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The Gen Z Student's Styles In Learning English At Islamic Junior High School

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Abstract

This study explores the learning styles of Generation Z students in the context of learning English at an Islamic Junior High School. Generation Z, characterized by its digital nativity and diverse learning preferences, presents unique challenges and opportunities for educators. The research employed qualitative methods to investigate how these students engage with English language learning, focusing on their preferred learning styles, technological integration, and cultural influences within an Islamic educational environment. Findings suggest that while digital tools are widely embraced, traditional pedagogical approaches remain influential. The study concludes with implications for educators to better cater to Gen Z's learning preferences while respecting the cultural and religious contexts of Islamic education.

Keywords: *The Gen Z, Styles Learning English*

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INTRODUCTION

The Gen Z (millennial generation) enjoys technology, and nearly every daily activity they engage in involves a device. This generation is unique in that it differed greatly from the previous generations in that it was born during the introduction of cell phones, the internet, and televisions in different sizes and colors. As a result, they were highly adept at utilizing technology for both daily tasks and education.

The Gen Z is one in which external factors have a significant impact on life development and growth, making them adaptable to rapid changes and capable of using technology to meet their requirements (Arum, 2018). Students wanted to use other forms of technology to enhance their creativity and skills while learning English, thus they learned how to use technology in addition to literature. (Kardena, 2017) indicates that in order to accomplish this learning objective, English lecturers should collaborate with their students.

According to Renandya (2020), learning style refers to a student's approach to the learning process. According to Lismay and Zubaidah (2019), students typically have a preferred method of organizing and processing information in the learning process. In order to address issues pertaining to their individual learning processes, students must be aware of their particular learning styles (Oxford, 2003). If they are aware of their learning preferences, especially in light of what teachers anticipate from their students in the classroom, it will be more beneficial for them. The traits of their individual learning styles are also present in millennial pupils. As per Arum, the "learning style of the gen z seems to favor certain activities like group learning, experiential learning, and using technology for learning." Additionally, millennial students prefer to learn from their experiences and use all forms of technology to find the knowledge they need (Arum, 2018).

The gen z is a new group of people that are adept at utilizing technology to fulfill their everyday demands.

Research Questions :

1. What is the gen z student's styles of learning english at islamic junior high school?
2. How are the styles of learning english realized at islamic junior high school?
3. Why are the styles realized the way they are?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Technology use in education, and specific considerations in Islamic educational contexts. This review will integrate studies from educational journals, articles, and other academic sources relevant to the subject.

a. Understanding Generation Z

- Characteristics : Generation Z, typically defined as those born from the mid-1990s to the early 2010s, is recognized for being digital natives, having grown up with ready access to the internet, digital devices, and social media (Seemiller & Grace, 2016).
- Learning Preferences : They prefer visual and interactive learning experiences, value autonomy, and expect personalization in their learning processes (Holmes, 2018).

b. Technological Integration in Learning English

- Digital Tools : Gen Z students often use apps, online games, and videos to enhance language learning. Studies highlight the effectiveness of tools like Duolingo, Quizlet, and YouTube for vocabulary building and grammar practice (Godwin-Jones, 2019).
- Social Media : Platforms like Instagram and Snapchat are not only for social interaction but also for informal learning, including language acquisition through peer interaction (Greenhow & Lewin, 2016).

c. Pedagogical Approaches in Islamic Junior High Schools

- Curriculum Design : Islamic Junior High Schools often integrate values-based education which aligns with religious beliefs and cultural practices. The English language curriculum could be adapted to reflect Islamic values, potentially influencing the choice of texts and contexts for language practice (Dahmardeh, 2009).
- Role of Teachers : Teachers in these settings act as both educators and moral guides, which influences how they engage with students and incorporate technology into their teaching practices (Mabruk, 2021).

Hockly (2018) supports this view, suggesting that interactive and gamified learning experiences can motivate Generation Z students and foster deeper engagement with the material. Dabbagh and Kitsantas (2012) argue that Generation Z learners thrive in collaborative environments where they can share knowledge and work on projects with peers. Social media and online forums provide platforms for such collaborative learning.

