

The Role Islamic Education in Shaping the Religious Character Generation Z in the Era of Digital Technology Development

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Abstract

Development digital technology has bring significant changes to the behavioral patterns, value systems, and character of Generation Z. The high intensity of digital media use without value guidance has the potential to weaken religious character, such as a decrease in religious awareness, low media ethics, and a tendency towards individualism. This condition demands the role of adaptive and contextual Islamic education in shaping the religious character of Generation Z in the digital era. This study aims to analyze educational strategies Islam, as well as methods and educational approach Islam in shaping the religious character of generation Z amidst the development of digital technology. This research uses a qualitative approach with a literature study method. Data were collected through documentation and scientific literature searches in the form of national and international journal articles, several of which are available. indexed on Google Scholars, and academic documents that discuss Islamic education, religious character, generation Z, and the development of digital technology, which published in the period 2021–2026, with focus on the theme education Islam, character religious, generation Z, And digital technology .

Data analysis was conducted using content analysis with a thematic approach, which included data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. The results indicate that effective Islamic education strategies for shaping the religious character of Generation Z include integrating Islamic values with digital technology, strengthening holistic religious character education, exemplary educators, and collaboration between schools, families, and the digital environment. Furthermore, religious habituation methods, including dialogue, And reflective, as well as approach humanistic, contextual, And integrative proven relevant in internalizing religious values in generation Z. This study concludes that education Islam own role strategic in form character religious Generation Z in the digital era if designed adaptively, sustainably, and in line with the dynamics of technological developments.

Keywords : Islamic education; religious character; generation Z; digital technology

Introduction Section

The development of digital technology in the last two decades has brought about fundamental changes in various dimensions of human life, including in the educational, social, and religious fields. This transformation has not only changed the way people communicate and access information, but also influenced the formation of individual thought patterns, behaviors , and value systems Khairanis et al., (2023). Generation Z, born and raised amidst the rapid development of information and communication technology, is the group most affected by these changes. This generation is known as *digital natives* , namely a generation that has a high dependence on digital devices, the internet, and social media in carrying out daily activities Fatah, (2023). This condition has shaped the characteristics of Generation Z which are different from previous generations, both in terms of how they think, interact, and in interpreting life values. On the one hand, digital technology opens up great opportunities for self-development and easy access to information, but on the other hand, it also presents serious challenges in character formation, especially religious character.

Various social phenomena indicate a tendency for religious character to weaken in some members of Generation Z. This is reflected in low levels of religious awareness, weak ethics in digital media, and increasing individualistic and pragmatic attitudes in everyday life Nasyfa and Khasanah, (2025). Exposure to unfiltered digital content, an instant culture, and the dominance of materialistic values in the digital space have the potential to shift religious values that should be the moral foundation of the younger generation. Samhudi, (2025)emphasized that without values-based educational support, digital technology can actually function as a factor that accelerates the degradation of students' religious character. This phenomenon shows that the problem of forming the religious character of Generation Z cannot be separated from the context of increasingly complex and dynamic digital technology developments.

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In the context of education, these challenges demand a strategic role for Islamic education as a primary instrument in shaping religious character. Conceptually, Islamic education is not only oriented toward the transfer of religious knowledge but also aims to shape a Muslim personality that is faithful, pious, and virtuous. Islamic education encompasses integrated spiritual, moral, and social dimensions and is oriented toward holistic character development Syahroni and Sunardi, (2025). Thus, Islamic education plays a fundamental role in building students' moral resilience amidst the currents of digital change. However, Islamic education in the digital era faces significant adaptation challenges, both in terms of strategies, methods, and learning approaches, to remain relevant to the characteristics of Generation Z (Fatah, 2025).

Theoretically, Islamic education in the formation of religious character is based on the principles of internalization of values, habituation, and role models. Religious character is not formed instantly, but through a long and continuous process that involves the stages of understanding values (*knowing*), experiencing values (*feeling*), and practicing values in real life (*acting*) Fijrin et al., (2025). Syahroni and Sunardi, (2025) emphasizes that Islamic education oriented towards the development of spiritual intelligence has the ability to build moral resilience of students in facing social and cultural changes, including the negative impacts of the development of digital technology. Thus, Islamic education theoretically has a strong foundation to be a solution to the problem of religious character of Generation Z.

