



Islamic education teacher communication strategies improving the quality of teaching and learning activities at mts hidayatub subban semarang

Fouad Larhzizer ^{a,1*}, Husna Nashihin ^{b2}, Aliwan ^{c3}, Santi Ratnawati ^{d,4}, Siti Qomala Khayati ^{e,5}, Triana Hermawati ^{f,6}, Mohammad Abdul Munjid ^{g,6}

^a Hassan First University Settati, Morocco; ^{b,g} Institut Islam Nahdlatul Ulama Temanggung, Indonesia; ^{c,d} STAI Walisembilan Semarang, Indonesia; ^f Universitas Alma Ata Yogyakarta, Indonesia

¹ fouad.larhzizer@uhp.ac.ma; ² aufahusna.lecture2017@gmail.com; ³ aliwan@setiaws.ac.id; ⁴ santiratnawati@setiaws.ac.id; ⁵ malahayati1104@gmail.com; ⁶ 241500046@almaata.ac.id; ⁷ m.abdulmunjid@gmail.com

*Correspondent Author

ARTICLE INFO

Article history

Received:

23-05-2025

Revised:

26-07-2025

Accepted:

26-08-2025

Keywords

*Communication Strategy;
Islamic Religious Education
Teachers;
Quality of Teaching and
Learning.*

ABSTRACT

This research aims to analyze the communication strategies of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers in dealing with the characteristics of Generation Z to improve the quality of teaching and learning activities (KBM) at MTs Hidayatus Subban Semarang. Generation Z has a tendency to learn quickly, visually, interactively, and is close to the digital world, so it requires teachers to implement more adaptive and interesting communication. This research uses a descriptive qualitative approach with observation techniques, in-depth interviews and documentation as the basis for data collection. The research results show that Islamic Religious Education teachers employ four main communication strategies. First, they use concise, clear, and relevant verbal language to enhance students' digital experiences, making the material easier to understand. Second, they utilize nonverbal communication such as expressions, eye contact, intonation, and gestures to reinforce moral messages and build rapport. Third, they integrate digital media such as videos, visual graphics, and supporting applications to attract interest and enhance understanding of religious concepts. Fourth, they apply a dialogic approach through discussions, questions and answers, and case analysis to enhance students' active participation and critical thinking skills. These findings conclude that adaptive, varied, and technology-based communication strategies can increase motivation, engagement, and the quality of teaching and learning in Generation Z students. The results of this study are expected to be a reference in developing Islamic Religious Education learning communication models in the digital era.

This is an open-access article under the [CC-BY-SA](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/) license.



Introduction

Education is the primary foundation for shaping the character, mindset, and identity of students through the process of educational interaction between teachers and students. In Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning, communication plays a central role as a means of conveying Islamic values, which require clarity, exemplary behavior, and a humanistic approach. Arifin emphasized that Islamic educational communication serves to transform the values of Islamic teachings through persuasive and dialogical messaging (Arifin, 2020).

Technological advancements have given birth to Generation Z, a generation that grew up in a digital, fast-paced, and highly visual environment. This generation is known for being multitasking, internet-savvy, and more responsive to interactive media (Prensky, 2018). This challenge is also felt by Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers at MTs Hidayatus Subban Semarang, who are required to design adaptive communication strategies to ensure learning remains relevant, engaging, and meaningful.

The quality of teaching and learning activities (KBM) is determined not only by the learning method, but also by the quality of communication between teachers and students. Mulyana explains that effective communication occurs when messages are delivered clearly, engagingly, and appropriately to the audience (Mulyana, 2019). This requires Islamic Religious Education teachers to implement innovative communication strategies, including utilizing digital media, concise language, visualization of materials, and dialogic interactions that align with the characteristics of Generation Z.

Several previous studies have shown that teacher communication strategies significantly influence the quality of learning for Generation Z. Research by Hamid (2021) found that digital-based communication and two-way interaction increased student participation in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning (Hamid, 2021). Meanwhile, research by Rahmawati & Suryana (2022) showed that the use of visual media and simple language styles can increase the attention of Generation Z students in religious learning at the junior high school level (Rahmawati & Suryana, 2022). Furthermore, a study by Kurniawan (2020) confirmed that teachers' success in interpersonal communication is a significant factor in building emotional closeness and student learning motivation (Kurniawan, 2020).

However, previous research has not focused much on how Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers' communication strategies are applied in the context of Islamic boarding schools (pesantren) or madrasahs, such as MTs Hidayatus Subban Semarang, which have a religious culture but are faced with digital-native Generation Z students. Therefore, this study is crucial in filling this gap by examining Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers' communication strategies to improve the quality of teaching and learning specifically at these madrasahs.

