

The Challenges of Teaching Islamic Education In the Millennial Generation Era

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ABSTRACT

This article discusses the issues of Islamic religious education learning in the millennial era, focusing on teachers, teaching methods, learning media, and students' interest in learning. The research was conducted in a high school in the Pasangkayu district. The research utilized a qualitative method with data collection techniques such as direct observation, in-depth interviews, and document analysis. The research findings indicate that implementing Islamic religious education learning in the millennial generation begins with preparing teaching tools. However, the application of teaching methods and the utilization of educational technology still need more improvement. The issues of Islamic religious education learning in the millennial generation in high school include internal and external problems. Internal problems include the teachers' need for more ability to deliver the lessons and utilize educational technology. Islamic religious teachers must be role models for students regarding responsibility, low interest, and learning motivation. External problems include the influence of scientific and technological advancements in communication and the impact of social environments. The solutions to these learning problems involve Islamic religious teachers improving the learning process, providing learning aids, and mastering educational technology. Additionally, teachers engage in discussions with various stakeholders at the school to address the learning issues.

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1. Pendahuluan

Technology development has changed from agricultural to industrial and information era. In agrarian societies, people's lives were marked by a focus on the past, a lack of appreciation for the time, work without design and planning, the use of traditional technologies, verbal and face-to-face communication, and wealth measured by the amount of land and livestock owned (Roseland, 2000). On the other hand, in industrial societies, the characteristics shifted towards a future orientation, work driven by design and planning, a high value placed on time (the saying "time is money" became prominent), the use of advanced technologies, written and long-distance communication, and wealth measured by the possession of specialized machines (Heyneman, 1976).

Society has now entered the 0.4 stage of the industrial revolution, characterized by the discovery of the internet (Nurdin, Pettalongi, Ahsan, & Febrianti, 2023). Previously, there was the 0.1 stage, marked by the invention of the steam engine; the 0.2 stage, marked by the discovery of electricity; and the 0.3 stage, characterized by the design of technological equipment such as vehicles, radios, televisions, and so on. Each stage of the revolution has led to different attitudes and behaviors. In the current internet era, society is characterized by a desire for fast services, reduced dependence on others, willingness to make breakthroughs, satisfaction and joy in being helpful to others, collaboration, willingness to experiment, and other entrepreneurial attitudes. Such a societal condition

becomes the target that educational activities must serve.

In addition, society today is confronted with the challenges of globalization, characterized by intense competition where the winners possess high quality and competitive advantages (Nurdin, 2023; Nurdin, Agam, & Adawiyah, 2023). There is interdependency that leads to solid domination over the weak. The use of advanced technology in various aspects of life brings about a new paradigm shift in multiple activities. Moreover, unique lifestyles and cultures emerge, prioritizing materialism and displaying individualistic, pragmatic, secular, and hedonistic attitudes.

As mentioned earlier, societal conditions necessitate the education sector to anticipate them by offering excellent education. Therefore, it is essential to have a suitable educational concept for the millennial generation. Before finding the right academic idea, we must first understand the causes of the learning failures in Islamic religious education during the millennial generation (Darmawati, Pettalongi, & Idhan, 2019). This understanding will enable us to seek solutions to the challenges faced by educators in schools.

The Law has regulated education through Law Number 20 of 2003 concerning the National Education System. Its vision is to realize an education system as a solid and authoritative social institution that empowers all Indonesian citizens to develop into quality individuals capable of proactively responding to the ever-changing challenges of the times (Vision and Mission of Law Number 20 of

2003). Therefore, the vision stated in the Law mentioned above is something to be achieved for the success of education and the realization of a national generation in line with collective aspirations. In 2000, Indonesia entered a new era known as the millennial generation. The term millennial broadly describes individuals who came of age in the early 21st century and encompasses people born between 1980 and 2000. Before the millennial era, the period is referred to as the baby bust or for individuals born between 1965 and 1979, and they belong to Generation X. According to Career Planner, this generation is known as the "Bust Generation" because the birth rate is lower compared to the previous baby boom generation (Rusli, Hasyim, & Nurdin, 2021; Rusli & Nurdin, 2022). They are also characterized by their skepticism, tending to hesitate in their actions or decision-making. Additionally, millennial generation is considered less engaged in community participation in their daily lives. They are perceived as indifferent to social issues surrounding them (Bucic, Harris, & Arli, 2012).

