenges in the digital world are crucial topics to address within the context of Islamic education. (Hatim Gazali , 2022, 50). By integrating these issues into teaching, Gazali hopes that Generation Z will

understand the strong relevance of Islamic teachings in addressing today's global challenges. This approach not only aids them in comprehending their faith but also encourages them to become positive agents of change in society. (Hatim Gazali, 2022, 65)

The book *Islam for Gen-Z* also strives to create a safe and inclusive learning environment where all opinions and questions are valued. By fostering an open space for discussion, Gazali aims to encourage Generation Z to actively ask questions, engage in dialogue, and formulate their own understanding of Islam. This approach is crucial, given that Generation Z tends to seek meaning and a deeper understanding of their beliefs rather than simply accepting information uncritically. (Nurul Hidayah. 2021, 15)

In order to further explore the methods and approaches used by Gazali in this book, this journal will examine the inclusive and creative components in *Islam for Gen-Z*, as well as how these approaches can serve as an alternative model in Islamic education that meets the needs of Generation Z in Indonesia.

METHOD

Research Type

This study adopts a qualitative approach with a library research methodology. The aim of this approach is to explore and analyze in-depth the content of *Islam for Gen-Z* by Hatim Gazali, as well as its relevance to Islamic education for Generation Z. (John W. Creswell, 2014, 178). The subject of this research is the book *Islam for Gen-Z* by Hatim Gazali. This study will also incorporate additional relevant literature on Islamic education and the characteristics of Generation Z, serving as secondary data sources.

Procedure

- a. Step 1: Define the research focus and objectives of the analysis.
- b. Step 2: Collect the book *Islam for Gen-Z* and other relevant supplementary sources.
- c. Step 3: Read and document key points from the book.
- d. Step 4: Conduct an analysis of the supplementary literature.
- e. Step 5: Identifying Key Themes from the Analysis Results

Data, Instruments, and Data Collection Techniques

The data instruments used in this research include the primary book, *Islam for Gen-Z* by Hatim Gazali; supplementary literature such as books or articles discussing Islamic education and Generation Z; and key notes comprising observations and findings made during the analysis.

- a. The data collection techniques employed in this research include
- b. Literature Review: Reading the primary book and supplementary literature together relevant information.
- c. Observation Notes: Documenting key points and emerging themes from the reading of the book and related literature.

Data Analysis Techniques

Data analysis is conducted through the following methods: Content Analysis: Identifying themes and categories from the primary book and supplementary literature to understand the proposed inclusive and creative approaches. Thematic Synthesis: Integrating information from various sources to develop a comprehensive understanding of Islamic education for Generation Z.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Hatim Gazali is a prominent figure who has made significant contributions to aligning Islamic education with the needs of Generation Z. In his book "Islam for Gen-Z", Gazali emphasizes the importance of an inclusive and creative approach that highlights the relevance of Islamic teachings in modern life. He argues that Generation Z, which has grown up in the digital era with unrestricted access to information, requires an educational method that is not only text-based but also context-oriented. The inclusive approach proposed by Gazali includes respect for diversity and openness to dialogue, allowing students to integrate Islamic values with contemporary issues such as social justice, environmental sustainability, and digital ethics.

Furthermore, Gazali advocates for the use of digital technology as a tool to creatively deliver Islamic teachings. He highlights how social media, interactive videos, and learning applications can enhance student engagement in the learning process. According to him, integrating technology not only makes learning more engaging but also reaches a wider audience, including those living in remote areas. Gazali believes that this approach will help Generation Z understand Islam as a dynamic and relevant faith that addresses the challenges of the times, while also encouraging them to become positive agents of change in society.

