

Generation "Z's Perception of Religious Moderation and Tendency to Choose Religious Studies in Indonesia

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ABSTRACT

Purpose – The purpose of this research is to reveal the potential interest tendency of Gen Z in choosing the theme of religious studies, when Gen Z has an open character but does not want to be bound by a religious system that is too strict based on student experience.

Design/methods/approach – This type of research is qualitative research with a phenomenological approach. The focus of this phenomenological research is the researcher's curiosity about students' experiences in behavior and the extent of their perceptions related to the selection of religious studies in successive time series that occur to respondents. Respondents in this study consisted of 40 students from different schools. The respondents were selected by purposive sampling. The data analysis used is based on Bogdan and Biklen's method.

Findings – The experience of students in participating in the study tends to lead to themes that are easy to enjoy such as the theme of fiqh and akhlaq. This diversity shows the openness and openness of this shows the potential for more moderation in religious views and attitudes.

Research implications/limitations – Opening up knowledge is related to awareness of the importance of choosing religious studies, especially for the younger generation or known as Gen Z. Therefore, it is important to help teenagers to choose places for religious studies that do not lead to radicalism to the point of destroying proper understanding. Apart from that, the first step to start is through school. Schools should be more responsive and increase their sensitivity regarding student potential.

Originality/value – This research still has limitations, especially in collecting the number of respondents. Hopefully future researchers can minimize this deficiency, and subsequent research can be more perfect. Apart from that, future researchers can also measure the extent of religious literacy in students so that the studies that can be given can be measured well.

 OPEN ACCESS

ARTICLE HISTORY

Received: 10-05-2023

Revised: 10-06-2023

Accepted: 30-06-2023

KEYWORDS

Islamic study,
Curriculum, Studies,
Religion, Religious
Moderation

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Introduction

The world of education in the era of advances in information and technology in addition to providing benefits, is also a serious challenge for the world of education (Kistoro et al., 2021). Including challenges for educators who teach religious sciences either in madrasah or in schools. The religious curriculum in the sense of content / content of religious curriculum material, formally actually already exists (Aktan, 2018). But in fact, it is not enough to feed the Z generation's knowledge of diversity, the majority of which are students at school and madrasah levels.

There are paradoxical nuances in the attitudes, thoughts and psychology of generation Z. For them, the meaning of religion in life is not too important. They live in conditions of sophisticated technological advances. They are smart in using social media, but do not care about the surrounding environment (Miftakhuddin, 2020). Even if they need aspects of spirituality, spirituality is not bound by religious doctrine (Abdullah et al., 2021). But on the other hand, generation z experiences confusion in religious identity. Actually, when the spiritual potential of generation z can be maximized properly, there are many spiritual factors that exist in generation z'; religious spiritual point of view, social spiritual point of view, religious ethical spiritual point of view (Jalal et al., 2021). These perspectives make generation z more likely to have an open attitude in responding to their lives, so they are easy to learn and learn new things, especially related to technology and information.

Generation z is known as an intelligent generation, but has a dependence on technology, and is seen as more open and tolerant (Bencsik et al., 2019). Generation z's intelligence also demands logic from religion hypothetically. When they do not get the logic aspect of religion, they tend to be skeptical; that is, they do not believe in things that are dogmatic religion (Dimock, 2019), even though skepticism can actually be an entrance to the space of confusion, emptiness so that there is no happiness. Whereas to get happiness in life is by means of religion. Religion provides value and meaning to life. Humans must carry out religious values to achieve happiness (Ru'iyah et al., 2020), because religion offers meaning to life and life to be meaningful.

Generation z has an empty space; loneliness, emptiness, turmoil and alienation in modern and unfocused life (Anggraeni, 2022). Based on this, there is actually potential and opportunity that can be done by the world of education so that the empty space can be filled with things that are beneficial to generation z and society, such as religious materials that can equip generation z to live better, more useful, and more meaningful, through religious study materials.

