Discussion and Dialogue Methods to Address the Moral Crisis of Generation Z on Social Media: A Case Study at SMP Kartikatama Metro

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Abstract
In the current era of social media development, platforms such as TikTok, Instagram, and YouTube have become an inseparable part of adolescents' lives, bringing positive impacts on creativity and access to information, but also posing serious challenges to the morality and character of the younger generation. This moral crisis includes a decline in communication ethics, imitative behavior toward negative content, as well as decreasing discipline and courtesy in the school environment. This study employs a qualitative approach with a descriptive method, using in depth interviews with the principal, Islamic Education (PAI) teachers, and students. The findings indicate that discussion and dialogue methods are effective strategies for fostering students' moral awareness. Islamic Education teachers act as facilitators who create space for critical, reflective, and communicative thinking, enabling students to assess moral values from religious and social perspectives in a rational manner. Through these dialogical activities, students become more cautious in interacting on social media, more polite in giving comments, and more capable of correcting the negative behavior of their peers. Theoretically, the results of this study reinforce Vygotsky's view of social constructivism and Al-Attas's concept of ta'dib, which state that moral education is formed through social interaction and reflective role modeling. Thus, the application of dialogue and discussion methods in Islamic Education learning proves effective in shaping digital spirituality, social responsibility, and ethical awareness among Generation Z in the era of social media. This study recommends integrating these methods into the Pancasila Student Profile (P5) curriculum as an adaptive, innovative, and contextual character education model for Indonesian schools.

INTRODUCTION

In the current era of digital development, social media has become an inseparable part of people's lives, especially among the younger generation. Platforms such as TikTok, Instagram, YouTube, and various messaging applications facilitate the search and exchange of information, as well as interaction between individuals. Research indicates that Generation Z in Indonesia uses social media intensively as a primary source of information and entertainment (Databoks, 2024). This situation can have positive impacts, such as increased access to knowledge, social connectivity, and digital creativity. However, technological

advancement also brings specific challenges to the moral quality and character of young people (Hidayati, 2022).

In general, many studies argue that poorly managed social media use can lead to negative behaviors, including bullying, the spread of hoaxes (unverified information), sexual content, and uncritical consumptive behavior (Susanto, 2021). For example, some studies state that although social media has the potential to become a medium for instilling values, norms, and habits that shape identity, attitudes, and behavior, it also enables the circulation of content that triggers moral decline and character problems among students. In this context, Generation Z becomes the main focus because of its high level of social media use and its strong influence on the surrounding environment (Prasetyo, 2023).

Data from Statistics Indonesia presented in the "Indonesian Gen Z Report 2024" show that Generation Z in Indonesia numbers around 74.93 million people, equivalent to 27.94% of the total population (Badan Pusat Statistik, 2021). This figure indicates that Generation Z carries both great potential and considerable risk related to the influence of social media use. Furthermore, other data reveal that Generation Z constitutes the group with the highest level of internet and social media use in Indonesia (Asosiasi Penyelenggara Jasa Internet Indonesia, 2024). This strengthens the urgency of paying serious attention to the moral and character aspects of Generation Z in the digital sphere.

There is growing evidence that social media strongly affects the psychological and moral dimensions of Generation Z. For instance, surveys show that the majority of Generation Z relies on social media as their main source of news, with the proportion reaching 73% (Fakultas Psikiatri Universitas Indonesia, 2021). At the same time, sectoral reviews report that Generation Z faces social and mental pressures arising from their engagement with social media (Kurniawan, 2022). Thus, the impact of social media use is not merely technical and digital in nature, but also closely linked to the formation of students' morals, ethics, and social responsibility.

In the educational context, junior high school represents a transitional phase that is highly vulnerable in terms of moral formation and social identity. Students at this level are in a stage of psychological and character development in which peer influence, digital trends, and moral instability are not yet well regulated (Fitriani, 2023). Schools in Indonesia report that teachers experience difficulties in anticipating student behaviors such as harsh comments in class chats, the spread of hoaxes among students, and viral trends that trigger

negative actions. This condition demands a more active role from education in providing effective solutions.