Based on the analysis of the book *Islam for Gen-Z* by Hatim Gazali, several key aspects were identified as central to teaching Islam to Generation Z. These findings include:

a. Characteristic of Generation Z

Generation Z is a cohort that has grown up in the digital age, where technology and social media are integral parts of their lives. They tend to think critically and have greater access to information compared to previous generations. According to the Pew Research Center, 95% of teenagers in the U.S. have access to smartphones, and 45% report being almost constantly online. In addition, the emergence of advances in modern science and technology in addition to offering various conveniences and comforts in life, also opens up opportunities to commit various more sophisticated crimes, if these science and technology are misused. Likewise, the means that make people forget God, and the tendency of immorality is wide open everywhere. All of this adds to the burden of moral duties. (Jaka Wandira, 2024, 63)

b. Inclusive Approach in Islam

Gazali emphasizes the importance of creating an inclusive learning environment. He proposes that Islamic education should embrace diversity and respect differences. In this book, he highlights that teaching the universal values of Islam, such as tolerance and appreciation for diversity, is crucial in building a harmonious community. (Hatim Gazali, 2022, 23)
Research indicates that an inclusive educational environment can enhance student engagement and improve their learning outcomes.

c. Creative Approach to Learning

Gazali proposes the use of technology and social media as tools for conveying Islamic teachings. He emphasizes the importance of presenting material in an engaging and interactive format. A survey conducted by *Education Week* found that 74% of teachers reported using technology to enhance classroom learning, with many stating that students are more enthusiastic when lessons involve technological elements. (Siti Aisyah, 2023, 67-65)

d. Student Participation in Discussion

Gazali emphasizes the importance of student engagement in the learning process. By encouraging students to participate in discussions and engage actively, they can develop critical thinking skills and a deeper understanding of Islamic teachings.

Characteristics of Generation Z and Challenges in Islamic Education

Generation Z, born between 1995 and 2012, possesses characteristics that differ from previous generations. Often referred to as digital natives, this generation grew up alongside the development of digital technology. This characteristic has a significant impact on their mindset, learning styles, and how they understand religion, including in the context of Islamic education. As a generation highly skilled in using technology, Generation Z relies on devices such as smartphones and computers to access information quickly. However, this use of technology presents both positive outcomes and challenges in delivering Islamic education.

One of the main characteristics of Generation Z is their ability to use digital technology to solve problems and seek information. This creates a need to design Islamic educational materials that are engaging and relevant to digital media. Materials such as videos, infographics, or interactive educational apps are more effective in conveying Islamic values compared to traditional lecture-based methods. (Munir, 2019).

In addition, Generation Z tends to be oriented towards practical values, meaning they assess information based on its relevance and usefulness in daily life. In this context, Islamic education needs to be contextualized to address issues they face, such as social media ethics, digital identity, and environmental sustainability. (Gazali, 2022). Generation Z has grown up in an environment

heavily influenced by technology, and they have a distinct learning style compared to previous generations. According to research by McKinsey, approximately 78% of Generation Z students prefer learning through experience and exploration rather than merely listening to lectures.

This indicates that static and traditional teaching methods, such as lengthy lectures, are no longer effective. Therefore, educators need to design more interactive and experience-based learning methods to engage students' interest. A study by the Pew Research Center notes that more than 90% of Generation Z has access to digital devices, with over 70% actively using various social media platforms daily. This highlights the need for educational approaches to align with their way of thinking, as they are accustomed to instant access to information.

Generation Z is also known to be more skeptical of the information they receive. They tend to conduct their own research before accepting information as fact. This means that educators need to provide clear and reliable information, while also involving students in the process of verifying information. In the context of Islamic education, it is crucial to strengthen students' understanding of religious teachings with authentic data and credible sources.

According to Hatim Gazali in the book *Islam for Gen-Z*, an effective approach to teaching Islam to Generation Z must encompass aspects of technology, content relevance, and inclusivity. This generation tends to be more critical, questioning values and concepts that are considered outdated, and demands information that is relevant to their daily lives. In this regard, the Islamic teaching strategies developed should not only provide religious information but also explain how Islamic teachings are relevant to modern life. This approach helps students feel more motivated and have a sense of ownership over the material they are learning.