This research will reveal the tendency of Gen z to choose religious studies themes in public schools in Yogyakarta. From these tendencies, it can be seen that Gen z has a tendency and understanding of diversity with certain patterns and patterns, which can affect Gen z's religious moderation attitude. When the tendency is then how to be analyzed from a curriculum perspective. This discussion is very important because the perspective and mindset can be influenced by what they read, study and discuss.

Methods

Research design

This type of research is qualitative research with a phenomenological approach (Kistoro et al., 2022). The focus of this phenomenological research is the researcher's curiosity about students' experiences in behavior and the extent of their perceptions related to the selection of religious studies in successive time series that occur to respondents.

Target of research

The selection of this phenomenological research is based on the experiences of students of public schools and madrasahs in the Special Region of Yogyakarta. Respondents in this study consisted of 40 students from different schools. The respondents were selected by purposive sampling with the specifications of students with different backgrounds of study theme selection tendencies, diverse experiences in religious selection, and have experience in the tendency of selecting mobile recitation according to the recitation theme of interest. In-depth interviews were conducted with respondents in two ways, namely online in the form of Zoom Meeting and face-to-face. Data collection was carried out from July to October 2022. The topics raised in the interviews lead to the results of preliminary research which obtained themes including aqidah-themed studies, akhlaq-themed studies, fiqh-themed studies, islam and science-themed studies, and islam and culture-themed studies.

Data Analysis Techniques

The data from the interviews were processed based on uniform themes. The data analysis used is based on Bogdan and Biklen's staging (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). This aims to make it easier for researchers to find conical findings so as not to obtain diverse data and be able to interpret data according to existing phenomena. The first step is to reduce the interview data based on themes. Furthermore, presenting the themes that have been grouped to connect into a uniform theme so that it is easy to interpret. The interview results that have been obtained are confidential research data so that researchers guarantee the privacy of respondents so as not to affect the assessment of outsiders. Therefore, the researcher used the respondent's identity coding in showing the results of the interview.

Trustworthiness

Qualitative research is no different from quantitative research which both require valid evidence in describing the data obtained in the study. There are various ways that can be done in showing the trustworthiness of qualitative research data, one of which is the triangulation method. Triangulation also has several types, in this study the researcher chose time triangulation so that the researcher needed a little long time to prove the data obtained was saturated. The data collection technique used was interviews with each student at least two to three times within a period of 10 days with interview sessions taking about 30 minutes for each student.

Result and Discussion

The themes chosen by respondents show the general picture and tendency of their interests, attitudes, and thoughts. The identification results related to the Islamic study themes chosen by respondents are about Fiqh, Aqidah, Akhlak, Tarikh (History), Islam and Science, and Islam and Culture. The following are the reasons why they chose certain themes according to their choices.

Table 1. The results of the reduction of the reasons and benefits of each research data theme

Theme	Reasons	Benefits
Fiqh	Want to know the topic of discussion; To worship correctly so as not to forget; To deepen Related to the daily life kaifiat; To know the law of God; Because the purpose of man is worship; Fiqh, including prayer, is a pillar of religion; Women's fiqh is something that is rarely discussed;	Inspiration; Worship correctly; Knowledge is maintained and more in-depth; Increase the quality of worship; Knowing what is right and what is not; Getting spiritual inspiration; Knowing more about proper prayer; Having future provisions as a woman.
Aqidah	To be inspired and repent; To know the foundation of Islam Increasingly convinced that there is a final day; Because you want a strong foundation	Can introspect; Receive guidance; Better life
Akhlaq	To know daily morals; To fortify oneself; Everyone must have morals; Lack of ethics in the younger generation; LGBT is becoming a trend; Tazkiyatunnaf; Many teenagers lack morals; The main charity for Muslims; To keep socializing, but know how to do it properly; Parents are the noblest human beings after the apostle; Intense study of Akhlaq is rare	Good morals; Learn many things; Can learn morals; Can obey the rules; So as not to fall into the trap; Getting closer to God; Means, Motivated; Getting closer to God; Gaining strength with a touch of akhlaq material; Getting very valuable
Tarikh	Knowing the truth of history so as not to misunderstand history; Knowing the stories of prophets; Much wisdom; Eager to do good	Not repeating dark history; Being inspired and grateful to be alive today; Can memetic wisdom
Islam and Sains	Knowing the interconnectedness of science and religion.	Balance and harmony between religious affairs and science
Islam and Culture	The theme is warm and engaging	Knowing the culture of his own people

