

Social Media Preferences in Early Childhood Islamic Education: A Comparative Study of Millennials and Generation Z

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Abstract

This study examines differences in social media preferences for early childhood Islamic education among Millennial and Generation Z parents. Using a qualitative case study approach, data were collected through structured interviews, participatory observations, and document analysis involving ten participants—five from each generation—in Batang Regency. Findings reveal that Millennials prefer YouTube and Facebook, focusing on structured access to visual educational content such as animated Islamic videos and songs. In contrast, Gen Z actively uses TikTok, Instagram, and educational games, often creating original content or collaborating with online communities to creatively convey Islamic values. For Millennials, social media is a supportive tool to introduce Islamic teachings in a fun, visual way. At the same time, Gen Z uses it to build communities and teach basics like hijaiyah letters. However, a surprising finding is that Gen Z's usage tends to be irregular, with high frequency and duration, increasing risks of gadget addiction and exposure to negative content. The study contributes to understanding how generational differences shape modern Islamic education strategies via social media. It offers practical insights for parents, educators, and policymakers to develop age-appropriate approaches and establish guidelines for healthy, effective social media use in early Islamic education, ensuring positive engagement while minimizing digital risks.

Keywords

Early Childhood; Generation Z; Islamic Education; Millennials; Social Media

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1. INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is one of the countries with the largest number of social media users globally. In 2023, it was recorded that over 204.7 million people, or approximately 73.7% of Indonesia's total population, are active social media users. The most widely used platform is YouTube, which boasts more than 180 million active users, followed by Facebook with around 130 million users, Instagram reaching approximately 99.5 million users, WhatsApp with about 98.7 million users, and TikTok having about 62 million active users (Indrioko, 2023). These statistics indicate that social media has become an integral part of Indonesian society, serving purposes ranging from entertainment and communication to information dissemination. This significant engagement with social media presents substantial opportunities for Islamic education in Indonesia to leverage digital platforms as mediums for da'wah (Islamic outreach) and learning. For instance, educational content related to Islamic teachings, Quranic



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interpretations, Hadith studies, and ethical values can be effectively communicated through YouTube videos, Instagram posts, or live streaming sessions on Facebook. Additionally, applications such as WhatsApp can facilitate interactive discussion groups focused on Islamic topics (Hadiati & Setianingrum, 2024). Given the vast user base, social media offers extraordinary potential to reach wide audiences, especially among the youth, allowing Islamic education to propagate in a more massive, modern, and contextually relevant manner (Gil-Fernández & Calderón Garrido, 2022). In line with this, Islamic institutions have begun actively embracing social media to adapt to social changes and engage more effectively with the community. They are utilizing these platforms not only for educational purposes but also to promote various aspects of Islamic life, thereby helping to bridge the gap between traditional education and contemporary societal needs (Huda, 2024; Indrioko, 2023).

Given the growing potential of social media for use in education, researchers have come together to conduct further studies on this topic. See Yin Lim et al. highlight how informatics students in Malaysia use social media for academic purposes, demonstrating the platform's great potential in enhancing student engagement and collaboration (See Yin Lim et al., 2014). Additionally, (Tus et al., 2021) Explore the impact of social media on the academic performance of Filipino students during online learning, where their results suggest that social media can both help and hinder the learning process, depending on how it is used. In China, (Zhang & Gao, 2014) Their case study demonstrates the role of social media in informal science learning, emphasizing the flexibility and accessibility offered by these platforms. Sriwijayanti provides a unique perspective by exploring Christian education in the digital age (Sriwijayanti, 2020), highlighting the importance of a faith-based community approach in utilizing social media. Finally, Gil-Fernández and Calderón Garrido examine the use of social media in early childhood and primary education in a virtual university (Gil-Fernández & Calderón Garrido, 2022), demonstrating that social media can support interactive learning even in young age groups. However, from the research tendency, there is a research gap that is a research gap that the use of social media for Islamic education for early childhood is still rarely done.

This study examines the differences in preferences for the use of social media for Islamic education for early childhood among couples from Generation Z and the Millennial generation. The research was conducted in three villages in Bawang District, Batang Regency: Sangubanyu Village, Wonosari Village, and Jlamprang Village. The focus of this research is to answer four key questions related to the use of social media by the two generations. First, the study seeks to identify the types of social media used by Gen Z and Millennial couples to support early childhood Islamic education. Second, this study will explore methods or methods applied by both generations in utilizing social media as a tool in Islamic education. Third, this study will also analyze the difference in perspective between the Gen Z and Millennial couples regarding the importance of Islamic education for early childhood and the effectiveness of social media as one of the supporting tools. Fourth, this research will explore the challenges faced by both generations in integrating social media into Islamic education practices for early childhood.

