

## Islamic Education in the Digital Era: Building the Mental Health of Generation Z for A Quality Future

Nina Indriana<sup>1</sup>, Mohammad Ridwan<sup>2</sup>, Sally Badriya Hisniati<sup>3</sup>, Asep Abdullah<sup>4</sup>, Aan Hasanah<sup>5</sup>, Bambang Samsul Arifin<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1,4,5,6</sup> UIN SGD Bandung, Indonesia

<sup>2</sup> STIABI Riyadul 'Ulum Tasikmalaya, Indonesia

<sup>3</sup> Universitas Pelita Bangsa, Indonesia

[ninaindry92@gmail.com](mailto:ninaindry92@gmail.com), [moh.ridwan@stiabiru.ac.id](mailto:moh.ridwan@stiabiru.ac.id), [sally.badriah@pelitabangsa.ac.id](mailto:sally.badriah@pelitabangsa.ac.id),  
[4abdullahsep@gmail.com](mailto:4abdullahsep@gmail.com), [aanhasanah@uinsgd.ac.id](mailto:aanhasanah@uinsgd.ac.id), [bambangamsularifin@ac.id](mailto:bambangamsularifin@ac.id)

### Abstract

*This article aims to explain the crucial role of Islamic education in maintaining the mental health of Generation Z in the digital era. By analyzing current trends, this research highlights the safety and wellbeing challenges facing Generation Z, including the negative impact of technology on mental health. The research method involved a literature review and analysis of current data regarding social media use and its impact. The research results show that the integration of Islamic values in digital education has a significant role in guiding Generation Z to manage technology healthily. The gap between technological advances and mental health can be overcome through learning Islamic values which include digital literacy and social media ethics. The novelty of this article lies in its holistic approach to the well-being of Generation Z, emphasizing healthy digital literacy and ethics in the context of Islamic education.*

### Keywords

Islamic Education; Mental Health; Generation Z



## I. Introduction

Generation Z is also known as iGen or Post-Millennials, which consists of individuals born between the mid-1996s and 2010 (Prakash and Tiwari, 2021) growing and developing in the rapid development of digital and information technology (Hastini, Fahmi and Lukito, 2020). Facts show that the use of digital devices, social media platforms and free access to information has formed a unique paradigm in their lives (Supratman, 2018; Firamadhina, Krisnani and others, 2020). Moreover, with such intensive exposure to cyberspace, significant changes have emerged in Generation Z's thinking, communication and social interaction patterns.

This rapid technological development has also had a far-reaching impact on this generation's approach to society, planning and transformation in education (Cilliers, 2017). Generation Z in particular has become highly skilled at utilizing technology, changing the way they interact with modern information and technology (Cilliers, 2017; Maturbongs, 2023). However, despite excelling in technology and social networking skills, Generation Z faces a number of challenges that are no less significant. Excessive dependence on technology can potentially have a detrimental impact on aspects of their physical and mental health (Twenge et al. 2018)

This phenomenon describes a reality where generation Z is not only a passive consumer of information, but also an actor who is actively involved in the process of forming their identity. Increasingly complex interactions in cyberspace create new

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challenges in guiding their development (Suprayitno and Wahyudi, 2020; Zazin and Zaim, 2020), especially in the context of educational values and Islamic teachings. A fundamental question arises: how can Islamic education engage effectively with generation Z who lives amidst such a dynamic flow of information?

In facing this challenging new landscape, the role of Islamic education becomes very crucial as a spirit and oasis that provides guidance and calm amidst the fast and complex flow of digital information (Suharyat, Agustina and Yuliasih, 2018; Suprayitno and Wahyudi, 2020; Ridwan, 2023 ). Islamic education is not only an obligation, but also a spiritual fortress that supports the mental health of generation Z. According to WHO ( World Health Organization ), mental health is a state of mental well-being that allows a person to overcome life's challenges, recognize one's potential, study well, work well. effectively, and contribute to society (Organization, 2022) or more briefly, mental health is health related to a person's emotional, mental and psychological condition (Fadli, 2022) .

It is hoped that the importance of building strong mental health through Islamic education can provide balance. In the midst of conditions of progress and widespread use of digital space which often encourages excessive comparison and worry, Islamic education carries a message of self-acceptance, altruistic values, and a broader perspective on life. By creating space for spiritual reflection and contemplation, Islamic education can become an oasis where generation Z can find calm and clarity of mind amidst the noise of cyberspace.

By exploring the deep connection between Islamic education, Generation Z's mental health, and the influence of the digital era, this research paves the way for filling the gap in the discussion regarding how Islamic educational values can be a relevant and effective solution in guiding this generation to face the unique challenges of the times. Now. This article aims to contribute to our understanding of the role of Islamic education in shaping the mental health of Generation Z to create a quality future.

