

The Effectiveness of Social Media in Enhancing Learning Interest in Islamic Religious Education among Generation Z

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Abstract

This study aims to examine the effectiveness of social media utilization in enhancing students' interest in learning Islamic Religious Education (Pendidikan Agama Islam/PAI) among Generation Z. As a generation that has grown up alongside rapid technological advancements and extensive social media usage, Generation Z demonstrates distinctive learning characteristics that differ from previous generations. The study is motivated by the relatively low level of student interest in Islamic Religious Education and the considerable potential of social media as an engaging, interactive, and technology, oriented learning medium. This research employed a quantitative approach using a survey method involving secondary school students as research participants. Data were collected through questionnaires designed to measure the extent of social media use and students' learning interest. The collected data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistical techniques. The findings indicate that the appropriate and purposeful use of social media positively influences students' interest in learning Islamic Religious Education. The utilization of platforms such as YouTube, Instagram, TikTok, and WhatsApp contributes to creating a more engaging learning environment, enhancing students' motivation, and encouraging active participation in learning activities. Therefore, social media can serve as an effective and innovative alternative learning medium that aligns with contemporary technological developments and supports the enhancement of learning interest among Generation Z students in Islamic Religious Education.

Keywords: social media; learning interest; Islamic Religious Education; Generation Z; digital learning

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INTRODUCTION

In the contemporary digital era, advancements in information and communication technology have significantly transformed various aspects of human life, including education. Social media platforms are increasingly used for communication and entertainment purposes and are often perceived as more engaging than conventional learning resources. As digital natives, Generation Z has been exposed to technological innovations from an early age and frequently utilizes social media in daily activities. Consequently, social media has emerged as a promising educational platform, particularly in Islamic Religious Education (PAI), as it enables learning experiences that are more engaging and aligned with current technological developments (Putri & Nugroho, 2022).

Learning interest is a fundamental factor influencing students' academic achievement and comprehension. Students who demonstrate high learning interest tend to participate actively in learning activities, maintain greater concentration, and exhibit stronger motivation to engage in educational processes. However, student interest in

Islamic Religious Education remains relatively low. This phenomenon is particularly evident among Generation Z learners, who generally prefer visual, concise, and interactive digital content over conventional instructional approaches that are often perceived as monotonous and less appealing (Sari et al., 2021).

Social media platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube offer various advantages, including accessibility, interactivity, flexibility, and attractive content presentation. These characteristics correspond closely with Generation Z's preferred learning styles, which emphasize digital engagement and interactive experiences. Therefore, integrating social media into educational practices is expected to enhance students' interest and engagement in Islamic Religious Education. Rahman and Hidayat (2023) argued that social media integration can facilitate learning processes that are both effective and enjoyable.

Moreover, social media provides opportunities for interaction among students and between students and teachers. Educators can employ social media to distribute learning materials, facilitate discussions, and communicate educational messages through innovative and creative approaches. Such utilization contributes to the creation of a more relaxed and enjoyable learning atmosphere, thereby reducing student boredom during the learning process (Wahyuni & Prasetyo, 2020).

Despite its numerous advantages, social media usage in educational contexts also presents several challenges. Aminah, (2024) noted that inappropriate social media usage may disrupt learning processes because students may become more focused on entertainment content than educational materials. Therefore, appropriate strategies are required to ensure that social media contributes positively to enhancing students' learning interest, particularly in Islamic Religious Education.

Based on these considerations, investigating the effectiveness of social media in increasing Generation Z students' interest in learning Islamic Religious Education is essential. The findings are expected to provide insights into the educational potential of social media and serve as a reference for developing innovative and technology oriented instructional approaches suitable for contemporary learners. Fauzi and Lestari (2021) emphasized that digital media based learning approaches can contribute significantly to improving educational quality in the modern era.

METHODS

This study employed a quantitative research approach to investigate the effectiveness of social media utilization in enhancing Generation Z students' interest in learning Islamic Religious Education. A quantitative approach was selected because the study focused on measuring the relationship and influence between social media usage as the independent variable and students' learning interest as the dependent variable in a systematic, objective, and measurable manner.

The research adopted a survey design, which enabled direct data collection from respondents regarding the phenomenon under investigation. According to Sugiyono (2021), survey methods facilitate the collection of data that accurately reflect real conditions in the field.

The research population consisted of Generation Z students enrolled in secondary schools. Participants were selected using purposive sampling based on predetermined criteria, particularly students who actively utilized social media in both educational and daily activities. The sample size was determined according to research requirements to ensure that the collected data adequately represented the target population. Arikunto (2020)

emphasized that appropriate sample selection is essential for obtaining representative and accurate research findings.

Data were collected using structured questionnaires developed based on indicators of social media utilization and students' learning interest. The instrument employed a five point Likert scale consisting of strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, and strongly disagree responses. Prior to data collection, the instrument underwent validity and reliability testing to ensure accuracy and consistency. Riduwan (2021) stated that validity and reliability testing are crucial procedures for ensuring the credibility of research instruments.

Data analysis was conducted using descriptive and inferential statistical techniques. Descriptive statistics were employed to describe the levels of social media usage and learning interest, while inferential statistics were utilized to examine the relationship and influence between the study variables. Correlation and simple regression analyses were performed using statistical software to improve analytical accuracy and efficiency. Ghazali (2022) suggested that statistical software significantly facilitates data processing and interpretation.