2. METHODS

This study aims to analyze the differences in the use of social media in Islamic education for early childhood between couples from Generation Z and Millennials. A qualitative approach was employed to achieve this objective, utilizing a case study design. The qualitative approach was selected to understand how these two generations utilize social media to support their children's Islamic education. Data were collected through three primary methods: structured interviews, participatory observation, and document analysis (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Structured interviews were conducted with couples with young children to obtain firsthand information about their views, habits, and strategies for using social media. Participatory observation was used to directly observe respondents' daily activities in integrating social media into the Islamic teaching and learning process with their children. Furthermore,

document analysis involved reviewing educational materials accessed by respondents through social media, such as learning videos, articles, or other content. The incorporation of participatory methods is supported by literature recognizing the need for a multifaceted, child-centered data collection approach to generate rich qualitative insights (Mertala, 2020). Thus, the triangulation of data collection methods not only strengthens the research design but also facilitates deeper insights into the educational dynamics shaped by generational differences in media engagement (Darmawan et al., 2023; Suteki & Sulistyowati, 2024).

The structured interview process conducted in this study involved the participation of ten informants, consisting of five individuals from the Gen Z generation and five from the Millennial generation. The method is divided into two sessions: a 30-minute group discussion session and an individual interview of 200 minutes, 20 minutes each per informant. Group discussions aim to gather initial perspectives in an interactive atmosphere (Liani, 2024). The use of regional languages, in this case Javanese, in interviews aims to provide comfort for informants so that they can speak more naturally and deeply (Suryaningsih et al., 2024). The interview recordings were transliterated into Indonesian to facilitate data analysis, where this approach is expected to produce authentic and representative information regarding the differences in mindset between the two generations (Setyaningsih et al., 2019). This study seeks to provide a clear picture of using social media related to Islamic education, which is considered increasingly important in today's digital era, where new challenges and opportunities are emerging (Nurfaizah & Na'imah, 2021).

Table 1. Profil Informan

No	Initials	Age	Generational groups	Origin of the Village
1	GZ1	23	Gen Z	Sangubanyu
2	GZ2	23	Gen Z	Banyubiru
3	GZ3	24	Gen Z	Banyubiru
4	GZ4	27	Gen Z	Kalianyar
5	GZ5	28	Gen Z	Kalianyar
6	GM1	34	Millenial	Sangubanyu
7	GM2	35	Millenial	Banyubiru
8	GM3	31	Millenial	Sangubanyu
9	GM4	42	Millenial	Kalianyar
10	GM5	40	Millenial	Kalianyar

Data verification techniques are very important to ensure data validity in research on the difference in the use of social media in Islamic education between Gen Z and Gen Millennial, including triangulation and member checking. The data analysis process uses the Miles and Huberman model, which consists of three stages: data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawn. At the data reduction stage, the information is filtered to focus on relevant aspects, according to the research objectives (Nurfuadi & Hasbulah, 2024). Furthermore, the presentation of data is carried out in the form of a systematic descriptive narrative to make it easier to understand. Finally, conclusions are drawn by identifying patterns, themes, and relationships between variables from the analyzed data, which is expected to provide a clear and in-depth picture in the context of Islamic education (Harfiani, 2021).

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

Findings

Millennial Generation's Preferences in Using Social Media for Islamic Education for Early Childhood

This research reveals that couples from the Millennial generation tend to use social media such as YouTube and Facebook as a means to introduce Islamic religious values to their children. YouTube is the main platform because it provides various educational content, ranging from animated videos about the Prophet's stories, Islamic songs, to tutorials on worship practices such as ablution and prayer (Burroughs, 2017). Some popular channels often used include Yufid Kids, NussaOfficial, Omar & Hana-Islamic Cartoons for Kids, and Sarah Playschool. Meanwhile, Facebook is used to share articles, infographics, or join Islamic discussion groups. In addition, interesting shows such as videos of animals (cats, monkeys, and chickens) are also often used to attract children's attention. The methods applied by the Millennial generation are generally interactive but simple, such as watching a video together or discussing the moral lessons of a story. They routinely use YouTube content for three sessions daily, each lasting 10-15 minutes, in the morning, afternoon, or evening, according to their busy schedule. Social media is an effective support tool to introduce Islamic values visually and fun way. However, the main challenge faced is content curation. Many have difficulty sorting out age-appropriate material and are worried about exposure to irrelevant or harmful information. Limited time due to busy work is also an obstacle to monitoring the optimal use of social media.