In addition, in strengthening the results of each theme, the researcher investigated with Word Cloud where the results showed that in each religious study of interest had a tendency with the themes described through the interview results. The following in Figure 1 is the result of the analysis using Word Cloud.



Figure 1. Word Cloud

1. Review of Fiqh Material

Fiqh material in addition to instilling religious attitudes can also facilitate students in forming tolerant characters and attitudes, namely through processes, discussions, expressing opinions and ideas in discussing various issues. One respondent said that fiqh material can help to know the kaifiat of daily life in society: kaifiat and attitudes towards God and kaifiat living with humans and the environment. If fiqh material is taught in the right way, by the right teacher, it will produce a good attitude. Not only understanding (fiqh) himself but also able to understand others outside himself. However, if fiqh is understood and taught as a doctrinaire identity, it allows problems to arise among religious believers.

"... To learn more about the procedures of daily life, to know the extent to which things are limited by Allah's law." (Jr-09)

"... the topic of fiqh is broad sir, I have not been able to grasp the diversity of fiqh topics, so I participated in many studies, especially when exams sometimes require extra time to study." (Jr-33)

2. Review of Akhlaq Material

Fiqh and morals, if they go hand in hand in human life consistently, will create peace and harmony in society. Akhlaq encourages us to spontaneously do activities, and fiqh guides us so that what we do is something that is right according to religion, doing the right thing in the right way. What the respondent said during the interview showed that the reason he chose the theme of morals was because he wanted to know how to get along properly and well. There is also a reason for choosing the theme of morals because he feels and sees that the environment is increasingly uncertain, so he hopes that he can protect himself and protect others. The destruction of nature and environmental conservation. Teachings about morals that come from religion teach humans about balance in behavior, starting from the balance of the soul which has implications for environmental balance.

Ideally, fiqh and morals cannot be separated, because morals are related to how an activity can be done and become a human character, while fiqh requires humans to do the right thing in the right way. Especially learning ushul fiqh because it can medoorng the emergence of a tolerant attitude.

"... studying and participating in akhlaq theme studies is one of the ways I fortify myself from the many cases such as LGBT which is now starting to develop a lot." (Jr-19)

"... There are many impacts if you don't learn akhlaq, one of which is that many teenagers are uncivilized, many fall into bad things, so they are far from Allah SWT." (Jr-22)

3. Review of Aqidah Material

Aqidah because they want to strengthen the foundation of their faith, to touch their hearts and beliefs, to know the foundation of Islam, and to always remember the last day. In general, the trend of expectations and related understanding is good, and this requires the development of a more progressive understanding for the good of himself and society. Aqidah does not stop at the dimension of self and Allah SWT but must become a generator of motivation for universal humanity, the relevance of divine values to human values. Akidah is the work of feeling theoretically or praxis. The feeling that humans have that they believe in the presence of God in every human activity, makes humans cautious. Prudence is a factor in the creation of a safe and comfortable situation both from the aspect of individual human beings and the social environment. Prudence is not always synonymous with being rigid and difficult to get along, let alone limiting oneself, but a way of how to regulate the rhythm and way of life and how to behave so as not to be mistaken before God and before humans. The integration of fiqh, morals and Aqidah is very important to learn well.

