

The Role of Islamic Character Education in Developing Digital Citizenship Among Generation Z

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Abstract: Islamic character education plays a crucial role in developing digital citizenship among Muslim Generation Z. In this fast-paced digital era, Generation Z faces unique challenges and opportunities, including the rapid and diverse spread of information. Islamic character education, which emphasizes moral and ethical values, can equip young people with the ability to behave wisely and responsibly in the online world. By teaching values such as honesty, tolerance, and empathy, Muslim Generation Z can learn to use technology in a positive and productive manner. Furthermore, Islamic character education encourages active participation in the digital community, including engaging in constructive discussions and disseminating beneficial information. Therefore, the integration of Islamic character education into both formal and non-formal educational curricula is essential for shaping individuals who are not only digitally literate but also possess integrity and social responsibility. This is expected to create a safer and more ethical digital environment for all users.

Keywords: Islamic Character Education, Digital Citizenship, Generation Z, Muslim, Digital Ethics.

INTRODUCTION

Islamic character education plays a very important role in developing digital citizenship among Generation Z. In the context of current social and technological developments, understanding the characteristics of the younger generation is crucial. One group that draws significant attention is Generation Z. Generation Z, born between 1997 and 2012, is a group that grew up in the digital era. They are surrounded by abundant technology and information, which influences how they learn, interact, and perceive the world around them. Gen Z is ambitious, creative, primarily learns from online sources, and has more friends compared to previous generations (Graczyk-Kucharska, 2020). They seek information online and share it online because they believe information and knowledge are more valuable when shared (Lazányi & Bilan, 2017). Generation Z is actively engaged in constant digital communication (Albadi & Zollinger, 2021).

The characteristics of Generation Z, who were born and grew up amidst rapid technological advancements, bring them face-to-face with various complex challenges in their daily lives. One of the main challenges is their tendency toward overexposure to information, where the ease of access to various digital platforms often exposes them to unfiltered information, including fake news or hoaxes, which could potentially affect their mindset and critical thinking abilities.

Digital Citizenship refers to an individual's ability to actively and responsibly participate in the digital society. In an era where information and communication technology (ICT) plays a crucial role in daily life, developing digital citizenship has become increasingly essential. Digital citizenship can be understood as the norms of appropriate and responsible behavior when using technology (M. Ribble, 2009). "Digital citizenship is the ability to engage in society online,

which includes understanding the rights and responsibilities that come with being a digital citizen." (Alonzo, A. C., & Rojas, C, 2022). Thus, digital citizenship serves as a foundation for Generation Z in interacting with information technology. Furthermore, existing societal norms and behaviors must also consider appropriate norms and behaviors in the use of technology.

This concept not only encompasses the use of digital devices and applications but also emphasizes the importance of responsible and ethical behavior when interacting in cyberspace. In this context, individuals are expected to possess adequate skills and knowledge to navigate the various challenges arising from technological advancements. As stated by Ribble (2021), "Digital citizenship is not just about technology; it encompasses the skills and knowledge needed to navigate the digital world responsibly and ethically." With a strong understanding of digital citizenship, the younger generation can contribute positively to society while avoiding behaviors that may harm themselves or others.

With the right approach, Islamic character education can become an effective strategy for instilling moral and ethical values in the younger generation. "An effective strategy in teaching Islamic character education is crucial to shaping a generation that is not only academically intelligent but also morally strong amidst technological advancements" (Hidayat, Fatimah, & Rosidin, 2022). Islamic character education is a learning process aimed at shaping and developing an individual's character based on Islamic values and teachings. This education does not solely focus on academic aspects but also emphasizes moral, ethical, and behavioral development. Therefore, integrating Islamic character education with technology is essential to ensure that the younger generation grows into faithful and responsible individuals in this digital era. As stated in the Qur'an:

وَلَا تَقْفُ مَا لَيْسَ لَكَ بِهِ عِلْمٌ

Translation: *"And do not follow that of which you have no knowledge"* (QS. Al-Isra: 36)

This highlights the importance of knowledge and understanding in every action, including the use of technology. With the rapid advancement of technology, having sufficient knowledge and a deep understanding of its impact is crucial to ensuring that actions taken are wise and responsible.

As Rahman (2021) emphasized, "Islamic character education not only shapes individual morality but also prepares them to become responsible digital citizens." Moreover, the integration of Islamic character education into formal and non-formal educational curricula is vital. This ensures the formation of individuals who are not only digitally literate but also uphold integrity and social responsibility (Sari, 2022).