At MTs Hidayatus Subban Semarang, low learning focus, student engagement, and rapidly changing classroom dynamics pose challenges to improving learning quality. Generation Z, with its shorter attention span and ease of distraction, makes traditional communication approaches less effective. Nurkancana & Sunartana state that learning for the digital generation must be visual, interactive, and provide space for active participation (Nurkancana & Sunartana, 2021).

Based on these conditions, this study aims to uncover how Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teacher communication strategies are designed and implemented for Generation Z at MTs Hidayatus Subban Semarang and how they contribute to improving the quality of teaching and learning. This study is urgently needed to strengthen educational communication innovations to make Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning more relevant, engaging, and impactful on students' character development

Theoretical

Islamic educational communication is the process of conveying Islamic messages, values, and teachings from teachers to students through verbal and nonverbal interactions aimed at shaping religious understanding and character. Arifin (2020) explains that Islamic educational communication is not only about delivering material, but also includes role models, attitudes, and spiritual values reflected in the teacher's actions. Meanwhile, Nizar (2018) emphasizes that communication in Islamic education must prioritize the principles of *tabligh*, *hikmah*, and *mau'izhah hasanah*, so that the message conveyed can be received persuasively, full of wisdom, and touches the psychological aspects of students. Effective learning communication, according to Mulyana (2019), depends on the clarity of the message, the media used, and the teacher's ability to adapt the approach to the character of the audience, especially in Islamic Religious Education learning which requires value sensitivity.

In the context of modern developments, Generation Z has very different characteristics from previous generations. They are a generation born and raised in a digital ecosystem, so they are accustomed to technology, the speed of information, and interactive visual media. Prensky (2018) calls this generation *digital natives*, who tend to think quickly, multitask, and are more responsive to visual and digital messages than conventional communication. However, Generation Z also has a shorter attention span and is easily distracted, so the learning process requires a creative and dynamic approach. Nurkancana and Sunartana (2021) added that learning for Generation Z must be visual, interactive, and provide space for collaboration and active participation to keep them focused and motivated.

Teacher communication strategies in learning play a strategic role in conveying messages and materials effectively. Rusman (2020) emphasized that communication strategies are how teachers plan and implement learning interaction patterns through the selection of methods, media, delivery techniques, and interpersonal approaches appropriate to the classroom situation. In Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning, communication strategies are not only verbal but also include nonverbal communication such as body language, facial expressions, tone of voice, and role models, which are part of the internalization of values (Arifin, 2020). Hamid's (2021) research shows that technology-based and interactive teacher communication can improve the understanding of Islamic Religious Education material in the digital generation, because students more easily grasp concepts through media relevant to their daily lives.

In the context of Generation Z, Islamic Religious Education teachers' communication strategies must be adaptive, creative, and relevant to the digital world that surrounds their lives. Rahmawati and Suryana (2022) stated that effective communication for Generation Z must fulfill the elements of *relevance*, *interactivity*, and *visualization* so that learning can attract their attention and maintain stable concentration. Islamic Religious Education teachers can utilize digital media such as learning videos, animated stories of the Prophet, infographics on moral values, and digital Quran applications to explain complex material. In addition, the use of concise, contextual language, and related to the phenomena of modern adolescent life is considered more easily accepted by Generation Z. Hamid (2021) revealed that two-way interactions such as discussions, questions and answers, *role-playing*, and *problem-based learning* can increase student engagement while strengthening the communication relationship between teachers and students. Teachers' exemplary behavior through nonverbal communication remains an important aspect in Islamic Religious Education learning because religious values are more easily internalized through real practice than mere verbal explanations (Arifin, 2020).

The quality of teaching and learning activities (KBM) is an indicator of the success of the teacher's communication process in learning. Sudjana (2019) explains that the quality of KBM is determined by the achievement of learning objectives, the effectiveness of learning interactions, and student engagement cognitively, affectively, and psychomotorically. In Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning, the quality of KBM is not only measured by students' cognitive ability to understand the material, but also by the development of their attitudes, morals, and religious behavior. Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers must create a humanistic, motivating, and dialogical classroom atmosphere to make the learning process more meaningful. When teacher communication is effective, students tend to be more focused, motivated, and able to understand the material in depth.

The relationship between teacher communication strategies and the quality of teaching and learning is very close. Research by Kurniawan (2020) shows that teacher interpersonal communication has a significant influence on student learning motivation, especially in religious studies. Rahmawati and Suryana (2022) found that the use of digital media and interactive communication styles can improve the quality of teaching and learning by creating an engaging and relevant learning process for Generation Z. Thus, Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teacher communication strategies that adapt to the digital-native character of students are believed to increase student effectiveness, participation, and understanding in learning. This reinforces the urgency of research on Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teacher communication strategies at MTs Hidayatus Subban Semarang to produce more relevant and contextual communication models to improve the quality of teaching and learning.