## **II. Research Methods**

This research applies a qualitative approach to explore Islamic education in the digital era, especially in efforts to build generation Z's mental health for a quality future. Within the framework of qualitative research, this research aims to explore key elements in Islamic education and understand their impact on the mental health of generation Z. This research is included in the library research category. Literature-based research is a type of research that focuses on literature review as the main focus. In this approach, literature becomes the object that is analyzed and interpreted to obtain a deep understanding of the research topic being studied. Literature-based research often involves critical analysis of existing theories, concepts, and research findings. This method allows researchers to synthesize information from various literature sources to form a solid conceptual foundation for the research being conducted.

Data was obtained from various sources, including Islamic texts, literature on Islamic education, and the views of ulama. The literature review method is used to detail and analyze the data carefully, with a focus on the interpretations and understandings that emerge in the literature (Rukin, 2019) .To overcome existing problems, an analysis technique known as content analysis technique is used. In this method, data is needed to solve each research stage, and then content analysis is carried out on the data to answer or

describe the research questions at that stage. The results of this content analysis then become the basis for answering research questions at the next stage, along with other data that has been obtained. It is hoped that the results of this research will provide in-depth insight into how Islamic education can be a key factor in building the mental health of generation Z in the digital era. The implications of this research are relevant in facing current and future challenges and provide guidance for the sustainable development of Islamic education for a quality future.

### III. Results and Discussion

In the midst of dynamic developments in technology and information that are changing the way Generation Z interacts with their environment and the world, the role of Islamic education in the digital era is becoming increasingly important. In an effort to maintain a balance between technological advances and mental health, Islamic education in the digital era plays a central role in guiding generation Z towards a deeper understanding of religion and maintaining their mental health. This transformation not only includes the integration of Islamic values in the digital paradigm but also provides a special focus on the mental health aspects of generation Z. In a context like this, the discussion will explore the technological transformation that affects generation Z, the integration of Islamic values in digital education, and The close relationship between Islamic education and mental health makes this article relevant for understanding the challenges and opportunities facing generation Z in the current digital era.

#### 3.1 Generation Z Transformation: Dynamics of Technology and Mental Health

Generation Z grew up in a highly connected context, where digital devices, social media platforms and free access to information became an integral part of their daily lives (Hastini, Fahmi and Lukito, 2020) . Therefore, generation Z is a *digital native* who spends most of their time interacting via social media. In observations made by Lucy Pujasari Supratman in her article entitled "Use of Social Media by *Digital Natives* " describes that *digital natives* use social media to get information, communicate virtually, explore hobbies, look for entertainment, support lecture assignments, shop online, and adopt fashion style and lifestyle (Supratman, 2018) .

In the face of rapid technological transformation, the challenges faced by Generation Z cannot be ignored. Even though they are skilled in utilizing technology, excessive dependence can have a negative impact on aspects of their physical and mental health (Maturbongs, 2023) . Research on 260 students in India revealed that 241 students (92.7%) agreed that depression, anxiety, self-harm and eating disorders were the most common mental health problems experienced by generation Z (Veluchamy, Agrawal and Krishnan, 2016) .

Research shows that too much time spent in cyberspace can increase stress levels and the risk of mental disorders among Generation Z. A report from the *National Institute of Mental Health* notes that the increased risk of mental disorders in Generation Z teenagers, especially those aged 18-25 years, can be associated with the high intensity of social media use (Rudianto, 2022) . This is confirmed by the findings of I-NAMHS ( *Indonesia – National Adolescent Mental Health Survey* ), a national household survey institute developed and implemented through collaboration between the Center for Reproductive Health (PKR) at Gadjah Mada University (UGM) in *Indonesia and the University of Queensland* (UQ) in Australia as the main global coordinator, stated that as

many as 34.9% or one in three teenagers, which is equivalent to 15.5 million teenagers in Indonesia, experienced a mental health problem in the last 12 months. Meanwhile, as many as 5.5% or one in twenty teenagers, which is equivalent to 2.45 million teenagers in Indonesia, experienced a mental disorder in the same period (Center for Reproductive Health, University of Queensland, 2022) . Teenagers from Generation Z show symptoms, such as continuous feelings of sadness, isolating themselves, and often getting lost in thoughts. Not only that, symptoms of depression also give rise to disorders, including disturbed sleep patterns, eating disorders, lack of energy, often feeling weak and lethargic, impaired social interaction, difficulty concentrating, and difficulty making decisions (Gazzaniga, 2019) .

This is not without basis, but is based on reasons: *first* , continuous exposure to digital content which is not always and all positive or supportive which can put pressure on their psychology. An *online* environment full of social comparisons and idealized images can create feelings of inadequacy and excessive worry among Generation Z. *Second*, excessive use of technology often leads users to lack direct social interaction. Generation Z who spend a lot of time online may experience social isolation, a lack of emotional support from personal relationships, and difficulty building healthy social skills. This is what Ibrahim (2011) calls a characteristic of the life lived by *the native generation* , which has a solitary character (desocialization), communicating personally (Supratman and Wahyudin, 2017) .