Currently, character is an important problem that needs to be discussed and resolved. This is partly due to the emergence of globalization, where human character changes rapidly from ideal to the opposite (Nurzannah, 2024). By teaching values such as honesty, tolerance, and empathy, Islamic character education can help Generation Z to use technology positively and productively. This is in line with Hasan's (2020) statement, "Good character education will produce individuals who are not only academically intelligent but also have high social awareness in interacting in the digital world." "Islamic character education can also serve as a tool to build ethical awareness among the younger generation, enabling them to contribute positively to digital society" (Junaidi, 2023).

This research is important because by understanding the role of Islamic character education in developing digital citizenship, we can create individuals who are not only skilled in technology but also possess strong ethics and morals. Generation Z, as a group growing up

amidst rapid technological and informational advancements, requires guidance in forming good character to interact positively in the digital world. Through Islamic character education, which emphasizes values such as honesty, responsibility, and empathy, it is expected that young people can understand and apply these principles in every action they take in cyberspace. This is hoped to create a safer and more ethical digital environment for all users.

This research is also relevant in the context of globalization, where cross-cultural interactions and differing values often collide. By equipping Generation Z with strong Islamic character education, we not only prepare them to face technological challenges but also to become responsible digital citizens who contribute positively to the global society. Thus, Islamic character education is not only relevant in the context of formal education but also in shaping a generation ready to face the challenges of globalization and technological advancement, as well as actively participating in creating a better digital world.

For that reason, this research aims to examine the influence of Islamic character education on the knowledge and practices of digital citizenship among Generation Z. The findings indicate that Islamic character education plays a significant role in shaping the attitudes and behaviors of young people in the digital world. This research will provide evidence regarding the extent to which Islamic character education contributes to preparing Generation Z to face the challenges of information technology. Furthermore, this study is expected to make a theoretical contribution to the development of Islamic character education, which has been rarely explored in the context of digital citizenship among young generations.

LITERATURE REVIEW

1. Islamic Character Education

Islamic character education is a process of moral, ethical, and behavioral formation of individuals based on Islamic values derived from the Qur'an and Hadith. This education not only encompasses spiritual aspects but also emphasizes the development of superior character to face the challenges of the times. As stated in QS. Al-Ahzab: 21:

لَقَدْ كَانَ لَكُمْ فِي رَسُولِ اللَّهِ أُسْوَةٌ حَسَنَةٌ لِّمَن كَانَ يَرْجُوا اللَّهَ وَالْيَوْمَ الْآخِرَ وَذَكَرَ اللَّهَ كَثِيرًا ۗ

Translation: *"Indeed, there has certainly been for you in the Messenger of Allah an excellent pattern for anyone whose hope is in Allah and the Last Day and who remembers Allah often."*

This verse highlights the importance of role models in the formation of Islamic character. According to Hasanah et al. (2020), Islamic character education serves as an important foundation in shaping individuals with moral integrity, honesty, and social responsibility. Islamic character education is not only applied through religious teaching in formal schools but also through family and community education. Rahman et al. (2021) state that education based on Islamic values can produce individuals who are not only faithful but also responsible in social and digital contexts. This can be seen in the implementation of values such as respect for parents, teachers, and peers, which form the basis of Islamic character development. Furthermore, Abdullah and Suryadi (2020) emphasize the importance of the role of family education as the foundation for Islamic character formation from an early age.

In the context of formal education, the integration of Islamic character education becomes an important strategy to face globalization (Sari & Hakim, 2022). For example, through project-based learning that connects Islamic values with global issues, students are taught to think critically and act ethically. Additionally, Hidayat and Zulkarnain (2019) emphasize the need for

curriculum development that integrates Islamic values with technology to prepare the younger generation to face the challenges of the digital era. In this digital era, Islamic character education is also relevant for building digital literacy awareness based on Islamic ethical values, such as honesty in disseminating information and responsibility in using social media.

Another study by Alwi et al. (2022) highlights the importance of developing learning programs that directly connect Islamic teachings with the challenges of the modern era. For example, they suggest teaching critical thinking skills based on Islamic values to help students face misinformation or fake news in the digital world.