Inclusive Education in Islamic Education

An inclusive approach in Islamic education is crucial for creating a safe learning space where students from diverse backgrounds feel valued. Gazali emphasizes that Islamic education for Generation Z should not be exclusive or overly dogmatic, but should focus more on acceptance and appreciation of differences. (Ali R & Nisa H, 2022, 23-30)

Inclusive education is one of the central themes discussed by Hatim Gazali in his book *Islam for Gen-Z*. In this book, Gazali emphasizes the importance of an educational approach that embraces diversity and creates a fair and equal environment for all individuals. Inclusive education from an Islamic perspective is based on universal values such as justice (*'adl*), compassion (*rahmah*), and respect for human dignity (*karamah insaniyyah*). These values are not only relevant but also form a crucial foundation in addressing the challenges of an increasingly plural and complex modern world. (Gazali, 2022, 2022, 45).

Gazali explains that inclusive Islamic education must be able to accommodate the social, cultural, and worldview diversity around us. Such education not only instills religious values but also provides students with the

opportunity to understand and respect differences. In his book, Gazali mentions that this approach aligns with Islamic teachings, as reflected in the Qur'an, particularly in Surah Al-Hujurat, verse 13, which emphasizes that diversity is God's will for people to know and respect one another. (Gazali, 2022, 46).

The characteristics of Generation Z, who have grown up in a digital world, also highlight the importance of inclusive education. This generation, highly familiar with technology and social media, has an open mindset but often faces challenges in understanding religious values amidst cultural and ideological diversity. Gazali asserts that exclusive Islamic education is no longer relevant for Generation Z. Instead, an inclusive approach that values diversity and emphasizes constructive dialogue will be more effective in helping them understand Islamic teachings in a profound and applicable way. (Gazali, 2022, 50).

In the book, Gazali also offers several practical steps for implementing inclusive education. First, he emphasizes the importance of creating space for discussion in the classroom so that students can openly and purposefully discuss issues of diversity. According to Gazali, dialogue is one of the best ways to strengthen students' understanding of the universal values of Islam. Second, the integration of a curriculum that includes dimensions of diversity, social justice, and human rights should be prioritized in Islamic education. Such a curriculum not only provides theological insights but also helps students develop an inclusive and critical attitude towards contemporary issues. (Gazali, 2022, 55).

Gazali also notes the importance of digital technology in supporting inclusive education. Technology enables broader access to learning materials, including for students in remote areas. By utilizing digital platforms such as educational videos, interactive apps, or social media, Islamic values can be conveyed in an engaging and easily understandable way for Generation Z. (Gazali, 2022, 60).

However, Gazali also acknowledges that the implementation of inclusive education is not without challenges. One of the main obstacles is resistance from groups who perceive inclusivity as a threat to the purity of Islamic teachings. To address this challenge, Gazali suggests a dialogical approach, fostering awareness that inclusivity is not in conflict with Islamic teachings but is, in fact, an integral part of its core. According to Gazali, Islam is a universal religion that remains relevant in addressing the needs of society across various historical contexts. (Gazali, 2022, 62).

Thus, inclusive education in Islamic education is not only a response to modern challenges but also a tangible implementation of Islamic teachings that emphasize justice, compassion, and respect for diversity. This approach becomes increasingly important in educating Generation Z, who live amidst a complex global dynamic, to become a generation that not only deeply understands religion but is also able to apply it in a pluralistic daily life.

Creative Approach through the Use of Digital Technology

The characteristics of Generation Z, who are highly familiar with technology, require a more creative and interactive teaching approach. Gazali suggests that the use of digital technology, such as educational apps, social media, and interactive videos, is highly effective in capturing students' interest and making them more engaged in the learning process. (Siti Aisyah, 2018, 3)

Generation Z prefers a varied learning format, such as videos, infographics, and interactive visual content. This aligns with research conducted by Zulkifli (2022), which shows that the use of technology in learning not only enhances student engagement but also facilitates better understanding of the material. The use of digital technology in Islamic education for Generation Z is one of the highly recommended creative aspects. Generation Z is the first generation to be intimately familiar with the internet and digital devices from a young age. Therefore, integrating digital technology in education not only increases appeal but also enhances the effectiveness of content delivery. In his book, Gazali recommends utilizing social media, learning apps, and interactive videos to reach Generation Z in a more engaging way that aligns with their learning style. (Ghazali, 2022, 150)