Method

This research uses a qualitative approach with a descriptive research type, because the main aim of the research is to describe in depth the PAI teachers' communication strategies in dealing with the characteristics of generation Z during the process of teaching and learning activities at MTs Hidayatus Subban Semarang. This approach is considered relevant for uncovering social reality as it is, especially in the context of communicative interaction between teachers and students. The research location is at MTs Hidayatus Subban Semarang, an Islamic educational institution which has the characteristics of generation Z students with a level of heterogeneity in social background and academic abilities. The researcher focused the study on Islamic Religious Education subject teachers and students in the classes who were the subjects of observation.

The data sources in this study consist of primary and secondary data. Primary data were obtained directly through in-depth interviews with Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers, observations of classroom learning processes, and documentation of teaching and learning activities. Secondary data were obtained from books, scientific journals, school archives, and other supporting documents relevant to the research topic. Informants were selected using a purposive sampling technique, selecting those deemed to have the most knowledge and understanding of the phenomenon under study, such as Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers, homeroom teachers, and several Generation Z students who were active in learning activities. Data collection techniques were carried out through participant observation, semi-structured interviews, and documentation.

Data analysis was conducted through the stages of data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing, as proposed by Miles and Huberman (2014). Data reduction was carried out by sorting and grouping relevant information, then presenting it in a systematic narrative form to facilitate interpretation. Furthermore, conclusions were drawn continuously based on empirical findings in the field. Data validity was tested through source and technical triangulation techniques, namely comparing information from various

informants and matching data from interviews, observations, and documentation to ensure the validity and credibility of the research findings.

Result and Discussion

1. Adaptation of Language and Verbal Communication Style of Islamic Education Teachers

Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers at MTs Hidayatus Subban Semarang have adapted their communication language to align with the characteristics of Generation Z, who tend to prefer quick, concise, and relevant explanations to everyday life. This adjustment aligns with instructional communication theory, which emphasizes that learning effectiveness is largely determined by the suitability of the teacher's language to the level of cognitive development of the students (Mulyana, 2018). Generation Z is known to prefer understanding through direct and concise sentences, so teachers avoid abstract terms and prefer simple, easy-to-understand language (Prensky, 2010).

Classroom observations show that Islamic Religious Education teachers begin lessons with advance organizer questions to explore students' prior knowledge. According to Ausubel, this strategy helps students connect new knowledge with existing knowledge, making the learning process more meaningful (Ausubel, 2000). *Advance organizer* questions are also suitable for Generation Z, who are more responsive to direct dialogue than lengthy lectures (Seemiller & Grace, 2017).

In addition, teachers reinforce material explanations through concrete examples drawn from the students' environments, particularly the digital world and social media. This is relevant to contextual learning theory, which emphasizes that material must be connected to students' real world for deeper understanding (Johnson, 2009). Generation Z, who live in a digital culture, more easily understands context-based messages that are close to their lives (Williams, 2015).

Teachers also avoid overly patronizing communication styles, as this can create resistance among Generation Z, who prefer an equal and participatory approach. This collaborative, communicative approach aligns with Rogers' interpersonal communication theory, which emphasizes the importance of *positive regard* and *empathy* in teacher-student relationships (Rogers, 1983). When students feel valued as individuals, they are more receptive to learning messages. In normative subjects such as Islamic jurisprudence and morals, teachers use scaffolding to help students understand complex concepts. Vygotsky explained that effective learning occurs when teachers provide gradual support according to the student's developmental zone (Vygotsky, 1978). This gradual strategy is particularly appropriate for Generation Z, who require a clear and systematic explanation structure (Turner, 2019).

Teachers also utilize lighthearted humor as an affective strategy to create a relaxed classroom atmosphere. Humor in learning has been shown to increase motivation, reduce anxiety, and build emotional closeness between teachers and students (Ziv, 1988). Generation Z, known for their preference for a relaxed and creative learning environment, is a perfect fit for this educational humor strategy.

With all these verbal adaptations, Islamic Religious Education teachers at MTs Hidayatus Subban Semarang successfully created friendly, dialogic, and enjoyable instructional communication. This aligns with the principle of educational communication, which states that the quality of verbal interaction between teachers and students is crucial to the success of teaching and learning activities (Hargie, 2011). These adaptations also strengthen positive teacher-student relationships, ultimately improving the quality of Islamic Religious Education learning for Generation Z.