Aqidah as the main and fundamental element in Islamic teachings turns out to be in the view of respondents to be in the third position, after fiqh and morals. This is closely related to Gen Z which has an open character, and tends to think hypothetically, scientifically, and rationally rather than doctrinally, while Aqidah is doctrinal. Although there is no evidence and facts that Gen Z is less likely to choose the theme of religious studies on the aspect of faith, it does not necessarily mean that they do not need and do not necessarily want to be bound by a religious system and principles. But the fact that Gen Z in general tends to be more open and freer in expression and tends not to want to be bound by a system, it is true. Their way of learning is more likely to be online. The results of the study prove that online learning results in many faces in students.

" Aqidah is to maintain our faith in Allah SWT so that not only worship but can still improve and guide our life ..." (Jr-21)

"... the foundation of our belief in faith and Islam is that we live with guidelines so that we are always on a good path." (Jr-24)

4. Review of Study of Tarikh / History Material

Knowing the historical truth so that bad history is not repeated in the future, is the choice as well as the reason why one respondent is more likely to choose the theme of history. Studying history can learn about the journey of humanity. Learning to appreciate the journey of the past, both on the humanitarian, national, and religious sides, is an important part of a pluralistic society and contributes to the education of the nation's culture and character.

Learning to understand history means learning to understand the various aspects involved with the events of a case; there are people involved, roles, means, social settings. Not a few people are inspired by history, and they are even inspired to do something similar to achieve the same results. Not a few people are inspired by history, and they are even inspired to do the same so that they can achieve the same results. History sometimes presents an atmosphere of emotion for those who listen to it or read it. The atmosphere of emotion is not just because of the mystical condition that is present entering the past time passage related to something, but the emotion shows the energy that penetrates the soul that is aware and ready to take lessons from the past, even playing a role in the present to continue the spirit of struggle. This is not just about respecting others with their historical journey, but rather following in their footsteps.

"... it turns out that many things that are part of history, can be one of the inspirations and be grateful for the current conditions." (Jr-18)

"Yes, so that we do not make mistakes in tracing the history of the past, and must emulate, take lessons, ..." (Jr-30)

5. Review of Islam and Science Studies

Islam and science are no longer something that is contradicted, but becomes an integral part, because the nature and character of Islam is *syumuliyah*. Scientific cues that give birth to science are clearly stated in the Quran and Hadith. However, the transmission of science and technology, which has been the main channel, does separate science and religion, so that both seem to be something foreign and do not greet each other. This shows a good potential to develop the theme of Islamic studies and science, at a time when the majority of Gen Z is not very interested in religious themes in an integrative manner with science. Even if there is a separate nature; religion alone or science studies alone.

This self-potential if managed properly will provide a very positive space so that this generation Z can contribute scientifically and not leave the values of Islam and this is the generation of *ulul al bab* described by Allah in the Quran Surah Ali Imron verses 190-190, that *ulul al bab* are people who think and think well and balanced. Developing science can strengthen faith and worship of Allah, the stronger the faith and worship of Allah the more it benefits himself and others. The challenge of the *ulul al bab* generation is not limited to the strength of *dhikr* and *piker* but must advance on the path of the industrial revolution whose challenges are not simple, but must remain grounded in the values of Islamic

teachings and human nature. The ulul al bab generation should not be born in a vacuum, but it is born from an environment of people who have ulul albab characters. It is an opportunity as well as a challenge for schools and madrasas so that this ulul albab character becomes an important concern to be built and implemented in educational institutions.

"... learning Islam and then science is something that is lacking, but learning science that is easy to understand and shows the greatness of Allah through His revelation, makes it easier for me to understand the knowledge." (Jr-27)

"Islam and science are connected and complement each other so that when learning, it can be accepted easily." (Jr-13)

6. Review of Islamic and Cultural Studies

Respondents who show their knowledge related to Islam and local culture mean that they know and understand the teachings of Islam and their own culture as cultural wealth in the place where they interact. Discussing Islam and local culture cannot be separated from the teachings and discourses that develop in society, but also related to the local culture where the community lives. The term distinguishing between religion and culture indicates the existence of conversations and discourse about both.