The third factor that plays a role is sleep disturbance due to the use of digital devices before bed. Continuous exposure to devices such as smartphones, personal computers, and television can substantially affect mental health, increase stress and anxiety levels, and give rise to a number of sleep disorders in both children and adults (Nakshine *et al.* , 2022) . Psychological health impacts include a tendency towards suicidal behavior and the emergence of depressive symptoms associated with dependence on digital devices, along with reduced sleep quality due to excessive screen exposure and discomfort triggered by certain types of content. This phenomenon can often trigger a state of hyperarousal, increased production of stress hormones, desynchronization of the body clock or circadian cycle, changes in brain chemistry, and create obstacles to energy levels and mental development (Chaput and Janssen, 2016; Nakshine *et al.* , 2022) .

Furthermore, the fourth factor is the pressure, whether directly aware of it or not, to continue to be connected and exposed to information at a relatively fast pace in cyberspace which can create ongoing feelings of anxiety and stress among Generation Z. Informational load and the expectation to always be "present" " in the information space can be a trigger factor for mental disorders.

For these reasons, it is important to respond to the mental health challenges faced by Generation Z with a holistic approach, namely: (1) efforts are needed to increase awareness among Generation Z regarding the impact of technology use on their mental health. Education regarding balanced time management between the digital world and real life can help reduce the risk of sleep disorders and stress, (2) resources and support need to be provided to help Generation Z develop healthy sleep habits, such as reducing screen exposure before bed and setting boundaries using devices before bed, (3) eliminating applications that trigger addiction, and (4) there needs to be an awareness campaign about mental health and efforts to eliminate the stigma surrounding mental disorders. Building an understanding that admitting and seeking help when needed is a strong and positive step can help reduce the pressure felt by Generation Z (Makarim, 2021) .

In facing this challenge, collaboration between educational institutions, communities and the digital community is the key to facing the challenges faced by

Generation Z in the digital era. This joint effort can create effective and efficient preventive measures, involving a deep understanding of the dynamics of digital technology use among this generation. By involving various parties, including parents, teachers, psychologists and other stakeholders, educational and mentoring programs can be implemented that support the mental health development of Generation Z. Through this joint effort, Generation Z will be able to take advantage of the positive potential of digital technology without sacrificing their mental health, thereby ensuring the creation of a quality and balanced future in the ever-evolving digital era.

### 3.2 Islamic Education in the Digital Era: Integration of Islamic Values in the Digital Paradigm

In this turbulent digital era, the Islamic education paradigm faces complex challenges due to the dynamics of historical determinism and realism. Muslims, with pride, celebrate the legacy of great scientists and thinkers and their historic contributions to world civilization and knowledge, involving the transmission of Greek treasures. However, on the other hand, the reality facing Islamic education cannot be ignored, especially in facing the modern era which is filled with the dominance of industry and technology. Therefore, the integration of Islamic values in the digital paradigm is essential to overcome challenges and ensure the relevance of Islamic education in this digital era.

The integration of Islamic values in the digital paradigm requires adapting learning methods to suit technological developments. Islamic education in the digital era not only provides an understanding of Islamic teachings, but also teaches the use of digital technology in understanding and practicing these values (Choli, 2020; Manan, 2023) . In facing the dynamics of technology in the digital era, the integration of Islamic values can be an important guide in developing the skills of generation Z. One of the main values that can be applied is noble morals. Islamic education can emphasize the importance of behaving well in digital interactions, such as being honest, clarifying ( *tabayun* ), maintaining ethics in online communication, not spitting out personal and other people's disgrace, respecting other people's opinions, and avoiding negative behavior such as *cyberbullying* (Maslan, Nasution and others , 2023) .

Social responsibility is also a relevant value in a digital context. Islamic education can teach generation Z to be responsible for their use of technology, including understanding the social impact of every *online action* and actively participating in efforts to build an inclusive and safe digital society. Furthermore, justice is also a key value that can be applied. Generation Z can be taught to be fair in using digital technology, including sharing information wisely. In addition, creativity and innovation can be encouraged by integrating sincere values in every action. Generation Z is taught to use technology productively, produce content of positive value, and contribute to building a meaningful digital environment.

Generation Z is invited to utilize technology as a learning tool that can enrich their Islamic understanding. In the digital era, the use of technology as a learning tool can be implemented through various innovations. One example is through the use of online learning *platforms* that provide interactive modules, learning videos and other digital resources with flexible access. With this platform, generation Z can access learning materials anytime and anywhere, allowing them to learn independently according to their own rhythm and learning style (Manan, 2023) .