Table 2. Comparison of the prevalence of Millennials and Gen Z in using social media for Islamic education in early childhood

Aspects	Millennial Generation	Generasi Gen Z
Social Media Platforms	YouTube, Facebook	YouTube, TikTok, Instagram, X (Twitter), and an educational gaming app
Content Used	Animated videos of prophetic stories, Islamic songs, worship practice tutorials, and interesting animal videos	Islamic short videos, hijaiyah interactive content, educational games, Cocomelon, Blippi, etc
Duration of Use	3 sessions a day, 10-15 minutes each	More than five sessions a day, duration reaches 30-60 minutes
Learning Methods	Interactive yet simple: watch videos together	Create your own content, collaborate with online communities, and gradually recognize alphabetic letters
Focus on Religious Education	Instilling Islamic values through stories	Worship Practices

GM1's informant revealed, "We chose YouTube as the main medium because the content is more visual and easy for children to understand." This platform is a favorite because it provides a variety of educational videos, including animations about the stories of the prophet, Islamic songs, to tutorials on worship practices such as ablution and prayer. In addition, GM2 added, "NussaOfficial is one of our favorite channels because its stories are not only entertaining but also educational." However, the main challenge in using social media is content curation. Many parents have difficulty sorting out age-appropriate material and are worried about exposure to irrelevant or harmful information. GM3 mentions that "videos about animals such as cats or chickens are often used to get children's attention before going into religious lessons." However, GM4 commented, "I often worry about my child being exposed to content that is not age-appropriate," GM5 said, "Curating the right content takes time and precision."

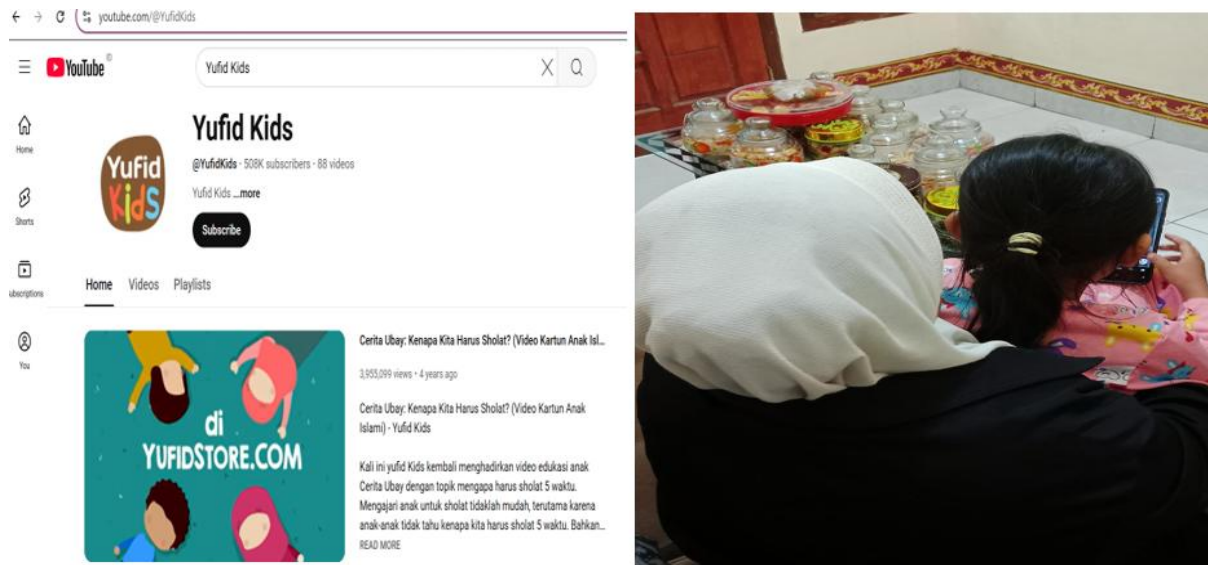


Figure 1. The informant is playing YouTube to introduce Islam to his son

In addition, Facebook is also a platform used by the Millennial generation for various purposes, including deepening religious understanding for their children. (Rajesh & Rangaiah, 2020) According to GM1, "Facebook helped me find Islamic articles that I could share with my family." This platform is an information-sharing tool and a forum for users to join Islamic discussion groups. GM2 added, "Islamic parenting groups on Facebook have really helped me get advice from other parents." However, it is important to remain selective about the content you consume. GM3 emphasized, "Not all articles or infographics on Facebook are valid, so I have to sort them out carefully." On the other hand, the live streaming feature is one of the main attractions. GM4 explained, "I often use the live streaming feature to participate in tausiyah or online studies." This was agreed by GM5, who stated, "Live streaming makes me feel closer to the clerics even though I am at home." Thus, the wise use of Facebook can greatly benefit early childhood religious understanding. Social media, such as Facebook, can be an interactive and useful educational tool. GM1 continued, "Through the Islamic videos I found on Facebook, I was able to teach religious values to children."