However, the implementation of Islamic education in the digital era can no longer rely solely on conventional approaches. The critical, visual, and interactive nature of Generation Z demands innovation in Islamic education strategies. The integration of digital technology into Islamic education learning is an unavoidable necessity. Khairanis et al.,(2025) states that the integration of Islamic values with digital technology can strengthen the religious character and religious moderation of Generation Z, as long as technology is positioned as a means of internalizing values, not simply a means of delivering material. This view emphasizes that Islamic education does not have to be at odds with technology, but can instead work constructively in shaping the religious character of students.

In addition to strategies, Islamic education methods and approaches are also determining factors in the success of forming the religious character of generation Z. The one-way lecture method is considered less effective if used dominantly, because it is not fully able to answer the learning needs of *the digital native generation* .

Nasyfa and Khasanah, (2025) emphasizes the importance of implementing dialogical and reflective methods that provide students with the opportunity to connect Islamic teachings with the realities of their digital lives. Furthermore, religious habituation methods, such as worship and strengthening media ethics, have proven effective in sustainably shaping religious character (Samhudi, 2025).

A relevant approach to Islamic education in the digital age is also humanistic and contextual. The humanistic approach positions students as active subjects possessing spiritual and moral potential that needs to be optimally developed, while the contextual approach adapts Islamic teachings to the realities of Generation Z. Wulandari et al., (2025) state that the humanistic approach in Islamic education is capable of creating an atmosphere of more learning dialogical and meaningful, so that participants educate are encouraged to internalize the religious mark in an aware way. The contextual approach also helps participants educate understand the relevance of Islamic teachings in facing digital ethics problems, such as distribution hoaxes, speech hatred, and social media abuse (Finta and Khasanah, 2025).

Various studies previously showed that Islamic education has contributed significantly in the formation of the religious character of the younger generation, even though there are still limited studies that specifically highlight generation Z in the context of digital technology development. Research Samhudi, (2025) shows that integration strategy marks Islamic education through activity habituation, religious activity , as well as utilization of digital media in learning capable of helping generation Z faces challenge values in the digital era. Samhudi, (2025); Wulandari et al.,(2025) also emphasized that optimizing Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning strategies through a contextual approach and digital technology can create effective learning in shaping the religious character of generation Z. Similar findings were conveyed by Fijrin et al., (2025) those who stated that the integration of traditional and contemporary approaches in Islamic education can strengthen the internalization of religious values of generation Z through educational digital media.

Other research emphasizes the importance of synergy between various educational environments. A. Rahman et al., (2022) It was found that religious character education is more effective when it involves collaboration between schools, families, and the social environment.

Sobarina, (2026) also emphasizes the role of educators' role models as a key factor in the formation of students' religious character amidst the dominance of digital public figures who do not always reflect moral values. In addition, Nasyfa and Khasanah, (2025) it highlights the role of Islamic Religious Education teachers as agents of religious character formation in the digital culture of generation Z. Strengthening the Islamic education curriculum based on character and spiritual intelligence

is also seen as important in strengthening the religious values of the younger generation amidst digital dynamics Syahroni and Sunardi, (2025). This issue is also strengthened by studies on the impact of globalization on the character of the younger generation and the role of Islamic education as a moral solution, as well as research that emphasizes the importance of a Sufi approach in the education of generation Z in the era of digital disruption (Wulandari et al., 2025).

However, some research still discusses Islamic education in general without deeply linking it to the characteristics of Generation Z and the dynamics of digital technology. This situation indicates the need for more comprehensive studies on how Islamic education strategies, methods, and approaches can be adaptively designed to shape the religious character of Generation Z. Therefore, literature-based studies are essential for synthesizing various scientific findings and formulating conceptual models that can serve as theoretical and practical references.

Based on the description, this study focuses its study on the role of Islamic education in shaping the religious character of generation Z in the era of digital technology development. This study aims to analyze the implemented Islamic education strategies, as well as relevant Islamic education methods and approaches in shaping the religious character of generation Z. Through the literature study method, this study is expected to provide theoretical contributions to the development of Islamic education studies, while offering practical recommendations for educators and educational institutions in designing adaptive, contextual learning, and oriented towards strengthening the religious character of generation Z in the digital era.

Method

This research uses a qualitative approach with a library research method. Library research is understood as a research method that uses literature written as source play research data, with objective dig, analyze , and synthesize draft, theory, as well as findings study previously in a way systematic (Zed, 2021).