A study by Zulkifli shows that the use of social media platforms such as YouTube, Instagram, or TikTok in Islamic teaching has increased student engagement and made them more interested in learning about religion. Digital technology allows learning to be more interactive and not limited to formal classrooms; it can also be accessed anytime and anywhere. For example, religious lectures or discussions uploaded on YouTube can be watched flexibly, providing students with the opportunity to understand Islamic teachings at their own pace, according to their preferences. (Zulkifli, 2022, 42-58)

The use of digital technology in Islamic education is not only a response to the demands of the times but also an effective strategy to bring younger generations, particularly Generation Z, closer to Islamic values. Hatim Gazali, in his book *Islam for Gen-Z*, suggests that a creative, technology-based approach can help deliver Islamic teachings in a more engaging, contextual, and applicable manner. Generation Z, who grew up with unlimited access to technology, requires an educational method that can compete with the digital information flow they face daily. (Gazali, 2022, 65).

Digital technology enables Islamic education to be delivered not only in textual form but also through interactive media, such as videos, infographics, learning apps, and social media. Gazali provides the example of how animated videos can be used to explain the stories of the prophets or the procedures of worship, making learning easier to understand and remember. (Gazali, 2022, 67)

This perspective aligns with research conducted by Goh and Sandars (2020), which shows that the use of multimedia in education enhances student engagement and helps them understand complex concepts through engaging visualizations and simulations.

Digital technology not only enhances the effectiveness of learning but also encourages the development of an innovative and globally competitive younger generation. With a creative approach, students not only learn Islamic values theoretically but also apply and spread them in their daily lives. Gazali emphasizes that the creative use of technology will empower Generation Z to become agents of change, bringing Islamic teachings into the context of a plural and complex modern life. (Gazali, 2022, 80).

By combining perspectives from various studies, the creative approach through digital technology in Islamic education not only addresses the needs of Generation Z but also serves as a strategic step in building education that is inclusive, innovative, and relevant to the progression of the times.

The Relevance of Islamic Teachings in Modern Life for Generation Z

In this modern era, the relevance of Islamic teachings is often questioned by the younger generation, who grow up in a pluralistic environment heavily influenced by global cultural forces. Generation Z, deeply affected by digital technology and a fast-paced lifestyle, faces significant challenges in understanding and applying religious values in their daily lives. Hatim Gazali, in his book *Islam for Gen-Z*, argues that Islamic teachings possess strong and practical relevance in addressing the contemporary issues faced by the younger generation. Gazali emphasizes that Islam is not a religion separate from the progress of the times but rather a faith that can provide solutions to modern problems through the universal principles taught in the Qur'an and Hadith. (Gazali, 2022, 82).

In his book, Gazali explains that Islamic teachings offer comprehensive solutions to issues such as social welfare, justice, equal rights, and environmental protection, which are primary concerns for Generation Z. One of the core values in Islam that is relevant to modern life is the concept of *tawhid* (the oneness of God), which teaches the importance of unity and interconnectedness among all living beings in the world. For Generation Z, who are often divided by different identities and values, the teaching of *tawhid* provides a foundation for understanding the importance of harmony and cooperation among humanity, as well as maintaining a good relationship with the environment. (Gazali, 2022, 85).

Gazali also mentions that the younger generation often feels alienated from religious teachings due to the gap between spiritual life and the demands of a worldly, fast-paced existence. However, he asserts that Islam, from his perspective, teaches a balance between the two—the world and the hereafter. Islamic teachings on prayer, zakat, and social worship provide clear guidance for Generation Z to lead a balanced life, oriented towards both worldly and spiritual goals. One example of this relevance is the principle of *khidmah* (service to others), which can serve as a foundation for engaging in social activities that benefit the community and the environment, while also earning spiritual rewards. (Gazali, 2022, 90).

