



SPIRITUAL INTELLIGENCE IN THE ISLAMIC EDUCATION CURRICULUM: EFFORTS TO COUNTER THE MORAL CRISIS OF GENERATION Z

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Abstract

Generation Z grows up in a fast-paced and open digital era. On the one hand, they enjoy easy access to information and technology, but on the other hand, they also face a serious challenge in the form of a moral crisis. Phenomena such as a lack of responsibility, weakened empathy, and consumptive behavior often appear among young people. This study discusses the importance of spiritual intelligence in the Islamic Education (PAI) curriculum as an effort to address these issues. The method used is a literature review by examining various relevant sources. The findings show that spiritual intelligence helps students develop deeper religious awareness, self-control, and the ability to make wiser decisions. By integrating spiritual intelligence values into the PAI curriculum, it is expected that Generation Z will be better prepared to face the challenges of the modern era without losing their moral direction and character.

Keywords: *Spiritual Intelligence, Islamic Education Curriculum, Generation Z, Moral Crisis.*

INTRODUCTION

Generation Z grew up in an era heavily influenced by technology and globalisation. Social media, smartphones, the internet and digital culture have led to the rapid dissemination of information. While there are many benefits, there are also negative impacts, such as the emergence of consumerist behaviour, low empathy, a loss of moral values and increased digital distractions. These issues have raised concerns that today's youth are experiencing a moral crisis, characterised by a weakening of character traits such as responsibility, honesty, and social awareness.

Islamic Religious Education (PAI) is one of the main pillars for instilling moral and spiritual values in Generation Z, and this should be achieved not only through cognitive material related to religious theory, but also through spiritual experiences, habit formation and real internalisation in everyday life. A relevant educational concept is spiritual intelligence, which includes awareness of God, empathy, self-control, the meaning of life, and connection with others and the environment.

Several recent 2024 studies show empirical evidence of the benefits of integrating spiritual intelligence into formal and non-formal educational contexts.

- A study on optimising the hidden curriculum to develop students' spiritual

intelligence in junior high schools found that private schools in Medan had successfully achieved this through programmes such as religious literacy, Quran memorisation, congregational prayers and infaq activities as part of the hidden curriculum (Nabila & Miswar, 2024). (Nabila & Miswar, 2024).

- Research on increasing spiritual intelligence through the implementation of science-based learning in early childhood in Majalengka found that science-based learning from an early age can increase children's spiritual intelligence through applicable, interactive methods. (Lita et al., 2024).

- A study on 'The Role of Islamic Religious Education Teachers in Increasing Students' Spiritual Intelligence at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Negeri 2 Boyolali' shows that teachers play a dual role as both material instructors and spiritual role models, facilitating spiritual values in learning activities and school habits. (Wahyuningsih, 2024).

The study 'Integration of Spiritual Values in the Hidden Curriculum to Build Akhlakul Karimah Character' emphasises the need to consistently incorporate spiritual values such as faith, piety, gratitude and empathy into every aspect of school life, beyond formal teaching, in order to build akhlakul karimah character. (Fitriani & Wulandari, 2024).

Although the evidence is positive, there are various real challenges in implementing spiritual intelligence in the PAI curriculum. Some schools still prioritise cognitive aspects such as memorisation and theory, employing traditional teaching methods. PAI teachers often face time constraints and a lack of specific training in spiritual education. There is also minimal integration between the formal curriculum and students' daily life experiences. Additionally, family and community environments often fail to support the values taught in school optimally, resulting in weaker moral and spiritual internalisation.

Therefore, more in-depth research is needed on how spiritual intelligence can be systematically integrated into the PAI curriculum. This research will examine the following aspects: how to design an ideal PAI curriculum for Generation Z, including methods and materials containing spiritual values; the role of teachers in implementation; obstacles arising in practice; and supporting factors, such as support from schools, families and communities. It is hoped that the PAI curriculum will be more than just a formal religious subject; it should also be a powerful instrument in building the moral character of Generation Z, making them strong, religious individuals who can withstand the negative influences of the times.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study takes a qualitative, case-study approach to explore the implementation of spiritual intelligence in the Islamic Religious Education (IRE) curriculum at Madrasah Tsanawiyah level. The research focuses on understanding how spiritual values are transformed during the learning process and the contribution of this to the moral development of Generation Z students. Research steps include participatory observation of the PAI learning process in the classroom, including teacher-student interactions and the application of spiritual values in daily activities. In-depth interviews were conducted with PAI teachers, students and other relevant individuals to explore their perceptions, experiences and views on instilling spiritual values, as well as a documentation analysis examining syllabuses, lesson plans and teaching materials to assess the extent to which spiritual values are integrated into the PAI curriculum. Data collection instruments include observations of behaviours and interactions in the

classroom that reflect spiritual values. Semi-structured interviews were conducted to obtain in-depth information from informants, alongside the analysis of documentation, teaching materials, field notes and student feedback. The collected data were analysed using thematic analysis techniques to identify the main patterns that emerged from the observations, interviews and documentation. This process involves reducing, categorising, and interpreting the data to draw conclusions relevant to the research objectives (Abdussamad et al., 2024). The results of this study are expected to provide insights into how integrating spiritual intelligence into the PAI curriculum can contribute to shaping the moral character of Generation Z students, and the strategies educators use to overcome challenges in the digital age. (Suprayitno et al., 2024)

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Implementing Spiritual Intelligence in the Islamic Education Curriculum