This method is considered relevant because the research focuses on a conceptual study of the role of Islamic education in shaping the religious character of generation Z in the era of digital technology development, particularly in identifying strategies, methods, and approaches to Islamic education that have been studied by previous researchers.

Source data study in the form of data secondary Which obtained from article journal national scientific And international some of which indexed on Google Scholars, and academic documents that discuss Islamic education, religious character, generation Z, and the development of digital technology. Literature Which reviewed restricted in publications published in the 2021–2026 period to ensure the novelty and relevance of the study. Literature selection was carried out selectively, considering the topic's suitability to the research focus, the journal's credibility, and the clarity of the research methodology used. A literature search was conducted using keywords such as *Islamic education* , *religious character* , *generation Z* , and *digital era* , as well as their English equivalents. Articles irrelevant to the context of Islamic education or not addressing the formation of religious character in generation Z were eliminated from the analysis.

Data analysis in this study was carried out using content analysis, that is technique analysis qualitative Which aim For interpret meaning text systematically and objectively Krippendorff, (2022). Content analysis in this study is combined with analysis thematic, Which allows researchers identify patterns findings and the main themes emerging from the analyzed literature Braun and Clarke, (2021). The initial stage of analysis involved in-depth reading of all selected articles to understand their context and focus. Next, the researcher performed data reduction by selecting information relevant to the research objectives.

The reduced data was then categorized into main themes that reflect the focus of the research, namely the strategy of Islamic education in forming the religious character of generation Z Maslulah, (2021), the Islamic education methods used in the process of forming religious character, and the adaptive Islamic education approach to development technology digital Maulida and Makrufi, (2025). Stage furthermore is interpretation data, namely interpreting literature findings by linking them to the theoretical framework of Islamic education and religious character, and comparing the results between studies to identify similarities, differences, and trends in thought. This interpretation process produces a conceptual synthesis that is used as the basis for drawing Khairanis et al.,(2025) research Maulida and Makrufi, (2025) conclusions .

Data validity is maintained through the use of credible and verified scientific literature sources, a transparent and consistent literature selection process, and systematic and iterative data analysis. Thus, the research results are expected to have adequate academic validity and can provide theoretical contributions to the development of study education Islam in context formation character religious Generation Z in the digital era.

Results and Discussion

Islamic Education Strategies in Shaping the Religious Character of Generation Z in the Era of Digital Technology Development

The results of the literature review indicate that advances in digital technology have a significant impact on the process of shaping the religious character of Generation Z. This generation was raised in a digital environment characterized by very broad access to information, freedom of expression, and the intensity of social interactions that are no longer limited by space and time. This situation has implications for changes in the mindset, behavior, and value orientation of Generation Z, including in the dimension of religiosity Humaida et al., (2025). Several studies have revealed that low religious literacy accompanied by weak moral control in the use of digital technology has the potential to cause a decline in religious character in Generation Z (Humaida et al., 2025).

In facing these challenges, Islamic education occupies a strategic position as the primary means of shaping and strengthening the religious character of Generation Z. Islamic education is no longer understood merely as a process of delivering religious material, but as a systematic effort to instill the values of faith, worship, and morals in the lives of students. One of the most highlighted strategies in the literature is the integration of Islamic education with digital technology. Islamic education is directed at using technology as a learning medium as well as a means of internalizing religious values relevant to the context of Generation Z's lives. Samhudi, (2025) states that the use of digital platforms, such as *learning management systems*, educational social media, Islamic learning videos, and prayer reminder applications, can increase student participation and strengthen the formation of religious character.

This integration strategy is considered effective because it aligns with the characteristics of Generation Z, a generation familiar with digital technology and accustomed to independent learning. The interactive, visual, and contextual presentation of Islamic educational content allows for a more engaging and meaningful delivery of religious values. Khusairi, (2025) emphasizes that the integration of Islamic education with digital technology serves not only as a learning innovation but also as a crucial strategy in fostering religious awareness, critical thinking, and ethical skills in Generation Z in the responsible use of digital technology.

In addition, strengthening religious character education holistically is also an important strategy in shaping the character of Generation Z. Effective Islamic education is not enough to only emphasize the cognitive aspect in the form of understanding religious teachings, but must also touch on the affective and psychomotor aspects related to religious attitudes and behavior. Zein, (2025) shows that an Islamic education strategy that integrates teaching values, habituating worship, role models, and moral reflection is able to shape the religious character of students in a sustainable manner. This holistic approach is becoming increasingly relevant in the digital era, when Generation Z is faced with various moral challenges in the virtual space (Zein, 2025).