However, in addition to the religious teachings themselves, Gazali emphasizes the importance of the methods used to communicate Islamic

teachings to Generation Z. In a world that is highly connected and flooded with a constant flow of information, conventional methods of delivering religious teachings are often not effective enough. Therefore, the use of digital technology becomes crucial in reaching the younger generation, who tend to be more responsive to information conveyed through visual media, such as videos, podcasts, and learning apps. (Gazali, 2022: 92).

Thus, the relevance of Islamic teachings in the lives of Generation Z lies not only in the content of the teachings themselves but also in how these teachings are packaged and communicated in a context that aligns with the needs and dynamics of the times.

Other sources also support this view. According to Esposito (2020), the relevance of Islamic teachings in the modern era can be found in the efforts to create a more just and peaceful society, which is crucial in addressing global challenges such as poverty, social inequality, and environmental degradation. Esposito notes that Islamic values regarding social justice and responsibility toward the Earth are highly relevant for application in an increasingly complex and diverse modern society. This aligns with Gazali's perspective, which emphasizes that Islam provides a strong ethical foundation for addressing the social and moral challenges emerging in the digital age. (Esposito, 2020,117).

On the other hand, Ahmad (2021) reveals that for Generation Z, who are often exposed to more secular ideologies, Islamic teachings offer an alternative that can fill the spiritual void commonly found in modern life. By understanding Islam through a more contextual and relevant approach, Generation Z can more easily integrate Islamic values into their lives without feeling alienated or caught in a conflict between religion and global culture. Ahmad suggests that technology-based Islamic education, which emphasizes critical discussion, can help this generation discover the relevance of Islam in their daily lives. (Ahmad, 2021,38).

In this context, an inclusive and creative approach to Islamic education is essential to ensure that religious teachings are not understood merely as rigid traditions but as dynamic and applicable life guidelines. In conclusion, the relevance of Islamic teachings for Generation Z can be achieved if religious education is adapted to their needs, utilizing creative and technology-based methods, while still preserving the fundamental principles inherent in the teachings of Islam itself.

CONCLUSION

This research demonstrates that an inclusive approach in Islamic education is crucial to meet the needs of Generation Z, which grows up in the digital era with broad access to information. This generation tends to think critically and question values and concepts that are perceived as outdated. Therefore, interactive teaching methods that value diverse perspectives become highly relevant. Hatim Gazali, in his book *Islam for Gen-Z*, emphasizes that Islamic

education must be capable of embracing diversity and creating a safe learning environment where all students feel valued and heard.

Furthermore, the research findings show that the use of digital technology, such as social media and interactive learning platforms, can enhance student engagement in the learning process. By utilizing technology, Islamic values can be conveyed in an engaging and easily understandable manner for Generation Z. This not only makes the learning experience more relevant but also helps students relate religious teachings to their everyday lives. Therefore, integrating technology into Islamic education becomes a necessity to capture the interest and attention of the younger generation.

However, this research also identifies several challenges in implementing an inclusive approach. One of the main obstacles is resistance from groups who view inclusivity as a threat to the purity of Islamic teachings. To address this challenge, it is crucial to raise awareness that inclusivity is not in conflict with Islamic teachings but is, in fact, a core principle of Islam. A dialogical approach involving all parties will be instrumental in fostering a better understanding of the importance of inclusive education, ensuring that it is perceived as an integral part of the Islamic educational framework.

SUGGESTION

Future researchers are encouraged to conduct in-depth studies on the effectiveness of inclusive teaching methods in Islamic education, taking into account the diverse local contexts. This will help provide more specific and practical recommendations. Educational institutions should develop training programs for educators on the use of technology in teaching, as well as strategies to create an inclusive learning environment. Improving educators' skills will support the management of diverse classrooms.

Parental and community involvement in the educational process is crucial. Building these partnerships can strengthen support for inclusive education and help students understand the relevance of Islamic teachings in their daily lives. Educational institutions should also conduct regular evaluations of the curriculum and teaching methods applied. This evaluation will ensure that Islamic education remains relevant and effective in shaping the character of Generation Z amidst the ever-evolving global dynamics.

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