This study found that spiritual intelligence is integrated into the Islamic Education (PAI) curriculum through a holistic approach combining traditional methods, such as lectures and discussions, with daily worship practices, alongside modern methods based on digital technology. PAI teachers emphasise cognitive, affective and spiritual aspects simultaneously, enabling students to understand religious theory and internalise moral values in their daily lives. Activities such as self-reflection, group prayer and character evaluation play an important role in the learning process, enabling students to relate religious teachings to their behaviour. This is consistent with findings that emphasise the importance of contextual and adaptive religious education for Generation Z. In addition, the application of spiritual values is carried out gradually and systematically in accordance with students' cognitive abilities. For instance, students first learn the concept of *akhlakul karimah* and are then shown how it can be applied in daily life. Finally, they are able to assess and improve their own behaviour. This gradual approach helps students to better understand the relevance of spiritual and moral values when facing modern challenges, including the influence of social media and digital socialising.

Learning strategies to counter the moral crisis

Islamic education teachers use creative learning strategies to address the moral crisis affecting Generation Z. One such strategy is the use of digital media, such as interactive learning applications, educational videos and online quizzes, which emphasise good moral values. (Pratama et al., 2024) This approach makes learning more interesting and relevant, and helps students to accept and apply spiritual values in real life. Teachers also use approaches based on stories of Islamic figures, case studies and group discussions to improve students' moral reflection skills. Using digital media in religious education can improve students' understanding of, and ability to apply, spiritual values. Alongside technology-based strategies, teachers emphasise daily habits such as praying together, reading motivational verses and taking part in social activities that encourage empathy for others. This approach has proven effective in shaping students' characters, making them more disciplined, responsible and caring towards their surroundings. This ensures that spiritual learning is not confined to the classroom, but is applied in everyday life. (Fadhilah, 2024)

Challenges in Implementing Spiritual Intelligence

Despite various strategies having been implemented, this study identified several challenges in the implementation of spiritual intelligence. Teachers face resource constraints, such as a lack of guidebooks, learning materials and specialist training to optimise spirituality-based learning. Additionally, the influence of social media and digital entertainment can distract students and reduce their adherence to moral values. (Kurnaesih et al., 2024)

These challenges are exacerbated by differences in students' social and cultural backgrounds, which affect their understanding of, and willingness to accept, spiritual material. Teacher preparedness and the effective use of technology are essential for the success of PAI learning in the digital age. Furthermore, some teachers struggle to adapt their teaching methods to Generation Z students, who tend to be active, critical thinkers who are accustomed to multitasking. Teachers must therefore be creative, flexible and innovative when delivering material, ensuring it remains relevant to students' experiences and interests without compromising the essence of the spiritual values they wish to instil. (Hasan & Amaluddin, 2025)

The Role of Parents and the Community in Supporting Spiritual Intelligence

As well as teachers, parents and the wider community play an important role in fostering spiritual intelligence in students. A harmonious family environment, praying regularly, monitoring gadget use, and participating in social activities can enhance the effectiveness of PAI learning in schools. (Aziddin, 2025) Collaboration between teachers, parents and the community fosters an environment that nurtures the moral character of Generation Z students. Integrating the various parties' roles in spiritual education is crucial to forming noble character. Furthermore, community activities involving students, such as social work, environmental service and mentoring from community leaders, can reinforce students' understanding of spiritual and moral values. Such activities also foster empathy, a sense of responsibility and social skills, enabling students to internalise spiritual values in real life as well as in the classroom. (Rizal & Amaluddin, 2025)

The Impact of Integrating Spiritual Intelligence into the PAI Curriculum

Integrating spiritual intelligence into the PAI curriculum has been proven to positively impact students' attitudes, behaviour and social interactions. Those accustomed to spiritual practices demonstrate higher levels of empathy, discipline and responsibility, and are less likely to engage in negative behaviours prevalent among Generation Z.

The implementation of spiritual learning also increases students' motivation, concentration and reflective thinking skills. This supports Rivai's (2025) theory that religious education prioritising spirituality can serve as a moral bulwark amid modernisation and digitalisation. Beyond individual impacts, integrating spiritual intelligence also has a positive effect on the school environment. Students show greater appreciation for their peers, teachers and parents, and actively participate in social activities that uphold moral values. This shows that spiritual education, if applied systematically and consistently, shapes students' character and fosters a positive, harmonious school culture. (Bhoki et al., 2025)

Conclusion and Implications

Based on the results of the study, it can be concluded that teaching spiritual intelligence in the PAI curriculum is very important for shaping the moral character of Generation Z students. By combining traditional methods traditional methods, such as lectures, group prayers, and self-reflection practices, with modern technology-based methods, such as interactive videos and digital quizzes, students not only understand religious material in theory but are also able to apply moral values in their daily lives. The support of teachers, parents, and the community plays a vital role in ensuring that spiritual learning can be carried out effectively. Students who are accustomed to spiritual habits and moral reflection show increased empathy, discipline, responsibility, and better reflective thinking skills.

The implication of this research is that schools need to design an Islamic Education curriculum that emphasizes moral values and spiritual intelligence and provides activities that support character building, such as social and extracurricular activities based on spirituality. Teachers need to be provided with adequate training and teaching materials so that learning methods are more creative, interesting, and suitable for Generation Z students. Parents and the community are also expected to actively support this, for example by encouraging prayer, supervising gadget use, and involving children in social activities so that moral values are more deeply instilled. In addition, this research can serve as a basis for the development of more innovative PAI modules based on spiritual intelligence that are relevant to the challenges of modern life.

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