Islamic Religious Education is a subject taught at every level of education, including public educational institutions, Islamic schools, and foundations (Makmur, Nurdin, & Pettalongi, 2022; Palinge, Nurdin, & Rusdin, 2022; Zulkarnaim, Sidik, & Nurdin, 2022). Each educational institution has different divisions and durations for Islamic Religious Education. In public educational institutions, the content of Islamic Religious Education is combined into a single subject with a shorter duration.

On the other hand, in Islamic educational institutions, the content is divided into several topics, such as creed and ethics, jurisprudence, Qur'an and Hadith, Islamic history and culture, and Arabic language, with a longer duration.

This field of study is expected to serve as a means to build a better national generation and play a significant role in various areas and expertise. Islamic education also serves as a strategy to guide and direct young people in preparing a competitive and quality generation nationally and internationally. Therefore, they can understand that they are integral parts of the nation, state, and religion, with inherent dignity and values. Currently, morality lies at the core of all issues the nation faces. Islamic religious education should guide individuals with noble character and ethics, which significantly impact their personal lives, groups, and society (Amiruddin, Nurdin, & Ali, 2021; Sutejo, Nurdin, & Syahid, 2021). The lack of improvement in the quality of Islamic religious education is, in fact, the responsibility of everyone, as each individual has a role and function. They contribute to advancing Islamic religious education in Indonesia and achieving the desired outcomes outlined in the Law.

Changes in students will occur after they undergo the learning process. Education can gradually transform students' behavior if they can implement the values of Islamic teachings in their lives, both at school, within their families, and in society. This process undoubtedly requires an active role from knowledgeable teachers in their respective fields, actively

engaging inside and outside the classroom (Taraju, Nurdin, & Pettalongi, 2022). Hence, this research examines the challenges in Islamic religious education learning for the millennial generation.

2. Tinjauan Pustaka

2.1 Issues in Islamic Religious Education Learning

Changes in students will occur after they undergo the learning process. Education can gradually transform students' behavior if they can implement the values of Islamic teachings in their lives, both at school, within their families, and in society (Mishra, Gupta, & Shree, 2020). This process undoubtedly requires an active role from knowledgeable teachers in their respective fields, actively engaging inside and outside the classroom. Hence, this research examines the challenges in Islamic religious education learning for the millennial generation.

Many factors influence a school's teaching and learning activities, such as students, teachers, learning methods, approaches used, educational facilities, and the curriculum (Badia, Meneses, Sigalés, & Fàbregues, 2014). These factors impact the learning process and outcomes, especially in Islamic religious education, both inside and outside the classroom.

The social background and conditions of students vary as each student grows and develops in a different family environment and is educated in different ways (Gu, Schweisfurth, & Day, 2010). Every parent has their approach to providing education and teaching to their

children. When a child is born into the world, the first educational environment they encounter is the family, and it is from here that the process of shaping the child's personality begins. As the second educational environment that students are exposed to, schools play a role in character formation by imparting knowledge based on existing guidelines. Schools also serve as a platform for students to learn mutual understanding, respect for differences, and especially religious tolerance. An example of a social condition in schools is when students come from families that greatly emphasize religion and education, which can foster a strong sense of empathy.

Student motivation in learning is crucial to help achieve learning success (Daskalovska, Gudeva, & Ivanovska, 2012). Motivation is a psychological state of an individual characterized by the desire or interest that arises from within, driving the individual to take action. Learning motivation, specifically, refers to the solid internal desire of an individual to learn. Previous research conducted by scholars has shown that most learning progresses better when internal and external motivation is enhanced (Oudeyer, Gottlieb, & Lopes, 2016).

However, the reality is that many cases of student academic disengagement exist in schools today. Sometimes, teachers assign homework to be done at home, but students must complete it properly. They may even copy their classmates' completed assignments to submit to the teacher. Another example related to learning

problems is a lack of enthusiasm for studying, being disruptive, disturbing classmates who are diligently studying, showing disinterest in the topics discussed in class, and not participating in congregational prayers at the mosque.