The duration of social media use is the main highlight for parents in managing their children's time (Mude & Undale, 2023). GM1 explained, "We limit YouTube viewing time to three sessions daily, 10-15 minutes each." These restrictions aim to maintain a balance between education and children's health. GM2 added, "Morning time is usually for Islamic motivational videos, afternoon for prophetic stories, and evening for worship tutorials." This pattern was considered effective by GM3, who commented, "My child is more focused if the duration of watching it is not too long." However, challenges remain, as GM4 revealed, "Sometimes it is hard to limit the time because the child asks for extras." Consistency is key, as GM5 emphasizes, "We try to be consistent with these rules so that children get used to healthy boundaries." With the right time restrictions, social media can be optimally used as an educational tool without interfering with children's development. GM6 added, "We also give small rewards if the child follows the time rules well." Through consistency and appreciation, parents hope children can learn discipline using social media.

Visual content on social media is considered more effective in attracting children's attention than traditional methods (Jeresano & Carretero, 2022). GM1 explains, "Animated videos about the prophet's stories are easier for children to understand than in the form of texts." Animations help children visualize stories better. GM2 added, "Omar & Hana-Islamic Cartoons for Kids is one of my favorite channels because the animation is so interesting." This is supported by GM3, who commented, "My child is more enthusiastic about learning religion through visual videos than traditional methods." However, content variety is still important, as GM4 revealed, "Sometimes children get bored if they only

watch animated videos." For this reason, GM5 chimed in, "We try to combine videos with other activities such as drawing or singing." GM6 adds, "Engaging children in interactive activities makes them more emotionally engaged." With this approach, social media is a source of entertainment and an educational tool that supports children's holistic development.

YouTube remains a favorite platform for many Millennial families due to the ease of access and variety of content it offers (Mude & Undale, 2023). GM1 explained, "YouTube has many educational channels to choose from as needed," demonstrating the platform's flexibility in providing educational materials. One of the channels that is often recommended is Yufid Kids. GM2 added, "Yufid Kids is one of the channels we use frequently because the content is very educational." In addition, the content of Islamic songs is also children's favorite. GM3 commented, "My son likes to watch videos of Islamic songs on YouTube," suggesting that the platform can provide positive value if used wisely. However, the risk of exposure to negative content remains. GM4 highlighted this by saying, "Sometimes video recommendations are not age-appropriate." To solve this problem, some parents try to use special features. GM5 said, "We try to use kids mode to minimize this risk." However, caution is still needed so that YouTube continues to provide maximum benefits for children. Parents also need to make sure that they always monitor their child's activities on these platforms to ensure that the content accessed is truly in line with the values they want to inculcate.

GM1 said, "I often share Islamic articles on Facebook for my family." These articles help improve religious understanding for all family members, including children. Social media is an effective forum because it is easily accessible and provides educational content. GM2 added, "The infographic on daily prayer is very helpful for my child to memorize." Children consider Infographics more interesting and easy to understand than long texts. This was agreed by GM3, who commented, "My child is more interested in learning if the material is presented in visual form." However, challenges arise when the information circulating is not always accurate. GM4 highlighted the importance of information validity: "Not all articles on Facebook are accurate, so I have to be careful." Therefore, verifying information is an important step before sharing it with children. GM5 chimed in, "We often verify information before sharing it." With this approach, social media such as Facebook can be an effective means of education, although selectivity in choosing information remains a top priority. The wise and critical use of social media is the key so that the information received truly benefits children's development. Parents must also ensure that the content chosen is appropriate for the child's age and needs, so that education through social media can have a positive impact.

Social media is a supporting tool in Islamic education. GM1 explained, "We use social media to complement children's formal education." This tool helps introduce religious values visually in a fun way. GM2 added, "Animated videos about worship practices are very helpful for children to understand the steps." This was agreed by GM3, who commented, "My child is more interested in learning religion through videos than traditional methods." However, GM4 highlighted the importance of supervision: "The use of social media must be supervised so as not to have a negative impact." GM5 said, "We are trying to optimize the benefits of social media for children's education." With this approach, social media becomes an effective educational tool, but supervision remains a top priority.

The millennial generation has a unique way of utilizing social media to support childcare, especially in conveying Islamic values (Pichler et al., 2021). According to GM1, "We choose content appropriate to the child's developmental stage," so relevance is the main key in choosing learning materials. This relevance is important so that children can absorb Islamic values effectively. In line with this view, GM2 revealed, "Videos about the story of the prophet are very helpful for children to understand Islamic values." This shows that visual and narrative content is easier for children to understand. GM3 added, "My child is more enthusiastic about learning if the content is relevant to everyday life." However, challenges arise when searching for the right content. GM4 expressed his concern, "Many videos on YouTube are not age-appropriate." GM5 explained its strategy to address this issue: "We try to seek references from the parenting community to choose the right content." With this

approach, social media can be optimally utilized as an educational tool, although there are still challenges in finding appropriate content.