The role model of educators is also a key strategy in the process of internalizing religious values. Amid the rise of digital public figures who often display hedonistic lifestyles and lack moral values, Islamic education educators are required to be consistent and authentic role models. Rohmah and Qomari, (2025) in their research published in *the Ilmuna Journal* showed that strengthening the exemplary behavior of Islamic Religious Education teachers can be more effective if supported by a conducive school environment and the use of digital technology. These conditions enable the process of internalizing Islamic values to proceed contextually and responsively to the dynamics and challenges that arise in the era of digital technology development. Teachers' efforts to build students' religious character are carried out through the implementation of religious values habits, providing exemplary attitudes and behaviors, and continuous supervision both in the context of classroom learning and in daily school life. Sobarina, (2026) confirms that moral integrity, consistency of religious attitudes, and educator ethics in using digital media have a significant influence on the formation of students' religious character. These findings align with the views of Nizar et al., (2025) who emphasize that teacher role models have a central and strategic role in the process of character formation of students, particularly in instilling the values of discipline, responsibility, and honesty in the school environment. Exemplary behavior that is consistently displayed through teachers' attitudes, behaviors, and daily interactions not only functions as a means of normative learning, but also serves as a concrete reference for students in internalizing moral and ethical values. Thus, the role of teachers as role models contributes significantly to creating a school culture that is characterized and supports the continuous development of students' personalities. Viewed from a theoretical perspective, the findings of this study have a strong connection with the social learning theory proposed by Albert Bandura as explained by Khozin et al., (2024), which emphasizes that the individual learning process occurs through the mechanisms of observation, imitation, and internalization of the behavior

of models perceived as having credibility and moral authority. Within the framework of Islamic education, Islamic Religious Education teachers serve as concrete representations of Islamic values, so that the attitudes, words, and actions displayed by teachers become the primary reference for students in developing religious behavior patterns in everyday life. In line with this, Mutia Nur Putri et al., (2023) explain that the success of instilling the value of honesty in students is not only determined by verbal delivery of material, but is greatly influenced by the consistency of the behavior of Islamic Religious Education teachers who demonstrate integrity and honesty in real life. Thus, teacher role models play an effective medium in transforming moral values from the conceptual level to the habituation of sustainable behavior in students. This role model is not only reflected in direct interactions, but also in the digital activities carried out by educators.

Collaborative strategies between schools, families, and the digital environment are also crucial for the success of Generation Z's religious character education. A. Rahman et al., (2022) They emphasize that Islamic education cannot be optimally implemented if it relies solely on formal educational institutions. Families play a role in shaping religious habits from an early age, while the digital environment needs to be directed to become a space that supports the internalization of Islamic values. Synergy between schools, families, and the digital environment is a comprehensive strategy for addressing the influence of technology on Generation Z's character.

Thus, this study demonstrates that effective Islamic education strategies for shaping the religious character of Generation Z in the digital era include the integration of digital technology, holistic character education reinforcement, educator role models, and collaboration between various parties. These strategies emphasize the importance of Islamic education that is adaptive, contextual, and responsive to the dynamics of technological development.

Method And Approach Education Islam in Forming Character Religious Generation Z in the Era of Digital Technology Development

In addition to strategies, Islamic educational methods and approaches play a crucial role in determining the success of developing the religious character of Generation Z. The literature review shows that conventional, one-way learning methods tend to be less effective in addressing the needs and characteristics of Generation Z as a generation that grew up with digital technology. This generation is more responsive to dialogic, participatory, and reflective learning methods, and provides space for active student involvement in the learning process (Arifin et al., 2024).

The dialogic method is one of the most relevant methods in Islamic education in the digital era. This method provides students with opportunities to discuss, ask critical questions, and connect Islamic teachings to their digital experiences. Hidayat and Syaife'i, (2022) states that the dialogic method can increase students' religious awareness because religious teachings are not only accepted normatively but also understood reflectively and contextually. Through dialogue, students are trained to critically evaluate various digital phenomena based on Islamic values.

Religious habituation methods are also very important in shaping the religious character of Generation Z. Habituation of worship, noble moral behavior, and digital media ethics must be carried out consistently and integrated into the learning process. Humaida et al., (2025). emphasized that habituation carried out continuously will form a religious *habitus* that is deeply rooted in students. In the digital context, this habituation can be realized through the use of Islamic digital media, the use of prayer reminder applications, and the habituation of online communication that upholds Islamic ethical values.