This phenomenon can have implications for implementing Islamic religious education in schools. Islamic religious education should be given greater priority, but it should be given top priority in schools. Researchers argue that even though Islamic religious education is not included in the national exams, teachers should still prioritize it by instilling Islamic values in the school environment. Additionally, teachers can integrate science and Islamic teachings into the learning process at school.

2.2 The Role of Teachers in Islamic Religious Education

A teacher possesses expertise in educating, guiding, and directing students directly in the classroom. An Islamic religious education teacher is responsible for enhancing all existing potentials within students cognitively, affectively, and psychometrically (Cahill et al., 2014; Solheim, Ertesvåg, & Dalhaug Berg, 2018). An Islamic religious education teacher is an adult who is obligated to provide and instill Islamic values in all their students.

The obligations of an Islamic religious education teacher include educating students to always be mindful of Allah by implementing the commandments and avoiding the prohibitions. Islamic religious education teachers also strive to maintain peace, benefit society, and practice every religious value daily. The Law that

governs teachers and lecturers is Law No. 20 of 2003, concerning national education, which states that teachers are professional educational personnel. Teachers are responsible for planning and implementing the learning process, assessing learning outcomes, providing guidance and training, and conducting research and community service. The Law also stipulates the role of teachers as the primary actors in the classroom, holding complete control over improving educational quality. In other words, teachers are the soul of the education system, an integral part that cannot be separated.

2.3 Definition of the millennial era

The current global changes are part of the worldwide transformation (globalization) characterized by the emergence of a new lifestyle (Nurdin, 2022). These changes are marked by the advancement of information technology and the industrial development that has emerged in human life. The new users of information technology are millennials, who play a significant role in developing these technologies. Among the cultural characteristics of the global community, there is intense competition among individuals and the demand to keep up with rapid global changes. These changes exert pressure on individuals to develop their knowledge and skills continually.

However, the level of ability and capacity of each individual varies. Many individuals need to prepare to face these cultural shifts. Deviations from norms in the use or exploitation of information technology also occur. The benefits and positive impact of using information technology have greatly

influenced the development of the millennial generation. For example, a cultural change experienced by the millennial generation is the habit of using online transportation services through mobile applications.

As a result, education in the millennial generation era has also undergone changes and transformations. Education in the millennial generation era includes the need for various skills (Pasricha & Kadolph, 2009), such as:

- a. *Visual activities* involve visual activities such as drawing, coloring, writing, presenting, role-playing, and others.
- b. *Oral activities* relate to students' speaking abilities, explaining, using scientific vocabulary, conducting interviews, participating in discussions, and so on.
- c. *Listening activities*, which involve actively listening to information.
- d. *Writing activities* include various writing tasks such as academic papers, short stories, reports, and more.
- e. *Drawing activities* involve creating visual representations such as diagrams, patterns, graphs, maps, and more.

Interactive learning models are suitable teaching models that align with the constructivist paradigm in the millennial generation era. The constructivist theory approach emphasizes the importance of students constructing their knowledge through the engagement of the teaching and learning process. Thus, the teaching and learning process becomes student-centered rather than teacher-centered.

Several models are based on constructivism, such as the learning cycle model, generative learning model, interactive learning model, CLIS (Children Learning in Science) model, and cooperative learning strategy model.

Education experts argue that interactive learning focuses on student questions by eliciting students' inquiries (Harton, Richardson, Barreras, Rockloff, & Latané, 2002). Others suggest that interactive learning is a process that allows learners to actively engage in the entire process, both mentally and physically. Another opinion states that interactive learning encourages students to ask questions and find their own answers. Based on these various opinions, interactive learning is intended to create a student-centered learning environment where students actively construct their knowledge by exploring their questions.

Interactive learning can be implemented by teachers in all subjects, with the condition that they pay attention to nine factors: motivation, attentional focus, student background, contextualization of the subject matter, individual differences among students, learning through play, learning through work, learning through discovery and problem-solving, and social relationships. In interactive learning, social interaction among students and between students and the teacher needs special attention. Education experts state that teaching theoretical concepts in school cannot solely focus on individual students discovering ideas. Instead, there needs to be social interaction in the learning process to construct the desired theoretical

concepts. As cited by T.G. Ratumanan, Vygotsky proposed that "educating humans requires a natural social nature and a process in which learners grow intellectually in their surrounding intellectual life."