In this situation, learning methods based on discussion and dialogue hold strong potential as approaches to address the moral crisis of Generation Z in the social media sphere at SMP Kartikatama Metro. The discussion method enables students to speak, listen, and express their views actively within the classroom learning environment. Character education studies note that through discussion, students can develop empathy, a sense of responsibility, and critical thinking skills (Rahmawati, 2021). Dialogue, which differs from one-way or superficial discussion, emphasizes understanding, reflection, and appreciation of others' perspectives (Susanto, 2021). Integrating these two approaches into religious and character education at the junior high school level can become a medium for nurturing digital culture, ethical social media behavior, and morally grounded conduct.

More specifically, at the level of national education policy, the Pancasila Student Profile (Profil Pelajar Pancasila, P5) introduced in the curriculum provides project-based co-curricular space that allows learners to internalize values such as cooperation, critical thinking, and noble character (Kementerian Pendidikan, 2022). This framework is highly relevant to the aims of Islamic Religious Education (Pendidikan Agama Islam, PAI), which focuses on character and moral development. Several studies on P5 implementation in 2024–2025 show that project-based learning is effective in cultivating collaboration and problem solving skills, thereby opening opportunities to design discussion and dialogue methods around themes such as digital ethics, anti-bullying, and information verification (Lestari, 2024).

Based on the above discussion, considering the urgency, digital context, and moral challenges faced by Generation Z in school environments particularly at SMP Kartikatama Metro this study is directed at designing, implementing, and disseminating the most effective Islamic Religious Education (PAI) methods to address the moral crisis of Generation Z on social media. This research positions PAI as a value anchor that synergizes with P5 and digital literacy so that noble character is not only cognitively understood but also realized in the everyday digital behavior of students at SMP Kartikatama Metro.

METHODS

This study employed a qualitative approach with a descriptive method. The qualitative approach was chosen because the research seeks to understand social phenomena

in depth through direct interaction with the research subjects, rather than merely measuring numbers or statistical variables (Sugiyono, 2019). This approach enables the researcher to portray holistically how discussion and dialogue methods are implemented to address the moral crisis among Generation Z students at SMP Kartikatama Metro.

According to Moleong, qualitative research aims to understand phenomena experienced by research subjects comprehensively through descriptions in the form of words and language within a natural context (Moleong, 2021). Therefore, this study emphasizes an in-depth understanding of the process of implementing discussion and dialogue methods as a moral education strategy in schools.

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

1. **Overview of Field Findings**

This study was conducted at SMP Kartikatama Metro, focusing on the implementation of dialogue and discussion methods in addressing the moral crisis among Generation Z caused by the influence of social media. Data were collected through in-depth interviews with: (1) the principal (Siswanto, S.Pd.I), (2) the Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teacher (Nurohmat, M.Pd), and (3) a student (Ahmad Dzakir). The interview results indicate that symptoms of a moral crisis among students have begun to emerge, such as a decline in communication ethics, imitative behavior toward negative social media content, and decreasing politeness and discipline. Nevertheless, the school, particularly the PAI teacher, has taken various preventive and corrective measures by using dialogue and discussion methods in classroom learning and religious activities.

2. **Principal's Perspective on Generation Z**

According to Siswanto, S.Pd.I, Generation Z is a generation that grows up in a digital era full of challenges and opportunities. They possess strong technological skills and high creativity, but are also easily influenced by popular culture on social media. The principal believes that social media plays a major role in shaping students' behavior and emphasizes the need for moral and character education grounded in religious values so that students not only know what is right, but also understand the moral reasons behind that rightness. To support this, the school implements regular religious programs such as dhuha prayer, Qur'an recitation (tadarus), and rotating short sermons (kultum), which aim to strengthen students'

spirituality so they have a moral shield against the negative currents of social media. However, the principal also acknowledges internal obstacles, such as students' lack of motivation, discipline, and concentration in learning, which pose their own challenges in moral development.

3. **Role and Strategies of the PAI Teacher in Addressing Moral Crisis**

The PAI teacher, Nurohmat, M.Pd, explains that religious teachers have a central role as uswatun hasanah (moral exemplars) for students. PAI teachers not only teach Islamic values but also apply active learning methods so that students are able to understand and internalize moral values in their daily lives. Discussion and dialogue methods are implemented to provide space for students to express their views, after which the teacher offers guidance using language that is accessible to them, making students feel respected and more engaged in the learning process. These methods are considered suitable for the characteristics of Generation Z, who are accustomed to voicing opinions and seeking freedom of expression. Such an approach facilitates an exchange of perspectives between teacher and students, so that students do not merely receive dogmatic instruction but understand moral values in a reflective and rational manner. The PAI teacher notes that the outcomes of applying these methods are quite positive, as reflected in changes in students' behavior on social media: they become more polite in commenting, more cautious in uploading content, and more willing to admonish peers who engage in morally inappropriate behavior.