Generation Z's preferences in using social media for Islamic education in early childhood

In contrast to previous generations, the findings of this study show that Gen Z couples show a more diverse and creative approach in utilizing social media to support Islamic education for early childhood (RASLIE & TING, 2021). They not only rely on platforms such as YouTube and Facebook but also utilize applications such as Instagram, X (Twitter), TikTok, and educational games. TikTok, for example, is often used to watch short videos that combine movements, music, and Islamic messages. Meanwhile, educational game applications help children learn hijaiyah letters interactively. Their methods, such as creating content or collaborating with online communities to share creative ideas, tend to be dynamic. The learning process begins with introducing letter shapes and sounds, associating letters with images and objects, forming simple words, and introducing simple sentences. They consider that introducing letters and the alphabet in religious education is more important than instilling monotheism first. Social media is considered a multifunctional tool that supports learning and builds community. However, the use pattern is often irregular, with a duration of 30-60 minutes per session and a frequency of more than five times a day. The digital content they broadcast to children includes Cocomelon, Blippi, Super Simple Songs, Kinderflix, Nussa Official, and National Geographic Kids. Although children seem enthusiastic, this habit can trigger gadget addiction, tantrums, and speech delays.

Although innovative, this study found that Gen Z's approach to utilizing social media for Islamic education in early childhood has several significant challenges. One of the main problems is exposure to negative content that is difficult for parents to control fully. In addition, maintaining a balance between the digital world and direct interaction is another challenge often faced. Parents often give gadgets to children when they feel tired of working without adequate supervision. This causes children to be exposed to age-inappropriate content or even English-language content that is not necessarily relevant to Islamic values. As a result, they admitted that some children had delays in speaking and interacting socially. Parental digital literacy plays a crucial role in the effectiveness of this approach. Without an adequate understanding of how to use social media wisely, negative impacts can be more dominant.

Social media such as YouTube and Facebook are also the main choices for Gen Z in supporting early childhood Islamic education. According to GZ1, "YouTube is very helpful because there is much Islamic content like Nussa Official that is suitable for children." The platform provides easy access to various educational videos that teach religious values interactively. GZ2 added, "Facebook is also useful for joining Islamic parenting groups that share ideas." These groups are not only a forum for exchanging experiences but also a place for discussing how to educate children in Islam effectively. GZ3 mentioned, "Through the Facebook group, I learned how to teach monotheism in a more fun method." This method involves simple games that can be done at home. However, challenges begin to arise when parents cannot control the duration of use of gadgets. GZ4 revealed, "I often give gadgets to my children when they are tired of working, but it turns out that this makes it difficult for them to speak fluently." Uncontrolled use of gadgets can affect children's language development. GZ5 highlights the importance of digital literacy: "Without a good understanding of social media, the negative impact can outweigh the benefits."

Using educational game applications is also a trend among Gen Z to support Islamic learning. Game applications are believed to be able to improve children's abilities (Udeozor et al., 2023). GZ1 mentioned, "Educational games help my child learn hijaiyah letters in an interactive and fun way." These apps are designed to engage children while providing useful learning. GZ2 added, "My son loves to play games that teach the association of letters with pictures and objects." This method is considered effective because it combines entertainment with education. In addition, GZ3 explains, "The learning

process starts with the introduction of letter shapes, then continues with forming simple words." This step-by-step approach helps children understand basic concepts before learning more complex things. However, using the gadget for too long can cause problems. GZ4 revealed, "My son started showing signs of speech delay due to playing gadgets too much." This is a serious concern for parents who want to balance the digital world and in-person interaction.

Online communities are one of the important elements in Gen Z's approach to early childhood Islamic education (Isro'i et al., 2022). GZ1 mentioned, "I joined an Instagram community focusing on Islamic children's education." This community allows parents to share ideas and experiences in parenting. GZ2 added, "Through this community, I get much inspiration to create my educational content." Interaction with online communities also helps improve parents' digital literacy. GZ3 mentioned, "Sharing ideas with other mothers makes me better understand how to use social media wisely." However, some challenges need to be faced. GZ4 revealed, "Sometimes my child is exposed to inappropriate content due to a lack of supervision." Negative or irrelevant content can affect a child's mindset if not properly controlled. GZ5 asserted, "We need to be more selective and vigilant about the content shown to children." With close supervision, social media can be a safe and useful tool to support early childhood Islamic education.