Interactive learning emphasizes the presence of interactions in the teaching and learning process. These interactions can occur between students, between students and instructional materials, between students and teachers, between students and other students' instructional materials, and between students and teachers. From the abovementioned opinions, interactive learning greatly benefits from social interactions within the school environment, allowing teachers, students, and instructional materials to influence and support predetermined concepts. In the learning process, teachers assign tasks that prompt students to construct ideas, develop rules, and learn problem-solving strategies. Consequently, the role of students becomes significant, and the dominance of the teacher in the learning process diminishes. In interactive learning, the part of the instructor is not the sole source of information and only consumes the majority of the classroom time. In other words, instructors play a facilitator role, guiding, assisting, and directing students to ensure that the learning process leads to the desired goals.

The stages of interactive learning include the preparation stage. Teachers and students prepare in this stage by selecting the topic covered in the learning activities. Next is the preconception stage, where the teacher explores the students' prior knowledge

and understanding of the topic to be studied. Subsequently, the exploration stage aims to stimulate students' curiosity by motivating them to ask questions about the activity topic. Then comes the questioning stage, where each student can ask questions within their group, and the students read out their questions.

Next is the investigation stage, where students can discover concepts through data collection, organization, and analysis in a teacher-designed activity. In this stage, the teacher only assists students in finding answers to the questions they have asked. Then there is the final knowledge stage, which allows students to present their findings. The teacher guides the students in conducting a class discussion. As recorded earlier, the student's answers are collected and compared to their prior knowledge before conducting the investigation. In this stage, students are asked to compare what they know with what they previously knew. The final stage is reflection, which involves thinking about what is new or what has been learned.

3. Methodology

This research adopts a qualitative approach. Qualitative research is characterized by collecting descriptive data, including the informants' words, actions, and feelings, who serve as the needed data sources (Nuridin & Pettalongi, 2022). The collected data is supported by textual and documentary data (files, audio, visual, audiovisual) that support the research. With this approach, the researcher aims to provide a detailed description of the

phenomena occurring in the field, the nature of the phenomena, and all aspects related to the theme under investigation (Nurdin, Stockdale, & Scheepers, 2013).

This study is classified as a case study research. Case study research delves more intensively into the current situation to gather information (Nurdin, Scheepers, & Stockdale, 2022). In other words, the researcher must build good relationships with various individuals and entities to become sources of information within the environment, such as academic units, social groups, individuals, institutions, and communities. The researcher must also immerse themselves in the surrounding environment to gather as much data as possible. The research was conducted in a high school in the Pasangkayu district, West Sulawesi Indonesia.

4. Result and Discussion

4.1 Challenges in Islamic Religious Education Teaching at the Senior High School Level

The challenges in teaching Islamic religious education at senior high schools include internal learning issues. The first problem lies in the low professionalism of teachers. Teachers need help selecting and implementing effective teaching methods. Additionally, teachers need more knowledge in the field of Islamic religious education. Furthermore, teachers must gain the necessary skills to use educational technology effectively in their teaching practices. The student's interest and motivation to learn Islamic religious education could be higher due to inadequate

explanations from the teachers.

Teachers should respect these challenging responsibilities, as the essence of education is to educate students. Teachers must prepare students to live following their time. This phenomenon highlights the importance of teaching children in Islam according to their era, as knowledge is dynamic and constantly evolving. Therefore, teaching methods should adapt to the current and future circumstances. The millennial era is characterized by the widespread accessibility of digital technology anytime and anywhere, enjoyed by people from all walks of life without exception. There is accurate, fast, and constantly evolving information within this era. In education, students are expected to be able to effectively and appropriately use social media platforms. However, many students need help to utilize the internet effectively as their social environment easily influences them without first considering their online interactions' positive and negative impacts. This situation requires teachers capable of guiding, directing, and filtering the harmful effects of internet usage. Teachers are also expected to be technologically literate, as the challenges teachers face in the millennial era are complex. Teachers must possess digital literacy, encompassing the knowledge, skills, and behaviors used in various digital devices such as smartphones, tablets, laptops, and desktop PCs connected to the internet. Teachers are lifelong educators with the primary task of educating, teaching, guiding, directing, training, assessing, and evaluating

students. They should also possess noble character traits, wisdom, and sincerity in their work. Therefore, teachers must continually enhance their knowledge and teaching techniques. Gadgets should be utilized to access a wealth of information to stay caught up with the students. Teachers can use various devices to download multiple applications and teaching materials. In essence, teachers' profiles should be able to effectively engage with the millennial generation, thereby fostering intelligent and characterful individuals.