2. Strengthening Nonverbal Communication of Islamic Education Teachers (Confirmed with Theory)

Nonverbal communication is a crucial aspect of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teacher strategies at MTs Hidayatus Subban Semarang. Generation Z is known to prefer visual and emotional stimulation in the learning process, so teachers' use of nonverbal communication serves to reinforce verbal messages. According to Knapp & Hall (2010), nonverbal communication conveys stronger meaning than verbal communication because it is spontaneous and directly perceived by students' senses. In the context of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning, the combination of verbal and nonverbal communication is key to creating optimal learning engagement.

When delivering material, teachers use eye contact to ensure each student feels cared for. Eye contact in educational communication has regulatory, affective, and cognitive functions because it can increase students' confidence and readiness to receive lessons (Argyle, 2013). Generation Z, who are highly sensitive to social presence in the learning space, responds positively to consistent eye contact. This practice also makes it easier for teachers to monitor students' attention levels during the learning process, in line with *classroom management theory*, which emphasizes the importance of visual monitoring by teachers to maintain the rhythm of learning (Emmer & Sabornie, 2015).

In addition to eye contact, varying intonation is an important strategy for maintaining student focus. Teachers regulate their speaking pace, raise their voices when emphasizing important points, and use pauses to emphasize meaning. This intonation variation is crucial for Generation Z because they are more easily distracted when material is delivered monotonously. Theoretically, experts state that vocal dynamics are a crucial element in *instructional communication*, improving message clarity and student information retention (Frymier & Houser, 2016). Therefore, Islamic Religious Education teachers use vocal variation as a pedagogical tool to reinforce learning.

Teachers' facial expressions also play a significant role in creating a comfortable learning environment. Expressions such as smiles, nods, or enthusiastic expressions signal that the classroom is a safe space for students to participate. Rogers (1983) emphasized that *positive facial expressions* from teachers create a conducive emotional climate, encouraging students to ask questions and express their opinions. Generation Z, who prioritize emotional comfort in interactions, greatly benefit from a friendly and expressive teacher approach, which makes them feel valued and emotionally supported.

Islamic Religious Education teachers also use hand gestures and body movements to clarify abstract concepts in religious instruction. Hand movements that depict sequence, direction, or meaningful relationships help students grasp complex concepts. According to Birdwhistell (2011), gestures are part of *kinesics*, clarifying the meaning of verbal messages and helping students process information visually. This strategy is effective for Generation Z students, who are cognitively more kinesthetic and visual in their learning (Williams, 2015). Thus, the use of gestures is not merely an aesthetic means of communication, but a pedagogical tool that enhances the clarity of the material.

In addition to gestures, a teacher's physical movements in the classroom also significantly influence students' attention. Teachers actively approach groups of students who are starting to lose focus. This approach is a nonverbal technique known as *proximity*, which, according to Mehrabian (1981), serves as a gentle signal of authority without the need for verbal reprimand. Generation Z is generally sensitive to direct reprimands, so this nonverbal approach is more effective in regaining attention without causing embarrassment or defensiveness.

Overall, the use of nonverbal communication by Islamic Religious Education teachers creates an interactive, warm, and dynamic learning atmosphere. Educational

communication theory states that learning success is greatly influenced by the teacher's ability to harmoniously combine verbal and nonverbal messages (Hargie, 2011). In the context of Generation Z, nonverbal communication becomes a more dominant element because they live in a strongly visual culture. Therefore, the nonverbal communication strategies used by Islamic Religious Education teachers not only strengthen understanding of the material but also play a significant role in building positive emotional relationships and improving the quality of teaching and learning at MTs Hidayatus Subban Semarang.

3. Utilization of Digital Media as a Learning Communication Tool

The use of digital media is a crucial communication strategy for Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers to engage with Generation Z at MTs Hidayatus Subban Semarang. This generation grew up in a digital culture, making it easier for them to understand information through technology-based media. PAI teachers utilize tools such as instructional videos, interactive slides, and digital platforms to enhance their delivery. This approach aligns with Prensky's (2010) "Digital Native" theory, which states that Generation Z has a strong preference for visual and digital media in the learning process.

In practice, Islamic Religious Education teachers often use short videos relevant to themes of faith, worship, and morals before beginning the main explanation. These videos serve as an initial trigger, stimulating students' attention and curiosity. Mayer (2014), in his theory of multimedia learning, emphasized that the combination of text, visuals, and audio can accelerate conceptual understanding through a more effective mental integration process. Students at MTs Hidayatus Subban appeared more enthusiastic when learning began with engaging visual media.

Presentation slides are also a widely used medium for organizing communication flows, making them clearer and more structured. Teachers present key points of the material in short, easy-to-understand bullet points. Simple, concise, and text-free slides help Generation Z students stay focused and avoid feeling overwhelmed by the information. This aligns with the minimalist design principle in visual communication theory (Lester, 2013), which states that visual simplicity can enhance clarity of meaning.