2. Concept of Digital Citizenship

Digital citizenship is defined as the ability of individuals to participate actively, ethically, and responsibly in a digital environment (Ribble, 2021). This concept encompasses an understanding of digital rights and responsibilities, the productive use of technology, and the avoidance of negative behaviors such as cyberbullying and information misuse. According to Choi (2016), digital citizenship involves nine key elements, including digital literacy, digital ethics, and social responsibility.

Research related to digital citizenship has highlighted the importance of education in shaping the digital behavior of the younger generation. A study conducted by Park and Kim (2020) shows that digital citizenship education in schools can enhance students' understanding of digital ethics and responsible technology use. In the context of Islam, values such as honesty, responsibility, and empathy can be integrated into digital citizenship education to create a more ethical digital society (Nurdin, 2021).

Furthermore, the concept of digital citizenship is also relevant in addressing the challenges faced by the younger generation in the digital era. For instance, according to Ribble (2021), effective digital citizenship education not only involves technology literacy but also the development of critical thinking skills to identify misinformation. Additionally, the integration of Islamic values can help students understand the importance of digital ethics, such as maintaining privacy, avoiding plagiarism, and using technology for constructive purposes.

Research by Nurdin (2021) also shows that the application of Islamic values such as justice, honesty, and responsibility in digital citizenship education can enhance social awareness and solidarity in the online world. In this regard, the role of teachers and educational institutions is key in providing examples and guiding students to practice digital ethics in their daily lives. Moreover, project-based learning that involves the application of technology to solve real-world problems can encourage students to use technology creatively and responsibly.

In the context of Islamic character education, the concept of digital citizenship can be implemented through an integrative approach. For example, learning that combines case studies on digital ethics with Islamic principles can provide students with a deeper understanding. Additionally, the use of digital platforms for discussion and collaboration can serve as a means to cultivate social responsibility and empathy in the online world.

Thus, digital citizenship is not only about the use of technology but also about how moral and ethical values can shape human interactions in the digital realm. This indicates that digital citizenship education based on Islamic values has great potential to create a more ethical and responsible digital society.

3. Profile of Generation Z

Generation Z, born between 1997 and 2012, is the first generation to grow up with full access to digital technology from an early age. They are referred to as digital natives because they have been surrounded by digital devices and the internet since childhood. The rapid

development of technology, from the internet and social media to smartphones, influences their way of life, how they interact, and how they learn. According to Twenge (2017), Generation Z has broad access to technology and information, which allows them to adapt more quickly to various technological advancements. However, behind this ease of access, there are significant challenges that Generation Z must face, one of which is a low awareness of digital ethics and the risks of technology misuse.

A. Characteristics of Generation Z

One of the main characteristics of Generation Z is their strong reliance on technology for various aspects of their lives, including education. Prensky (2020) states that Generation Z has a technology-based learning style; they are more responsive to learning that integrates digital tools and direct interaction through online platforms. This characteristic makes them very familiar with IT-based learning, such as e-learning and the use of educational applications. They are also more likely to communicate through social media, which affects how they interact with the outside world. However, on the other hand, this generation also experiences difficulties in direct social skills. According to research by McKinsey & Company (2020), although Generation Z is highly connected through technology, they often feel lonely and have difficulty building face-to-face relationships. This indicates a paradox where they are very connected virtually but tend to be less emotionally connected in the real world.

B. Islamic Character Education and Digital Citizenship

One of the significant challenges faced by Generation Z is the lack of awareness regarding ethics in the use of digital technology. Huda et al. (2021) note that the lack of ethical guidance in technology use can lead to negative behaviors in the digital world, such as cyberbullying, social media addiction, or the spread of misinformation. Therefore, Islamic character education becomes crucial in fostering ethical awareness among them. Islamic character education that integrates values such as honesty, responsibility, and empathy can help Generation Z face the challenges present in the online world. Alwi et al. (2022) emphasize the importance of integrating Islamic values into the curriculum to shape ethical digital behavior. Islamic character education not only serves to cultivate noble morals but also teaches them how to act wisely and responsibly in using technology. Abdullah and Suryadi (2020) found that religion-based character education has a positive influence on students' digital literacy, meaning they are better able to understand and use technology in an ethical and wise manner.

C. Culture-Based Digital Citizenship Education

In a global context, many studies highlight the importance of culture-based digital citizenship education. Kim and Rhee (2021) reveal that digital citizenship education programs based on local cultural values can enhance ethical awareness among the youth. This is relevant to the approach of Islamic character education, which emphasizes religious values as the foundation of digital ethics. In this context, Islamic character education that teaches religious values can serve as a bridge to help Generation Z actively participate in the digital world with full responsibility.