Gen Z's approach to early childhood Islamic education shows that they prioritize letter and alphabetic recognition over monotheism (Szymkowiak et al., 2021). GZ1 states, "In my opinion, introducing the letters and sounds is more important before entering into the concept of monotheism." GZ2 supports this view: "Children need to understand the basics before learning more complex concepts." The introduction of hijaiyah letters is the first step in the learning process. GZ3 added, "Once the child learns the letters, I start teaching them the association of letters with pictures and objects." This method aims to help children understand concepts concretely before moving on to abstraction. However, challenges arise when children are more interested in gadgets than hands-on learning. GZ4 revealed, "My son would rather watch videos on a gadget than learn letters with me." This shows that digital media can divert children's focus from direct interaction. GZ5 asserts, "It is important to maintain a balance between the digital world and in-person interaction."

Social media is considered a multifunctional tool that supports learning and builds community (Appel et al., 2020). GZ1 mentioned, "Through social media, I can share my experiences with other parents with the same vision." This platform allows parents to support each other in educating their children. GZ2 added, "The online community helped me find Islamic content appropriate for children." Social media is also a forum for sharing creative ideas. GZ3 mentioned, "I often make educational videos and share them on Instagram." However, irregular use of social media can cause problems. GZ4 revealed, "The duration of using gadgets often exceeds the limit because the child does not want to stop." This suggests that this habit can trigger gadget addiction. GZ5 emphasized, "We have to be more disciplined in managing the time of social media use." With the right settings, social media can be an effective tool to support early childhood Islamic education.

Irregular patterns of social media use are one of the main challenges for Gen Z. GZ1 mentioned, "We often use social media without a clear schedule." The duration of use of the gadget often exceeds the recommended limit. GZ2 added, "My child can watch videos for 30-60 minutes per session." The frequency of use is also quite high, with more than five times a day. GZ3 mentioned, "This worries me about the impact on the child's development." This habit can trigger gadget addiction and behavioral problems. GZ4 revealed, "My son often has a tantrum if his gadget is taken." This shows that uncontrolled use of gadgets can affect children's emotions. GZ5 emphasized, "We have to be more disciplined in managing the time of social media use." With the right settings, social media can be a support tool without interfering with a child's development.

Islamic content, such as Nussa Official and National Geographic Kids, is the top choice for Gen Z. GZ1 mentioned, "Nussa Official is one of my son's favorite content because it teaches Islamic values in

a fun way." This content is designed to engage children while providing learning. GZ2 added, "National Geographic Kids also helped my son learn about the world through an Islamic perspective." However, challenges arise when the content watched does not follow Islamic values. GZ3 mentioned, "I have to make sure that the content that the children watch is in accordance with religious teachings." Speech delay is also a problem that needs to be watched out for. GZ4 revealed, "My son started showing signs of speech delay due to watching videos too much." This shows that excessive use of gadgets can affect children's language development. GZ5 emphasized, "We need to be more selective in choosing the right content for children."