Conversations between religion and culture occur in the activities of society, there are conditions that affect each other, so in the spread of Islam cannot be separated from the existing culture, there is a process of acculturation, between culture and religion. Conversations between Islam and local culture are played by agents who have the space and enough to influence each other. Religious figures who are authoritative in religious matters have strong influence in portraying religious messages in the community, as well as traditional leaders who are equally influential. There are times when they greet each other and hold hands, there are times when they are divergent and contradictory and even tense.

Gen Z's position in this context is only limited to following and just having fun, unlike the early generations who acted as contestants in fighting for ideals, be it cultural or religious aspects, so the religious aspects must be kept pure, which cultural aspects can be considered good and bad. Gen Z is very close to technology, but difficult to socialize. While the discussion of Islam and local culture in practice is in the activities and interactions of the community. So, if any of them have a tendency and are interested in the focus of study, it means that he has an open mind to study his religion and culture. This open attitude is an important part of a moderate attitude or moderation. The ministry of moderate life; an order of religious behavior that is accommodating to local culture, friendly in religion. Although the culture that has been running in society is not purely the result of religious practice, the strength of religious values that are implemented will affect the existing culture.

"... there were many things that I didn't know from the various stories of cultural connections that developed with Islamic values in them." (Jr-35)

"... the learning to recognize culture and Islam is not much to describe, which turns out to be in everyday life and taught without realizing it." (Jr-04)

Curriculum is an important factor in education, whether formal curriculum or hidden curriculum (Aktan, 2018). The curriculum becomes the blue print of education. There are four important components in the curriculum that greatly affect learning outcomes including the character and perspective of students, namely aspects of goals, content or material content, learning strategies (Afdal, 2015), methods and evaluation (Cahyo Adi Kistoro et al., 2021). When viewed in terms of curriculum, the study material or study content is only part of the educational curriculum. The important aspects that influence the strong mindset of students towards religious moderation views and attitudes, in addition to the material aspects, are the objectives, methods and evaluation aspects.

Educational objectives are the basic and urgent aspects of education, because with these learning objectives participants will be escorted, assisted, motivated to become someone in accordance with these objectives. The goals also need to be arranged in stages and systematic and implementative procedures. Educational goals will not be achieved if from the beginning the preparation procedure does not match the expectations and stages of learning (Hopid & Kistoro, 2022). Whoever the teacher is, the companion who teaches and conveys fiqh, morals, Tarikh, akidan, Islam and science as well as Islam and local culture should know, what is the purpose of the learner. Even the goals also need to be integrated with other aspects or with other sciences, because in essence this life is always connected and integrated with other aspects and dimensions.

The distinctive feature of Islamic education goals is the integration between the aspects of the world and the hereafter (Daun & Arjmand, 2018), so that in its formulation requires an integrative way of thinking. Learning fiqh is not only aimed at knowing the science of fiqh and carrying it out as individual piety towards God, but also learning to understand other fiqh (understanding) beyond one's own understanding. The purpose of learning akhkaq is not limited to making the learner have morals towards God and himself and his group, but to have morals with all of Allah's creations. Likewise, learning Tarikh and Aqidah, in order to be able to understand and appreciate the past so that it has awareness of its role today, by having a strong belief in Allah which is actualized with a good attitude towards all creatures of Allah Swt. Of course this requires people or educators who are broad-minded. PAI teachers with high competence (Adi, 2021), moderate and open.

Teaching materials are an important part of the curriculum. What will be taught, that is the teaching material or content. Materials also need to be arranged in accordance with the order of the objectives of education or learning. The preparation of good teaching materials is very decisive in the process of learning and learning through teaching materials (Nuryasana & Desiningrum, 2020). Learning thoroughly systematically in stages is very decisive for results. In addition to teaching materials must be adjusted to learning objectives, the stages and sequence of delivery of teaching materials need to be considered by educators. If the purpose of learning is moderation, it is impossible for students to only learn fiqh from one madhhab perspective. Diversity needs to be conveyed

from the start, both diversity in the aspect of teaching materials, ways or goals and methods. Outside the formal structure of the curriculum, religious moderation in schools can use the hidden curriculum (Orón Semper & Blasco, 2018). Implementation with habituation internalization and institutionalization.