In addition to visual media, Islamic Religious Education teachers utilize digital applications such as Kahoot, Quizizz, or Google Forms for quick evaluations. The use of digital quiz apps not only serves as an assessment tool but also creates a competitive yet fun learning environment. According to recent research by Setiawan (2022), game-based learning can increase student motivation and engagement because it aligns with the characteristics of Generation Z, who prefer challenges and instant interaction.

Digital media also serves as a two-way communication tool between teachers and students. Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers utilize class WhatsApp groups or educational platforms like Google Classroom for discussions, assignments, or the distribution of supplementary materials. This digital communication provides flexibility for students to ask questions at any time and adjust their learning pace. This aligns with the concept of synchronous and asynchronous communication in digital learning as explained by Hrastinski (2019).

Furthermore, the use of digital media allows teachers to use infographics to clarify conceptual information. For example, moral values, the pillars of faith, or religious procedures can be packaged in infographics that are easier to remember. Infographics are considered effective for Generation Z because they tend to process information visually and quickly (Smiciklas, 2012). In class, students demonstrate better understanding when teachers present material in the form of diagrams or diagrams. Overall, the use of digital media helps Islamic Religious Education teachers create learning communications that are more adaptive to Generation Z preferences. Digital media not only functions as a tool, but also serves as a bridge connecting religious material with students' digital everyday world.

The success of this strategy demonstrates that Islamic Religious Education learning can be more engaging, relevant, and effective when packaged through the right technological approach.

4. Strengthening Humanistic Interpersonal Communication between Teachers and Students

Humanistic interpersonal communication is one of the main strategies of Islamic Religious Education teachers at MTs Hidayatus Subban Semarang in dealing with the characteristics of Generation Z. Teachers realize that this generation is more open and responsive to an empathetic approach and respects their existence as individuals. This kind of communication strategy is based on the concept of humanistic communication which emphasizes dialogic relationships, mutual respect, and the formation of positive emotional bonds between teachers and students (Rogers, 1983). By prioritizing a humanistic approach, Islamic Religious Education teachers can create an emotionally safe learning atmosphere.

In teaching practice, Islamic Religious Education teachers often begin interactions by asking about students' condition, offering personal greetings, or using lighthearted humor to lighten the classroom atmosphere. This approach helps reduce the psychological distance between teacher and students, allowing for a more natural and relaxed communication process. According to *student-centered communication theory*, interactions that place students as active participants will increase learning comfort and strengthen intrinsic motivation (Noddings, 2012). This is evident in the classroom when students appear more confident in asking questions and engaging in discussions.

Islamic Religious Education teachers also emphasize the importance of active listening in interpersonal communication. When students express opinions or questions, teachers pay full attention, nod, and respond appropriately. This technique aligns with the concept of listening competency mentioned by Burleson (2010), where a teacher's ability to listen empathetically increases students' positive perceptions of them. The effect is seen when students feel valued and more confident in participating.

Humanistic interpersonal interaction is also evident in teachers' ability to build two-way communication. Teachers provide space for students to express their religious thoughts or experiences, then relate these to the learning material. This approach fosters a sense of belonging and increases students' emotional engagement in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) lessons. Freire's (1997) theory of *dialogic pedagogy* asserts that ideal education should open up a space for dialogue so that knowledge is constructed collaboratively, not simply transferred one-way.

In addition, teachers provide emotional support when students face academic or personal challenges. For example, when a student seems unfocused due to family issues, teachers don't immediately reprimand them but instead engage them in a private conversation after class. This approach aligns with the concept of *teacher immediacy*, which is the teacher's verbal and nonverbal actions that increase psychological closeness with students (Mehrabian, 1981). Research shows that teacher immediacy significantly influences the learning motivation of Generation Z, who crave emotional validation.

Islamic Religious Education teachers also implement role-modeling-based interpersonal communication. They not only convey Islamic values verbally but also demonstrate patience, courtesy, and integrity in daily interactions. This approach aligns with Al-Ghazali's concept of *exemplary pedagogy*, which posits that a teacher's example is the most powerful instrument in moral education (Al-Ghazali, 2005). As a result, students view teachers as trustworthy and exemplary figures.

Overall, strengthening humanistic interpersonal communication helps create healthy emotional relationships between teachers and students. Generation Z, who tend to crave personal attention and emotional validation, feels more valued and connected to the

learning process. Thus, this strategy not only improves the effectiveness of learning communication but also strengthens the overall quality of teaching and learning at MTs Hidayatus Subban Semarang.