D. Challenges and Opportunities for Generation Z in the Digital Era

Generation Z has extraordinary access to various types of technology, which provides them with opportunities to develop their potential in a more flexible and rapid manner compared to previous generations. They can learn independently through various digital platforms, collaborate with people from different parts of the world, and develop skills relevant to the needs

of the times. However, significant challenges also arise related to issues of technology dependence, social media addiction, and exposure to content that does not align with ethical values.

Islamic character education, which prioritizes moral and spiritual values, can be key in helping Generation Z understand the impact of their behavior in the digital world and guide them to use technology wisely.

Method

This study employs a literature review approach, which is an effective method for collecting and analyzing information relevant to the research topic. Data collection techniques are carried out through literature sources that include books, journals, and seminar proceedings related to Islamic character education and digital citizenship. According to Creswell (2014), a literature review allows researchers to identify and analyze previous relevant studies, thereby providing a broader context for the issues being investigated. In the context of this research, the researcher analyzes literature data related to the research focus, namely the role of Islamic character education in developing digital citizenship among Generation Z.

Result and Discussion

The findings of this study underscore the significant role of Islamic character education in fostering digital citizenship among Generation Z. In an era characterized by rapid technological advancements and widespread access to digital platforms, the challenges of misinformation, cyberbullying, and unethical behavior have become increasingly prevalent. This section discusses how Islamic character education can effectively address these challenges through several key points.

1. **Enhancing Ethical Awareness:** Islamic character education plays a crucial role in helping students understand the importance of ethics in digital interactions. As noted by Refai (2023), "Islamic character education equips students with the skills necessary to behave ethically in digital interactions." By instilling a strong ethical foundation, students are better prepared to navigate the complexities of the digital landscape.
2. **Fostering Critical Thinking Skills:** This educational approach also promotes the development of critical thinking skills essential for evaluating information. Research by Kim and Rhee (2021) indicates that "digital citizenship education based on local cultural values can enhance ethical awareness among the youth." By encouraging students to think critically about the information they encounter online, Islamic character education helps them discern credible sources from misleading ones.
3. **Integrating Islamic Values into the Curriculum:** The incorporation of Islamic values into educational curricula can significantly shape responsible digital behavior. Rahman et al. (2023) emphasize that "education based on Islamic values can reduce negative behavior among adolescents by providing a clear ethical framework." This integration not only reinforces moral principles but also guides students in their online interactions.
4. **Case Studies of Implementation:** Several educational institutions that have adopted Islamic character education programs report positive outcomes in students' digital behavior. For instance, a program developed by Huda et al. (2021) demonstrates that students engaged in Islam-based character education exhibit improvements in ethical behavior and digital responsibility. These case studies highlight the practical implications of integrating character education into the digital citizenship framework.

In conclusion, Islamic character education not only contributes to the moral development of individuals but also equips Generation Z with the necessary tools to face global challenges ethically and responsibly. This educational approach lays a strong foundation for positive interactions in the digital realm, enabling students to tackle issues such as misinformation and negative online behavior. By embedding Islamic values within the curriculum and educational practices, we can cultivate a more ethical and responsible digital society. The findings of this study illustrate the immense potential of Islamic character education in shaping positive digital behavior and enhancing social awareness among youth, thereby enabling them to make meaningful contributions in an increasingly complex digital environment.

Conclusion

Islamic character education plays a very important role in building digital citizenship among Generation Z. Through an approach that emphasizes ethical values, this education not only helps students understand the importance of ethical behavior in digital interactions but also encourages the development of critical thinking skills necessary for wisely assessing information. The integration of Islamic values into the educational curriculum has proven effective in shaping responsible digital behavior and reducing negative behavior among adolescents.

Case studies showing positive results from Islamic character education programs affirm that this approach can enhance students' social awareness and digital responsibility. Thus, Islamic character education not only contributes to the formation of moral individuals but also equips Generation Z with the skills and values needed to face global challenges ethically and responsibly.

Overall, the potential of Islamic character education in creating a more ethical and responsible digital society is significant. By adopting these values into educational practices, we can cultivate a generation of youth who are capable of making positive contributions in an increasingly complex and challenging digital environment.

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