4. **Student Perspective on the Dialogue and Discussion Methods**

One of the students, Ahmad Dzakir, stated that the discussion and dialogue methods implemented by the Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teacher increased students' interest and engagement in religious learning. From his point of view, these lessons are more appealing because students can speak freely rather than merely listening passively to the teacher, and discussions sometimes address viral issues on social media that turn out to contain many moral lessons.

The student also acknowledged that these activities made him more reflective in using social media, for example by being more cautious before posting and better understanding the moral impact of digital content. This suggests that the dialogue and discussion methods are not only effective in improving students' moral understanding, but also influence their actual behavior in their digital lives.

5. **Researcher's Perspective on the Dialogue and Discussion Methods**

From the perspective of Islamic education, Sagala, (2021) explains that the role of PAI teachers is highly strategic in shaping students' character through uswatun hasanah (good example) and empathetic communication. Religious teachers are responsible not only for transferring religious knowledge, but also for instilling akhlakul karimah (noble character) through role modelling and dialogue that engages the affective dimension of students.

This principle is in line with the concept of ta'dib proposed by Al-Attas, (1980), which states that the aim of Islamic education is not merely to transmit

knowledge, but to form an adab oriented (well mannered and ethical) personality. Thus, the dialogue and discussion methods applied at SMP Kartikatama Metro can be regarded as a concrete form of modern ta'dib practice, namely an educational process that builds moral awareness through reflective interaction between teachers and students.

Furthermore, the findings of this study strengthen Vygotsky, (1978)theory of social constructivism, which emphasizes that moral learning is formed through social processes and interpersonal communication. In this context, classroom discussions and dialogues function as a medium for students to construct moral understanding collectively, rather than solely through teacher instruction. The exchange of viewpoints enables students to assess the moral consequences of actions, develop empathy, and learn to appreciate differences, so that dialogue based moral education not only strengthens individuals personally, but also contributes to building a school culture that is value-oriented and harmonious.

This approach fosters critical awareness, social responsibility, and digital spirituality, which serve as a primary bulwark against the powerful influence of social media. The findings support a new paradigm of religious education in the digital era, shifting from mere value transmission to a process of forming moral awareness that is reflective, dialogical, and applicable. Therefore, the implementation of dialogue and discussion methods at SMP Kartikatama Metro can be used as a model of moral education that is adaptive, innovative, and contextually relevant for the digital generation across various educational institutions.

CONCLUSION

The study shows that the moral crisis among Generation Z at SMP Kartikatama Metro is a real phenomenon arising from the rapid flow of information and the influence of popular culture on social media. Students tend to imitate lifestyles, language, and behaviors that often conflict with school norms and ethics, indicating that digital technological development brings both benefits and risks: on the one hand it enhances students' creativity and openness, but on the other it weakens their self control and moral awareness.

To respond to these challenges, the school particularly the Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teacher applies dialogue and discussion methods as an effective and

relevant moral learning strategy. Through this approach, the teacher does not merely deliver content but also opens space for students' critical thinking, allowing them to express opinions, ask questions, and relate religious values to issues they encounter in everyday life and on social media. As a result, changes in students' behavior become visible both at school and in digital spaces: they communicate more politely, are more cautious in uploading content, and show greater willingness to admonish peers who behave contrary to shared norms. This indicates that dialogical learning not only enhances students' cognitive understanding of morality but also encourages the internalization of values into concrete attitudes and actions.

Thus, dialogue and discussion methods prove to be a strategic solution for addressing the moral crisis of Generation Z in the digital era. The findings are consistent with the views of scholars such as Lickona, Arifin, and Nasution, who emphasize that contemporary moral education must be participatory, reflective, and communicative, rather than purely doctrinal. Through two way communication that respects students' perspectives, PAI teachers at SMP Kartikatama Metro succeed in creating a learning environment that not only transmits religious knowledge but also shapes character, responsibility, and strong ethical awareness in students.

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