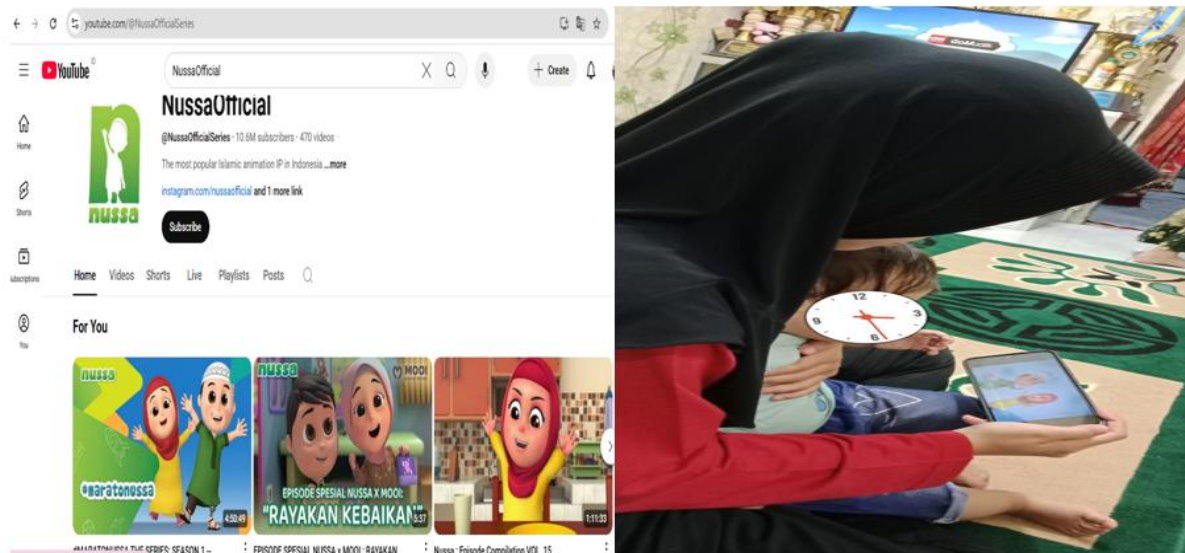


Figure 2. The informant is playing YouTube to introduce Islam to his son

Direct interaction remains an important element in early childhood Islamic education. GZ1 mentioned, "While social media helps, in-person interaction remains irreplaceable." Parents need to maintain a balance between the digital world and in-person interaction. GZ2 added, "My child is more responsive when taught directly than through gadgets." Direct interaction helps children develop speaking and social interaction skills. GZ3 mentioned, "I always take time to play and learn with my children." These activities include reading Islamic storybooks, role-playing, or teaching simple prayers. However, challenges arise when parents are too busy working. GZ4 revealed, "I often give gadgets to children when they are tired of work." This suggests that work pressure can affect the quality of interaction between parents and children.

Tawhid education is one aspect that needs to be considered in early childhood Islamic education. GZ1 mentioned, "After the child understood the basics, I started teaching the concept of monotheism." This concept is taught gradually so that it is easy for children to understand. GZ2 added, "Tawheed is an important foundation in Islamic education." However, challenges arise when children are more interested in gadgets than hands-on learning. GZ3 mentioned, "My son prefers to watch videos rather than learning tauhid." Speech delay is also a problem that needs to be watched out for. GZ4 revealed, "My son started showing signs of speech delay due to watching videos too much." This shows that excessive use of gadgets can affect children's language development. GZ5 emphasized, "We must be more selective in choosing learning methods." With the right approach, social media can be a support tool without interfering with the education of Islamic values.

Discussion

This research reveals that Millennials and Gen Z have significant differences in utilizing social media for Islamic education in early childhood. Millennials tend to use platforms like YouTube and Facebook as the primary tools to introduce religious values to their children (Pedreira et al., 2022). They

focus more on visual-based educational content, such as animated videos about the Prophet's stories, worship tutorials, and Islamic songs from popular channels such as Yufid Kids and NussaOfficial. The learning methods used by this generation are generally simple but interactive, for example, by watching videos with children or discussing the moral messages of these stories. Social media is an effective support tool because it conveys Islamic values visually and pleasantly. However, the biggest challenge faced is curating content appropriate for children's age and difficulty monitoring the use of social media due to time constraints and busy work (RASLIE & TING, 2021). Nevertheless, they still prioritize the use of social media as a means of supporting Islamic education in a structured and scheduled manner.

On the other hand, the Gen Z generation shows a more dynamic and creative approach in utilizing social media for early childhood Islamic education. In addition to YouTube and Facebook, they actively use applications such as TikTok, Instagram, and educational games to convey Islamic messages. TikTok, for example, is used to watch short videos that combine Islamic music, movements, and messages. Meanwhile, educational game applications help children learn hijaiyah letters in an interactive and fun way. In contrast to previous generations, Gen Z tends to create content on their own or collaborate with online communities to share creative ideas. However, the use pattern is often irregular, with a duration of 30-60 minutes per session and a frequency of more than five times a day. Although this method is innovative, challenges such as exposure to negative content, gadget addiction, and speech delay are problems that need to be addressed. Parents' digital literacy is important in ensuring social media becomes a tool to support Islamic education without hindering the child's overall development.

The frameworks articulated by Jean Piaget and Lev Vygotsky provide a fundamental basis for analyzing the role of social media in early childhood Islamic education among Millennials and Generation Z (Flavell, 1963). Piaget's theories highlight the significance of concrete experiences and social interaction in learning, indicating that children's comprehension evolves through direct engagement with their environment and peers (Erbil, 2020). This perspective aligns well with the structured approaches of Millennials, who often utilize platforms such as YouTube to co-view educational videos with children, thus fostering interactive learning and enhancing communication skills. However, challenges arise regarding content curation, as the overwhelming volume of material available can complicate effective learning experiences (Pedreira et al., 2022). Meanwhile, Vygotsky's emphasis on the social context of learning underpins the interactions facilitated by social media among Generation Z, where platforms like TikTok and Instagram can enhance collaborative and creative capacities (Erbil, 2020).