5. Use of Refreshing and Ice Breaking Techniques in Learning Communication

The use of refreshing and ice-breaking techniques is a strategy widely implemented by Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers at MTs Hidayatus Subban Semarang to maintain the focus and enthusiasm for learning among Generation Z. This generation is characterized by a tendency to get bored easily due to high exposure to information and digital stimulation. Therefore, teachers need to create a dynamic learning atmosphere through light activities that can restore student concentration. This approach is relevant to the theory of *arousal and attention*, which emphasizes that enjoyable activities can increase students' attention and mental readiness (Schunk, 2012).

In the learning process, Islamic Religious Education teachers often begin sessions with light games or quick questions to refocus students. This technique is a form of experiential learning that aligns with Kolb's (2014) theory that physical and interactive activities can strengthen the internalization of knowledge. When students participate in icebreaker techniques, they not only create a fresh learning environment but are also better prepared to receive the core material.

Teachers also use refreshing techniques in the form of light movement activities like stretching, clapping, or short games involving group work. These activities are effective for Generation Z, who tend to be active and require variety in their learning. Jensen's (2005) theory of *movement-based learning* states that motor activity can stimulate cognitive function and improve oxygen flow to the brain, thereby enhancing student focus.

In addition to physical activity, Islamic Religious Education teachers incorporate educational humor as a form of psychological refreshment. The humor used is not disruptive jokes, but rather humor that is relevant to religious material or everyday phenomena. According to Martin (2010), humor in learning can reduce stress levels, increase positive responses, and strengthen social relationships in the classroom. The use of humor has been shown to create a more relaxed classroom atmosphere and reduce learning pressure.

Icebreaker techniques are also used to build camaraderie and communication among students. For example, teachers might ask students to share a positive message with a friend before beginning the lesson. This type of activity reinforces moral values while fostering healthy social interactions. This approach aligns with Bandura's (1997) *social learning theory*, which emphasizes that positive behavior is reinforced through social interaction and observation of others.

Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers also utilize digital icebreakers, such as app-based quizzes or interactive puzzles. Generation Z responds particularly well to technology-based activities because they align with their visual, instant, and competitive learning styles. Research by Azizah (2021) shows that digital icebreakers can improve student concentration and motivation more effectively than traditional methods. Teachers facilitate this need to keep the learning process relevant and engaging.

Overall, the use of refreshing and icebreaking techniques supports the creation of more lively and adaptive learning communication to the characteristics of Generation Z. Students' cognitive load can be reduced and the classroom atmosphere remains conducive to further learning. Through this strategy, Islamic Religious Education teachers successfully maintain the rhythm of learning, thereby significantly improving the quality of teaching and learning at MTs Hidayatus Subban Semarang.

6. Persuasive Communication of Islamic Education Teachers in Directing Generation Z's Learning Behavior

Persuasive communication is an important strategy used by Islamic Religious Education teachers at MTs Hidayatus Subban Semarang in guiding the learning behavior of Generation Z. Persuasion is used to encourage students to understand the important values of Islamic Religious Education learning and foster internal awareness, rather than simply following orders. This approach aligns with the concept of *persuasive communication*, which emphasizes changes in attitudes and behavior through messages that influence cognitive, affective, and conative aspects (O'Keefe, 2016). Thus, teachers strive to build students' intrinsic motivation towards learning activities.

In classroom practice, Islamic Religious Education teachers often use both rational and emotional messages to influence students' thinking. Rational messages are demonstrated through logical explanations of the benefits of understanding Islamic teachings in everyday life, while emotional messages are realized through inspirational stories that touch students' affective side. This two-track approach aligns with the *Elaboration Likelihood Model*, which states that individuals can be persuaded through the central (logical) and peripheral (emotional) paths depending on their psychological state (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986).

Teachers also demonstrate behavioral consistency as a form of persuasion through role modeling. When teachers demonstrate discipline, honesty, and courtesy in daily interactions, students are more likely to accept the moral messages conveyed. This role modeling approach is reinforced by *behavior modeling theory*, which emphasizes that a person's behavior is influenced by the role models they serve as role models (Bandura, 1997). In the context of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning, role modeling is a more powerful means of persuasion than mere verbal advice.

Additionally, teachers utilize persuasive communication techniques through praise, positive reinforcement, and verbal motivation. When students demonstrate effort or progress, teachers offer praise to reinforce positive behavior. This technique refers to *reinforcement theory*, which states that behavior becomes stronger when it receives positive consequences (Skinner, 2005). Generation Z, highly sensitive to social recognition, feels more motivated when they receive appreciation.

Islamic Religious Education teachers also use narratives as a persuasive tool. Through inspiring stories about Islamic figures or historical events, teachers can influence students' attitudes in a more subtle and touching way. Narratives are powerful because they can stimulate the imagination and help students understand moral values through the storyline (Fisher, 1987). Religious narratives packaged with contemporary relevance have been shown to make it easier for students to internalize the values taught.

