Investigating Interest and Necessity: A Phenomenological Analysis of Generation Z's Involvement in Islamic Religious Education

*Nurul Jannah[1], Albertos Damni[2]
[1,2]Institut Agama Islam Negeri Kerinci, Jambi, Indonesia
*Corresponding Author: nuruljannah8879@gmail.com

Abstract

This study examines the importance and value of Islamic Religious Education for university students, with particular attention to the relationship between personal interest and the necessity of spiritual and moral development in higher education. Using a qualitative phenomenological approach, data were collected through semi-structured interviews, observations, and documentation involving students from diverse academic backgrounds. The data were analyzed using Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) to capture students' lived experiences. The findings indicate that religious education is not merely perceived as a compulsory subject, but is experienced as a meaningful process that contributes to character formation, moral development, and life balance in the context of rapid technological change. Students' engagement emerges through the interaction between internal factors, such as personal beliefs, and external influences, including institutional environment and pedagogical practices. Importantly, the study reveals that what initially appears as an academic obligation can develop into personally significant engagement. These findings highlight the dynamic relationship between interest and necessity and suggest the need for more responsive and student-centered approaches in religious education.

Keywords: *Awareness, Interest, Necessity, Religious Education, Religious Identity*

***

A. Introduction

Precisely a demographic that grew up alongside the explosive growth of information technology, Generation Z has a relatively high level of digital literacy, which influences how they learn, communicate, and access information (Celik 2023; Chen, Zhu, and Díaz del Castillo H. 2023). Unlike previous generations, Generation Z has a very significant difference. Based on observations, Gen Z is more responsive to digital devices than millennials. Even without prior learning or instruction, Gen Z can play them (Nurhalya and Damni 2025; Zis, Effendi, and Roem 2021). Unlimited internet exposure makes Generation Z vulnerable to various forms of harmful content, such as disinformation, pornography, and popular culture trends that encourage

consumerist and hedonistic behavior, which can indirectly influence lifestyles and disrupt character formation and moral values (Amanah, Noperta, and Damni 2024). Amid the rapid digitalization that often reshapes religious values, religious education is expected to serve as a moral bulwark, instilling deep ethical and spiritual awareness so that the younger generation grows not only intellectually but also with strong moral integrity, thereby achieving a satisfying personal and social life (Aini, Ferry, and Damni 2024).

Islamic Religious Education plays a crucial role in shaping the identity of a religious individual. Religion is a system of values, guidelines, instructions, and encouragement that helps individuals attain the objective of a better, good, and perfect life. Religion is one of the actions within a social system that exists within a person, involving belief in certain powers (magical or spiritual), and it functions to protect oneself and others (Jamin and Damni 2024). Islamic education significantly shapes a person's personality. Through religious lessons, they learn to control emotions, respect differences, and understand the importance of justice (Damni 2024). In the community context, the function of Islamic religious education is primarily to cultivate character and values.

In the era of globalization and modernization, rapid information flows and change have marked this period, and many individuals experience confusion and a loss of identity (Risdianti, Jamin, and Damni 2024; Snow and Corrigall-Brown 2015; Spears 2021). In the middle condition, religious education becomes more significant. Many people seek meaning and purpose in life, and religious education often offers insight into fundamental questions concerning existence, the purpose of life, and moral values. Education is essential and plays a significant role in the current era.

Personal interest in religious education is typically influenced by factors such as life experience, social environment, and a desire to find meaning in life. For example, individuals who experience a crisis of identity or a moral dilemma perhaps feel pushed to delve into their religious beliefs. Family and community environments also play a significant role in fostering interest (Walker, Chan, and McEver 2021; Zhao and Sun 2020); on the other hand, there are demands to adapt to contemporary developments (Damni 2025). Therefore, research should examine how religious education can be optimized to meet individual spiritual and moral needs and to strengthen religious identity in an increasingly diverse society. This research is crucial given that religious identity and the role of religious education are increasingly salient in contemporary society. Furthermore, this research will examine religious education both as an object of interest and as a pressing need for the current generation.

The main objective of this research is to understand, in depth and holistically, the life experiences of students at state Islamic religious universities, particularly in relation to personal interests and educational needs. Specifically,

this research will identify and describe the essence and primary motivations of students pursuing Islamic religious education, distinguishing genuine interest from external motivations. It will also explain and interpret the interaction between personal interest and external needs. Furthermore, it will analyze in detail students' lived experiences and perceptions of the benefits and challenges of Islamic religious education.