Through this methodological approach, the study aimed to provide a comprehensive understanding of how social media contributes to enhancing Generation Z students' interest in learning Islamic Religious Education and to offer recommendations for future digital learning innovations.

RESULTS & DISCUSSION

Results

The findings indicate that social media utilization contributes positively to increasing Generation Z students' interest in learning Islamic Religious Education. Growing up in a highly digitalized environment, Generation Z demonstrates a preference for technology based learning approaches over conventional instructional methods. Platforms such as YouTube, Instagram, TikTok, and WhatsApp facilitate learning experiences that are more engaging, interactive, and accessible. Previous studies by Mirawati and Mislaini (2024) and Supriadi, Taufiqurrahman, and Samsuddin (2025) similarly reported that social media supports learning processes that are more effective and aligned with the characteristics of Generation Z learners.

The implementation of social media as a learning medium was associated with increased student participation, enthusiasm, and understanding of religious concepts. Students demonstrated greater involvement in classroom discussions and exhibited stronger motivation to engage with learning materials. Furthermore, the learning environment became more flexible and less monotonous, contributing to improved learning experiences.

Research on digital innovation in Islamic Religious Education has also shown that Generation Z students prefer visually appealing and interactive learning content. Educational videos, Islamic podcasts, digital quizzes, and creatively designed instructional materials were found to enhance students' concentration and learning motivation. These findings support the argument that digital media can substantially improve student engagement throughout the learning process (Supriadi et al., 2025).

Instagram Reels based instructional media were also identified as effective tools for increasing students' interest in learning Islamic Religious Education. The use of short, visually engaging videos reduced boredom and facilitated better comprehension of learning materials. Akbar, Salminawati, and Rakhmawati (2023) reported similar findings,

emphasizing that creative social media content can significantly increase students' interest in religious education.

Digital innovations involving applications such as Canva, interactive videos, and educational social media platforms further contributed to creating enjoyable and modern learning environments. These tools enabled students to access educational content independently at any time and from any location, thereby enhancing learning flexibility and autonomy (Fatikhasari, 2024).

Nevertheless, several challenges were identified, including limited internet access and insufficient supervision of students' social media activities. Rahmatika and Muharromah (2024) emphasized that effective supervision is essential to ensure that social media remains a productive educational resource.

Discussion

The widespread use of digital platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, YouTube, and WhatsApp has become an integral aspect of Generation Z's daily life. This phenomenon provides significant opportunities for educators to integrate social media into instructional practices, particularly within Islamic Religious Education. According to Supriadi et al. (2025), Generation Z learners demonstrate strong preferences for visual, practical, and interactive learning experiences.

Social media enables educators to transform traditional lecture based instruction into more dynamic forms of content delivery, including short educational videos, infographics, Islamic podcasts, and interactive quizzes. Such innovative approaches create a more engaging and modern learning environment, thereby increasing students' motivation and interest in learning (Mirawati & Mislaini, 2024).

Another significant advantage of social media is its ability to support flexible and independent learning. Students can access educational materials anytime and anywhere through mobile devices, allowing them to review learning content outside formal classroom settings. This flexibility contributes to improved learning effectiveness and supports self directed learning behaviors (Supriadi, 2025).

Furthermore, social media integration promotes student creativity. Applications such as Canva and TikTok enable teachers to assign creative projects, including Islamic educational videos, digital da'wah content, and religious posters. These activities encourage active student participation and deeper engagement with learning materials. (Ningsih, 2025) highlighted that digital learning approaches significantly enhance students' creativity and learning interest.

However, despite these benefits, excessive or inappropriate use of social media may negatively affect learning outcomes. The abundance of entertainment content can reduce students' concentration and distract them from educational objectives. Consequently, teacher and parental supervision remains essential to ensure that social media usage contributes positively to students' academic development. Rahmatika and Muharromah (2024) emphasized that effective monitoring is necessary to maximize educational benefits while minimizing potential risks.

Overall, social media can serve as an effective learning medium for enhancing Generation Z students' interest in Islamic Religious Education when implemented appropriately. Creative, interactive, and purposeful utilization of social media can foster engaging learning experiences that align with contemporary technological developments. Nevertheless, continuous guidance and supervision remain crucial to ensuring optimal educational outcomes (Patmawati, 2025; Limo, 2025).

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings and discussion, it can be concluded that social media plays a significant role in enhancing Generation Z students' interest in learning Islamic Religious Education. Platforms such as YouTube, Instagram, TikTok, and WhatsApp provide engaging, interactive, and accessible learning experiences that align with the learning preferences of contemporary students.

The integration of educational videos, visual designs, interactive quizzes, and other digital learning resources contributes to increased motivation, participation, and learning interest. Furthermore, social media facilitates flexible and independent learning by enabling students to access educational content at any time and from any location.

Despite these advantages, the educational use of social media requires appropriate supervision and guidance from teachers and parents. Excessive social media use may reduce learning concentration and expose students to non educational content. Therefore, social media utilization should be directed toward positive and educational activities that support learning objectives.

In conclusion, social media represents an effective and innovative learning medium capable of enhancing students' interest in Islamic Religious Education, provided that it is utilized responsibly and strategically within educational contexts.

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