Hidden curriculum is very flexible so that without being included in the curriculum structure it can still be run as long as there are parties who are concerned and focused on managing it well. In fact, this hidden curriculum in certain cases is even more effective. Lemeted group, which was pioneered by Prof. Mukti Ali, is quite effective in forming open thinking in the discussion participants. If educators know the potential and tendency of students in choosing the theme of study, then in response to accommodating policies or programs, it will be an extraordinary potential, and can develop and develop for the better, of course by using methods that are relevant to existing conditions.

The opinion that methods are more important than materials may not always be true in all conditions of education. But the limitation of methods in the learning process can also lead to the failure of education because both learners and teaching materials are not conveyed properly. Every method used in learning or learning is intended to produce an effective and efficient learning process, and facilitate learning objectives (Lee et al., 2020). An interesting method can spark learners to learn better. There are many kinds of methods that can be applied in learning activities. Active learning with 101 active learning strategies can be learned in Mel Silberman's book, then applied in the learning process (Silberman et al., 2015).

Learning methods can facilitate the objectives and teaching materials to be delivered appropriately, effectively, and efficiently. The methods in Mel Silberman's book are more democratic. The implementation of democratic learning methods encourages communication between educators and students, even providing the widest possible opportunity for students to exchange thoughts and ideas according to the way and learning style of students.

In order for learners to have open and democratic views and attitudes, educators can start early. The tendency of students to have a desire to study fiqh, morals, akidah, Tarikh, Islam and science and Islam and local culture shows that there is open potential and is ready to be given good and useful information. Learning objectives are realized with learning materials and delivered to students through learning methods. To see the extent of the success of learning that has been done, there is an evaluation process. Evaluation has an important role in encouraging students to be motivated to learn, as well as improving the quality of student learning and even the quality of educators (Brockerhoff-Macdonald, 2013). The evaluation carried out must be in accordance with the objectives of education or learning that have previously been determined.

To find out the extent to which learning is successful, religious moderation based PAI learning has three stages: material planning, implementation and evaluation (Latipah et al., 2020). In relation to Gen z's tendency to choose the theme of religious studies, the school or teacher needs to prepare from the beginning the learning objectives, teaching material planning, implementation, and evaluation that have the spirit and style of religious

moderation. Curriculum components: objectives, materials, methods, and evaluation are key factors in the formation of moderate religious understanding, as well as environmental factors and interactions outside of school. It is necessary to think, a comprehensive curriculum in educating, including educating and fostering Gen z.

Conclusion

The character of Gen Z, which has a tendency not to want to be bound by the rules of religious institutions, does not mean that they are alien to religious studies. In fact, they need religious studies, even tend to be more diverse. have a diverse tendency in choosing religious study materials. This diversity is a very positive and contributive potential to manage the perception, perspective and attitude of Gen z in religion, and this requires a good curriculum. Therefore, curriculum planning, curriculum implementation and curriculum evaluation must really be the concern of all parties involved in the world of education.

Schools should be more responsive and increase their sensitivity regarding the potential of students. The choice of religious study themes that tend to vary at the student level indicates the positive potential of students. This research still has limitations, especially in collecting the number of respondents. Hopefully future researchers can minimize this deficiency, and subsequent research can be more perfect. Apart from that, future researchers can also measure the extent of religious literacy in students so that the studies that can be given can be measured well.

Declarations

Author contribution statement

AH initiated the initial idea, developed the study, conducted preliminary studies, data collection, and wrote the draft article. AS initiated the initial idea, developed the study on religious content, and wrote the content. HF assisted in conducting preliminary studies, conducting assessments, reviews, and finalizing articles and assisted in data collection, analyzing data, reviewing, and finalizing the article. NR analyzed the data, interpreted the meaning, and finalized the article.

Funding statement

This research is the result of internal research supported by LPPM Ahmad Dahlan University, Indonesia.

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