4.2 Engaging and Meaningful Learning

The millennial generation of students requires various teaching methods that can stimulate their interest in learning. This is because students in the millennial era are more proficient in the information presented on gadgets. However, teaching methods must be tailored to the subject matter to facilitate its delivery and collaboration with students' interests. One method that can be used is the question-and-answer method. The question-and-answer method involves delivering instructional messages by asking questions and students providing answers. Conversely, students can also ask questions, and the teacher answers those questions. The method based on the experiment is a teaching approach where students conduct experiments on a particular subject, observe the process, and write down the results of their investigations. Then, these observations are presented to the class and evaluated by the teacher. Furthermore, the lecture method is teachers' most commonly used teaching method. This learning method emphasizes the oral delivery of

course material, where the teacher presents the learning material monologously through one-way communication. Sometimes, this method can be tedious, so its implementation requires specific skills to make the presentation engaging and capture students' attention. The present-day learning paradigm should provide students ample opportunities to actively participate in learning, allowing them to develop thinking skills encompassing observation, interaction, communication in all directions, and reflection.

4.3 Teachers as Role Models

The millennial generation is a generation that emphasizes rational views, focusing on tangible, audible knowledge, which gives rise to perceptions. In shaping good perceptions, it is essential to demonstrate exemplary behavior to students. However, the danger arises when there is a gap between words and actions, which can erode students' learning loyalty. In education, it is preferable to prioritize a persuasive approach rather than an authoritarian or coercive one, as it enables students to apply their knowledge concretely by utilizing technology in learning.

The approach used by teachers to enhance the quality of education for students in the millennial era at the high school level is the 4 R method. The first R is Research, which means teachers explore what technology can be used in the classroom to deliver instructional materials, making students feel comfortable and facilitating more effective learning. The following approach is Relevance, meaning instructional materials must be relevant

to the current generation. The third approach is Rapport, as millennials highly value relationships. This tendency is evident in their preference for group friendships. Therefore, students will be happy and feel connected to teachers who share similar interests. The final approach is Rational, which means that teachers must explain the outline and objectives of the materials to be provided to students.

With the changes in students belonging to the millennial generation, teachers should view these challenges as positive and constantly innovate and enhance their teaching skills to align with the demands of the times. The progress or decline of a nation depends on teachers as the builders of a quality generation. External issues affecting Islamic education in state 1 duripoku senior high school, pasangayu regency, include the negative impacts of advancements in science and technology in communication. Additionally, various problems arise from the influence of family and societal environments. Family-related issues include weak Islamic education and broken families, destabilizing children's well-being. Problems within the community include the emergence of delinquent youth groups that influence students.

Therefore, Islamic education can serve as a deterrent to various problems arising from the influence of digital technology. In this millennial era, Islamic education can act as a fortress for the millennial generation, enabling them to become more resilient in the face of negative influences from advanced information technology. The success of Islamic education in countering the adverse effects of information technology depends on the actors involved in education, such as teachers, the government, and families.

5. Conclusion

The solutions implemented by the school and Islamic education teachers to address various issues in Islamic education have been commendable. However, there are still areas that need improvement in the learning process. For example, teachers can inquire about the preferred learning models of students. Islamic education teachers should also ask students about their weaknesses and areas for improvement in delivering instruction. Criticism is necessary because teachers cannot evaluate themselves and claim they are already doing well in teaching. The measure of good education depends on the students who are the subjects of learning. Regarding the shortcomings in utilizing educational technology, teachers must work hard to enhance their knowledge and skills in using information technology.

Public senior high school in Pasangkayu district has several facilities and infrastructure to cultivate religious awareness among students, including Islamic books and a mosque equipped with various worship materials such as the Qur'an. Public senior high school in Pasangkayu will require students to participate in extracurricular activities such as religious study sessions every Friday night, congregational Dhuhr prayer, and short lectures.

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