The humanistic approach is also a relevant approach in Islamic education for Generation Z. This approach positions students as active subjects with spiritual and moral potential that needs to be optimally developed. Humaida et al., (2025) states that the humanistic approach in Islamic education can create an empathetic, inclusive, and respectful learning environment, thus encouraging students to consciously internalize religious values. This approach aligns with the character of Generation Z, which upholds freedom of expression and individual autonomy.

A contextual approach is also a crucial element in Islamic education in the digital age. This approach emphasizes the connection between Islamic teachings and the realities of students' lives, including the digital world. Humaida et al., (2025) states that a contextual approach helps students understand that Islam has relevance and solutions to various digital ethics issues, such as the spread of hoaxes, hate speech, cyberbullying, and social media addiction. With this approach, Islamic education is understood as applicable and relevant to modern life.

An integrative approach that combines cognitive, affective, and psychomotor aspects was also a key finding in this study. Syahrani and Sunardi, (2025) It emphasizes that Islamic education based on character and spiritual intelligence can build the moral resilience of Generation Z in facing the challenges of the digital era. This approach emphasizes a balance between understanding religious teachings, internalizing values, and applying them in real-world and digital environments.

Overall, the results and discussion indicate that effective Islamic educational methods and approaches in shaping the

religious character of Generation Z must be dialogical, humanistic, contextual, and integrative. These methods and approaches enable Islamic education to function as a sustainable, adaptive, and relevant process of value transformation amidst the rapid development of digital technology.

Conclusion

Based on the results of the literature review and discussion that has been conducted, it can be concluded that Islamic education strategies have a very fundamental role in shaping the religious character of generation Z in the era of digital technology development Fatah, (2023). Generation Z living in the digital ecosystem faces serious challenges in the form of a rapid flow of information, shifting moral values, and tendencies towards individualism and pragmatism that have the potential to weaken the internalization of religious values Nasution et al., (2022). In this context, Islamic education is required to not only maintain normative Islamic values, but also be able to package them contextually and relevant to the reality of digital life so that they can be accepted and internalized effectively by Muhalli, (2021) generation Z. Khairanis et al., (2023) adaptive, critical, and responsible religious characters in the digital space (Fatah, 2023; Nasution et al., 2022).

Furthermore, Islamic educational methods and approaches serve as operational instruments that determine the success of the strategy for forming the religious character of Generation Z. Suyatno and Wantini, (2022) Consistently applied religious, dialogical, and reflective habituation methods enable Islamic values to be understood not only in the cognitive realm but also internalized in the attitudes and behavior of students in a sustainable manner Z. Arifin and Hidayat, (2021). The humanistic approach in Islamic education positions students as educational subjects with spiritual and moral potential, while the contextual approach helps students understand the relevance of Islamic teachings to real challenges in the digital era, such as media ethics, digital literacy, and social responsibility Rohman, (2023). In addition, an integrative approach involving synergy between schools, families, and the socio-digital environment has been proven to strengthen the process of forming religious character in a sustainable and systematic manner Hasanah and Ma'arif, (2024). Thus, appropriate Islamic educational methods and approaches not only function as a means of religious learning, but also as a mechanism for forming deep, applicable, and contextual religious awareness in the daily lives of Generation Z (Suyatno and Wantini, 2022).

In general, this study confirms that Islamic education has a strategic position and remains relevant in addressing the challenges of shaping the religious character of Generation Z in the era of digital technology development Hidayat and Syafe'i, (2022). Islamic education can no longer be understood solely as a process of transferring religious knowledge, but rather as a systematic and ongoing effort to form a complete religious personality, which includes the spiritual, moral, and social dimensions of students Ma'arif, (2021). The success of Islamic education in shaping the religious character of Generation Z is largely determined by the ability of educators and educational institutions to design strategies, methods, and learning approaches that are adaptive to current developments without abandoning the fundamental values of Islamic teachings (Rahman and Kholis, 2023).

With careful planning and consistent implementation, Islamic education has great potential to become the main foundation in forming a generation Z who is religious, ethical, and able to utilize digital technology wisely as part of devotion to Allah and the embodiment of social responsibility in society (Sulaiman et al., 2024).

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