Stephen R. Covey's framework in "The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People" is particularly relevant when analyzing Millennial and Gen Z approaches to Islamic education through social media. The first habit, "Be Proactive," indicates that Millennials often strive to select educational content deliberately and allocate time for their children. However, their busy work schedules frequently hinder this proactivity (Waworuntu, E., Kainde, S., & Mandagi, 2022). In contrast, Gen Z reflects Covey's second habit, "Begin with the End in Mind," by utilizing their creativity to generate educational content, albeit often unfocused (Konstantinou & Jones, 2022). The third habit, "Put First Things First," presents challenges for both generations, especially Gen Z, who may become absorbed in social media, lacking clear priorities that could disrupt their children's developmental needs (Nurfuadi & Hasbulah, 2024). Furthermore, Covey's latter habits, such as "Think Win-Win" and "Synergize," manifest through parents' digital literacy, fostering a synthesis between technology and Islamic education. This theoretical structure provides practical guidance for parents from both generations to optimize social media's advantages while mitigating its potential downsides ("The Beauty of Character Education on Preschool Children's Parent-Child Relationship," 2014). Thus, Covey's principles underscore the need for integrating effective habits into parenting Millennials and Gen Z to enhance their children's educational experience amidst the contemporary digital landscape.

These findings are similar to previous research, especially regarding using social media as a learning support tool. As revealed by (Doğan & Gülbahar, 2018). Social media such as YouTube and

Facebook have become effective platforms for delivering educational content visually and interactively. These findings align with this study's results, which show that the Millennial Generation uses the platform to introduce Islamic values to children through animated videos and worship tutorials. In addition (Chen & Wang, 2021). Emphasized the importance of self-efficacy and interest in learning in using social media for education, which was also reflected in this study, where parents of both generations sought to utilize social media to improve their children's religious understanding. However, other similarities found are challenges in curating age-appropriate content and supervising social media use, which was also mentioned by (Tian et al., 2018). In the context of social media marketing. Although there are similarities in the methods of social media use, this study focuses more on early childhood Islamic education, thus providing new insights into how social media can be used specifically in religious contexts.

The main novelty of this study lies in the explicit comparison between Millennials and Gen Z in utilizing social media for early childhood Islamic education, something that has not been discussed much in previous studies. While previous studies, such as those (Akbar & Dellyana (2023), have only focused on the characteristics of specific generations in the social media era, this study reveals significant differences in the approach of the two generations. Millennials tend to use more structured and traditional methods, while Gen Z shows a more dynamic and creative approach by leveraging platforms like TikTok and educational gaming apps. This reflects Gen Z's adaptation to the latest digital trends, which previous research has not explored. In addition, the latest findings in this study are the role of parents' digital literacy in facing challenges such as exposure to negative content and gadget addiction, which is an important highlight in early childhood education. Thus, this study not only adds insight into the use of social media in Islamic education but also highlights the urgency of digital literacy as a determining factor for the success of technology integration in children's education.

The exploration of social media's role in Islamic education for early childhood among Millennials and Generation Z reveals a complex interplay between technology use and educational engagement. Research indicates that both generations uniquely integrate digital platforms into their learning processes, reflecting distinct lifestyle choices and value systems (Devi et al., 2024). For practitioners in Islamic education, these findings underscore the potential for tailored educational content that resonates with the preferences of these generations (Karina et al., 2021). Moreover, this study highlights the critical necessity of digital literacy for parents to navigate challenges such as content curation and the management of gadget use, which is essential for maintaining developmental balance in children (Donaldson & Alker, 2019). It is recommended that digital literacy training be offered to parents, particularly those from Gen Z, to enhance their skills in filtering appropriate content for younger audiences (Akbar & Dellyana, 2023).

4. CONCLUSION

Based on the research results, there are significant differences in the approaches of Millennials and Gen Z in utilizing social media for Islamic education in early childhood. Millennials tend to use platforms like YouTube and Facebook, focusing on educational visual content, such as animated videos and Islamic songs, accessed in a scheduled and structured manner. In contrast, Gen Z is more innovative, utilizing TikTok, Instagram, and educational games, creating content, and collaborating with online communities. The data also shows that Gen Z's social media usage patterns, which tend to be irregular, with high duration and frequency, are correlated with the risk of device addiction and exposure to negative content. These findings have practical and theoretical implications, particularly in designing digital-based Islamic education strategies that suit the characteristics of today's young generation. Practically, parents and educators need to improve digital literacy and monitor social media use to ensure it is balanced with children's physical, mental, and spiritual development. Theoretically, these results contribute to the understanding of intergenerational shifts in digital behavior in the context

of religious education. Limitations of this study include the lack of in-depth analysis of the long-term impact of social media use on child development and the lack of empirical data regarding the effectiveness of the learning methods used by both generational groups. For further research, it is recommended to conduct longitudinal studies to evaluate the long-term effects of social media use in children's Islamic education and to develop digital literacy guidelines for parents to ensure that social media remains a safe and beneficial educational tool.

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