Social media can also be integrated as a supportive learning tool. Islamic discussion forums on *platforms* such as *Facebook* or *Twitter (X)* can facilitate interactive dialogue between generation Z and stakeholders in Islamic education. *Live streaming* or *webinars*

via *Zoom-meeting* or *Google-meet* can also be an effective means of bringing Muslim clerics or scholars virtually, opening up opportunities for generation Z to listen to lectures directly and participate in discussions via digital platforms.

Of course, all facilities and innovations in Islamic education in the digital era must be accompanied by strict supervision. This supervision is the key to ensuring that the learning presented can be spread well and followed responsibly by generation Z. Several effective supervision steps can be carried out in four ways, namely: *first* , mentoring and guidance carried out by educators online (in network) by providing direction, answering questions, and providing feedback to ensure understanding of the concepts taught. *Second* , collaboration with parents in monitoring the use of social media by providing regular notifications and reports about the development of generation Z. *Third* , evaluating the learning process through online exams, online assignments, or online assignments, educators can measure generation Z's understanding and involvement in learning. And *fourth* , monitoring learning activities through an online learning platform equipped with generation Z activity monitoring features.

In fact, strict supervision is an essential basis for ensuring the success of Islamic education in the digital era for generation Z. With effective steps such as mentoring, collaboration, evaluation and monitoring of learning activities, we can ensure that the integration of Islamic values in the digital paradigm does not is only an innovation, but also a strong pillar for the formation of a balanced and quality generation Z in the digital era.

### **3.3 Islamic Education: Maintaining the Mental Health of Generation Z in the Digital Era**

Facing a digital era full of dynamics, the role of Islamic education is becoming increasingly important in maintaining the mental health of Generation Z. In a situation where technology has become an inseparable part of everyday life, the integration of Islamic values in the digital paradigm is the key to guiding this generation. in order to maintain a balance between technological advances and mental health. According to data, in the last two decades, educational institutions have been faced with a number of concerning trends related to the safety and well-being of Generation Z, including acts of violence, online bullying, and the increasing trend of youth suicide (Burke and Bloss, 2020) .

In facing the dynamic digital era, the role of Islamic education is becoming increasingly important in maintaining the mental health of Generation Z. In a situation where technology has become an inseparable part of Generation Z's daily life, the integration of Islamic values in the digital paradigm is the key to guiding so they can maintain a balance between technological advances and mental health. Generation Z, as *digital natives* , tends to spend most of their time in cyberspace. Therefore, Islamic education needs to develop strategies that are relevant to their digital lifestyle. One approach that can be taken is to involve Generation Z in learning that not only provides an understanding of religion, but also encourages the application of Islamic values in the use of technology.

Learning programs can focus on developing healthy digital literacy, including an understanding of social media ethics and its impact on mental health. Generation Z needs to be empowered to be smart, wise and ethical technology users. Additionally, Islamic education can incorporate the values of wisdom and simplicity in a digital context, helping them manage digital consumerism and appreciate the importance of maintaining a balance between the virtual and real worlds.

Preventive measures also need to be implemented, such as holding counseling or guidance sessions that are inclusive and friendly towards Generation Z. Involving them in an open dialogue about the mental health challenges they face can be an effective first step. Apart from that, Islamic education in the digital era needs to involve the role of parents in supporting and understanding the digital dynamics faced by Generation Z. Thus, Islamic education is not only a guardian of religious traditions, but also a partner in forming character, mental health and digital ethics. Generation Z to be able to face the challenges of the digital era wisely and in balance.

#### IV. Conclusion

In facing the increasingly complex challenges of the digital era, the role of Islamic education is very crucial in guiding Generation Z to maintain their mental health. The integration of Islamic values in the digital paradigm provides a solid foundation for this generation to manage technology wisely. Islamic education is not only about maintaining religious traditions, but also about forming the character and digital ethics needed to face the dynamics of the digital world. Generation Z, who grew up amidst advances in technology and information, needs healthy digital literacy. Therefore, Islamic education can play an important role in forming a correct understanding of the use of technology. This learning covers aspects such as being wise in using social media, managing time online, and understanding the mental health impacts of excessive exposure to digital content.

Apart from digital literacy, Islamic education also includes the values of wisdom and simplicity. In the era of fast-paced digital consumerism, it is important for Generation Z to understand the meaning of wisdom in managing digital resources. Islamic education helps them to avoid the negative impacts of excessive digital consumerism and encourages them to prioritize the values of simplicity. The role of parents is also key in supporting the mental health of Generation Z in the digital era. By opening an open dialogue about mental health, parents can become key advocates for their children. Islamic education is not only the responsibility of schools, but also a collaborative journey between schools, parents and society in forming a spiritually and digitally balanced generation.

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