Another persuasive technique is collaborative engagement, where teachers involve students in small classroom decisions, such as determining learning methods or selecting discussion groups. By involving students, teachers demonstrate that they are trusted and valued, thereby allowing students to feel a greater sense of responsibility for positive behavior. This approach aligns with *participatory communication theory*, which emphasizes that participation increases a sense of ownership in the learning process (Servaes, 2008).

Overall, PAI teachers' persuasive communication has had a significant impact on improving the quality of generation Z's learning behavior. The messages conveyed not only provide information, but also build students' awareness and internal motivation. With this strategy, PAI teachers at MTs Hidayatus Subban Semarang are able to direct students' learning attitudes and behavior more effectively so that the quality of teaching and learning improves overall.

Conclusion

Based on the results of research on *Islamic Religious Education Teacher Communication Strategies for Generation Z in Improving the Quality of Teaching and Learning Activities at MTs Hidayatus Subban Semarang*, it can be concluded that the effectiveness of learning is largely determined by the teacher's ability to adapt communication strategies to the characteristics of Generation Z who are digital-native, fast, visual, and highly responsive to dialogic interactions. Traditional and one-way communication is no longer effective, so Islamic Religious Education teachers need to develop more adaptive, contextual, and collaborative communication patterns. Research findings indicate that Islamic Religious Education teachers successfully implemented various forms of verbal communication adaptation through the use of simple, concise, and relevant language to students' lives. Teachers were able to integrate concrete examples from the digital world, utilize provocative questions, and employ step-by-step explanations to help students understand abstract material. This non-patronizing and empathetic communication approach provided space for students to actively engage, thus strengthening teacher-student interpersonal relationships and fostering a more conducive learning environment. In addition to verbal communication, Islamic Religious Education teachers also maximize the role of nonverbal communication to reinforce messages. Friendly facial expressions, open body movements, intense eye contact, and the use of visual media have been shown to increase the focus and learning motivation of Generation Z. This strategy aligns with Islamic educational communication theory, which emphasizes the importance of teacher role models and attitudes as part of the internalization of values. In terms of media and technology, Islamic Religious Education teachers demonstrate adaptive skills through the use of learning videos, infographics, digital applications, and interactive platforms relevant to Generation Z's learning styles. The use of technology not only increases students' interest in learning but also strengthens their understanding of the material because it aligns with their digital culture. Learning interactions become more engaging, effective, and facilitate active student engagement.

In general, Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers' communication strategies have been shown to significantly improve the quality of teaching and learning at MTs Hidayatus Subban Semarang. The learning environment becomes more dynamic, dialogic, and student-centered. Student engagement increases cognitively, affectively, and socially, enabling optimal achievement of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning objectives. This study reinforces previous research that emphasized the importance of effective communication in learning for Generation Z. Thus, Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teacher communication strategies that adapt to the characteristics of Generation Z are an urgent need in the context of modern education. Teachers are not only required to master religious material but also to possess pedagogical communication competencies that are up-to-date. Moving forward, the communication model implemented at MTs Hidayatus Subban Semarang can be further developed as a reference for other madrasas or schools facing similar challenges in improving the quality of teaching and learning for Generation Z.

References

- Al Awwaby, MS, Ardianto, Y., Rokhimawan, MA, & Hayad, Z. (2025). *Implementation of Islamic education curriculum development at Stitma Madani Yogyakarta: A practical and theoretical review*. Amorti: Journal of Interdisciplinary Islamic Studies. <https://doi.org/10.59944/amorti.v4i2.439>.
- Aliwan, AH (2024). Ethics of Virtual Islamic Propagation Communication in the Digital Era. *Janaloka*, 2 (2), 221–232. <https://doi.org/http://dx.doi.org/10.26623/janaloka.v2i2.11347>