Dudeney (2013) highlights the importance of integrating digital literacy into language teaching. He suggests that educators should focus on developing students' digital skills alongside their language skills, using tools such as blogs, podcasts, and social media. Hockly (2018) emphasizes the need for gamification in language teaching, as it aligns with Generation Z's preference for interactive and motivational learning experiences. She advocates for the use of digital games and simulations to enhance language learning.

a. Challenges and Opportunities

- Cultural and Linguistic Challenges : Balancing English language acquisition with Islamic values and Arabic language learning can pose a unique set of challenges. Teachers need to be sensitive to cultural contexts while employing modern educational technologies.
- Opportunities for Enhanced Engagement : Incorporating Islamic values into English language teaching materials can enhance relevance and engagement for students, making learning more meaningful and contextually rooted.
- Cultural and Linguistic Challenges : Balancing English language acquisition with Islamic values and Arabic language learning can pose a unique set of challenges. Teachers need to be sensitive to cultural contexts while employing modern educational technologies.
- Opportunities for Enhanced Engagement : Incorporating Islamic values into English language teaching materials can enhance relevance and engagement for students, making learning more meaningful and contextually rooted .

b. Case Studies and Practical applications

- Interactive Learning Environments : Case studies from schools like the International Islamic School in Malaysia show successful integration of interactive technologies in English language classes that engage Gen Z learners effectively .
- Project-Based Learning : Projects that integrate English language skills with community service or cultural exploration projects support holistic learning and appeal to Gen Z's

preference for practical and impactful learning (Smith & Thompson, 2016).

METHOD

We use Descriptive qualitative study to explore and describe the learning styles of Gen Z students in learning English at an Islamic Junior High School. Develop a questionnaire to identify students' preferred learning styles, Include questions about their use of technology, study habits, and attitudes towards English learning, Conduct semi-structured interviews with a subset of students to gain deeper insights into their learning styles and experiences, Take notes on teaching methods, student engagement, and interactions. Use descriptive statistics to analyze survey responses and identify the most common learning styles among students. Provide background information on Gen Z learning characteristics and the context of Islamic education. Present the findings from surveys, interviews, and observations, highlighting key themes and patterns. Interpret the results, linking them to existing literature on Gen Z learning styles and English language education.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Based on the data we found that Students find learning English at the Islamic Junior High School enjoyable, but they struggle with pronunciation because some teachers do not emphasize this aspect. Technology has a significant impact on learning English, making it easier for students to complete assignments and understand the material through tools like Google Translate. Students' interest, motivation, and curiosity in learning English are significantly influenced by the teacher's approach. A lack of engaging teaching methods and insufficient emphasis on pronunciation decrease students' enthusiasm. Students recognize the importance of English for their future, particularly for career aspirations such as becoming a businessman and needing to interact with international investors. Students find learning English using cellphones more practical compared to books, citing ease of access and convenience.

The enjoyment reported by students suggests that the overall environment and curriculum are engaging. However, the lack of focus on pronunciation is a significant gap. Pronunciation is a crucial part of language learning that affects students' ability to communicate effectively. The curriculum should incorporate more pronunciation practice to address this issue and enhance students' speaking skills. The integration of technology in education is beneficial, especially for Gen Z students who are digital natives. Tools like Google Translate provide immediate assistance and facilitate independent learning. However, reliance on translation tools can also hinder the development of language skills if not complemented by proper guidance and instruction. It is essential to balance technology use with traditional teaching methods to ensure comprehensive language acquisition.

The teacher's role is pivotal in shaping students' attitudes towards learning. Engaging and interactive teaching methods can greatly enhance students' interest and motivation. The current teaching methods, as described by the students, seem to lack these qualities. Professional development for teachers, focusing on innovative teaching strategies and the importance of pronunciation, could improve student engagement and learning outcomes. The awareness of English as a vital skill for future success highlights the students' understanding of its global importance. This recognition can be leveraged to motivate students further. Schools can enhance this motivation by providing real-world contexts and opportunities where students can see the practical applications of English in their desired career paths.

The preference for digital tools over traditional books aligns with the characteristics of Gen Z, who are accustomed to digital interactions. This preference suggests a need for educational institutions to incorporate more digital resources and mobile-friendly content into their teaching strategies. However, it is also important to ensure that the quality and depth of learning are not compromised. A blended approach that combines digital tools with traditional methods might offer the best learning experience.

CONCLUSION

Researchers conclude that the interview data reveals several key insights into the English learning experience of Gen Z students at the Islamic Junior High School. While students generally enjoy learning English, there are areas that require improvement, such as pronunciation teaching and engaging teaching methods. Technology plays a significant role in aiding learning, and students are

aware of the importance of English for their future careers. They also prefer digital learning tools over traditional books. To address these findings, the school could consider enhancing teacher training, integrating more technology-based learning tools, and adopting a blended learning approach. These steps could improve student engagement, motivation, and overall proficiency in English.

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