- Aliwan, A., Mustafidin, A., Hakim, A., Ratnawati, S., Latifah, KF, & Hidayatulloh, A. (2025). *The role of urban landscape in the dynamics of Islamic education in the archipelago: Theoretical and historical study*. At-Turots: Journal of Islamic Education, 7 (1), 124–135. <https://doi.org/10.51468/jpi.v7i1.887>
- Aliwan, Ahmad Mustafidin, Abdul Hakim, Santi Ratnawati, Kunfuaidah Latifah, & Arief Hidayatulloh. (2025). The role of urban landscape in the dynamics of islamic education in the archipelago : Theoretical and historical study. *At Turots: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam*, 7(1), 124–135. <https://doi.org/10.51468/jpi.v7i1.840>
- Aliwan, A., Ratnawati, S., Syaifudin, M. A., & Hakim, A. (2025). Analisis Strategi, Tantangan, dan Peluang Dakwah melalui Podcast di Era Digital. *Janaloka: Jurnal Ilmu Komunikasi*, 3(1).
- Aini, M. (2025). The thoughts of Abdullah Nashih Ulwan and Zakiah Daradjat on Islamic religious education for children and its relevance in the contemporary era. *Ar-Risalah Journal of Islamic Education*, 1 (1), 1-12.
- Arifin, Z. (2020). *Islamic Educational Communication: Concept and Implementation*. Jakarta: Rajawali Press.
- Anzar Aquil, Maria Nurul Qoyyimah, Aliwan, Santi Ratnawati, Diemas Nur Falahur Rozaq, Kamalun Ni'am, & Triana Hermawati. (2025). Implementation of the deep learning approach in akidah akhlak instruction for strengthening islamic social awareness values among students of mi nurul huda raji, demak. *Amorti: Jurnal Studi Islam Interdisipliner*, 4(4), 183–191. <https://doi.org/10.59944/amorti.v4i4.487>
- Ausubel, D. P. (2000). *The Acquisition and Retention of Knowledge: A Cognitive View*. Boston: Kluwer Academic.
- Hamid, A. (2021). The Influence of Digital Communication in Islamic Education Learning on Generation Z Student Participation. *Journal of Contemporary Islamic Education*, 5(2), 112–125.
- Johnson, E. B. (2009). *Contextual Teaching and Learning: What It Is and Why It's Here to Stay*. California: Corwin Press.
- Kurniawan, H. (2020). The Influence of Teacher Interpersonal Communication on Student Learning Motivation in Religious Learning. *Nusantara Education Journal*, 4(1), 55–67.
- Miles, M. B., & Huberman, A. M. (2014). *Qualitative Data Analysis: A Methods Sourcebook* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.
- Misbah, M., Lubis, SH, Purwanti, E., Rohimah, R., Ikhsanudin, M., Jumaeda, S., ... & Aliwan, A. (2025). *Research methodology of Islamic religious education* (qualitative and quantitative) (ET Murni, Ed.). West Sumatra: CV Afasa Pustaka. ISBN: 978-623-89848-9-3.
- Mustafidin, A., Fahsin, M., Hakim, A., & Hidayatullah, MA (2024). *Integrative curriculum innovation in responding to globalization: A case study of Darul Amanah Islamic boarding school*. At Turots: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam, 473-483. <https://doi.org/10.51468/jpi.v7i1.887>.
- Nasarudin, N., Suryanto, D., Nurjanah, N., Rofi'i, MA, Mubarak, F., Kardi, J., ... & Umar, RH (2023). *Religious moderation from the time of the Prophet Muhammad to the era of Society 5.0* (ET Murni, Ed.). West Sumatra: CV Afasa Pustaka.
- Nurainiah, N., Aliwan, A., Azhari, D.S., Kardi, J., Samsudin, M., Pathollah, A.G., ... & Rohimah, R. (2024). *History of Islamic education*. West Sumatra: CV Afasa Pustaka. ISBN: 978-623-10-0511-3.
- Mulyana, D. (2018). *Communication Science: An Introduction*. Bandung: Rosdakarya Youth.
- Mulyana, D. (2019). *Effective Communication in Education*. Bandung: Rosdakarya.

- Nizar, S. (2018). *Philosophy of Islamic Education: Historical, Theoretical, and Practical Approaches*. Jakarta: Kencana.
- Nurkancana, W., & Sunartana, IM (2021). Visual and Interactive Learning for the Digital Generation. *Indonesian Journal of Educational Technology*, 3(1), 45–57.
- Prensky, M. (2010). *Teaching Digital Natives: Partnering for Real Learning*. California: Corwin Press.
- Prensky, M. (2018). Digital Natives and Digital Learning: Understanding the New Learners. *Journal of Future Education*, 6(3), 14–27.
- Rahmawati, R., & Suryana, D. (2022). Visual Media and Simple Language Style for Religious Learning for Generation Z. *Journal of Adolescent Education*, 8(2), 90–102.
- Rogers, C.R. (1983). *Freedom to Learn for the 80s*. Columbus: Charles E. Merrill.
- Rusman. (2020). *Learning Models: Developing Teacher Professionalism*. Jakarta: Rajawali Pers.
- Seemiller, C., & Grace, M. (2017). *Generation Z: A Century in the Making*. New York: Routledge.
- Sudjana, N. (2019). *Fundamentals of the Teaching and Learning Process*. Bandung: Sinar Baru.
- Vygotsky, L. S. (1978). *Mind in Society: The Development of Higher Psychological Processes*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Williams, A. (2015). Understanding the Learning Preferences of Gen Z Students. *Journal of Educational Psychology and Technology*, 7(4), 33–41.