B. Methods

This research employs a qualitative, phenomenological approach. This approach was chosen because it aims to gain a deep understanding of individuals' subjective experiences regarding their interest in and need for religious education (Brinkmann 2023; Delmas and Giles 2023). Phenomenological studies offer an in-depth approach to analyzing and understanding human experience. This study employs a qualitative approach with Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (Smith 2017; Squires 2023; Vaccarino Bremner 2025). The researcher positions himself to see the world through the eyes of the informant. The interpretation process proceeds in two stages: the informant interprets his life/experience regarding religious education, and the researcher interprets how the informant interprets these experiences.

Following IPA's requirement for a small, homogenous sample to allow for deep idiographic analysis, this study involved 23 university students from IAIN Kerinci. Participants were selected using purposive sampling with the following criteria: (1) Gen Z students (born 1997–2012), (2) currently enrolled in or having recently completed an IRE course, and (3) representing diverse academic backgrounds to capture varied perspectives on need versus interest. Sampling was discontinued once thematic sufficiency was reached, ensuring each individual's narrative was explored in sufficient depth.

The primary data were gathered through in-depth, semi-structured interviews, lasting approximately 35-55 minutes each. Key interview questions focused on: How do you describe your first encounter with IRE in university? and In what ways do you perceive this course as a personal need versus a curriculum requirement? To enrich the idiographic accounts, non-participant observations were conducted during IRE lectures to capture student engagement and behavioral cues. Furthermore, document analysis of students' reflective journals and course syllabi was used as contextual data to triangulate the findings and understand the pedagogical framework influencing their experiences.

Data analysis followed the multi-stage IPA process: (1) repeated reading and initial noting of the transcripts; (2) developing emergent themes; (3) searching for connections across emergent themes; and (4) moving from individual cases to cross-case analysis (Smith 2017). This process ensured that the

....

final themes remained grounded in the participants' actual lived experiences while allowing for the researcher's interpretative insights.

To ensure credibility and confirmability, the study employed member checking, where participants reviewed their transcripts to ensure accuracy. Source triangulation was achieved by cross-referencing interview data with observation notes and document analysis. To maintain dependability, a clear audit trail was established, documenting every step from raw transcripts to the final thematic framework. The researcher also engaged in peer debriefing with fellow doctoral candidates to challenge potential biases and refine the logic of interpretations (Heath 2015).

C. Results and Discussion

The significance of Islamic Religious Education (IRE) in this institution is reflected in its status as a mandatory university core course. Enrollment data from 2022 to 2025 indicates that IRE consistently serves a massive student body. This extensive reach positions IRE not merely as a departmental subject but as a universal academic requirement. However, this high enrollment is primarily driven by institutional policy ('Need'), which often stands in contrast to the diverse levels of personal 'Interest' among Gen Z students from different disciplinary backgrounds. Understanding this dynamic is crucial, as the large number of students mandatorily enrolled in IRE does not inherently reflect a high intrinsic interest in the subject matter.

This study aims to comprehend the perspectives of Generation Z students in viewing Islamic Religious Education as a synthesis of personal interests and life necessities. The analysis aims to elucidate several empirical categories: the significance of religious education as a moral and spiritual necessity, the interplay between interests and needs in the learning process, and the impact of social contexts, including family dynamics and pedagogical experiences within the classroom. The results demonstrate that while students initially enroll owing to curricular requirements, they subsequently perceive religious education as a moral framework that assists them in forming their religious identity and managing the intricacies of contemporary life. Consequently, interest in religious education arises from an understanding of existential requirements influenced by social and educational experiences.

1. Religious Education as a Life Compass

The analysis of participant narratives reveals a significant distinction between education as a formal requirement and education as an existential necessity. Participants do not perceive Islamic Religious Education (IRE) merely as a series of credits, but as a life compass essential for navigating the complexities of the digital age.

....

"We must distinguish between academic needs and life needs. For me, religious education is not just an academic matter... it is a fundamental need of life as a Muslim. It is the benchmark I use to measure whether my behavior is good or not." (Informant A, October 2025).

The findings suggest that for Gen Z students, the need for religion is often triggered by an apprehension regarding moral decline in the era of rapid technological advancement. Rather than seeing IRE as rigid dogma, they perceive it as a functional handle that provides social security and a clear identity. Another participant noted that religious study creates a social shield, where the public's positive perception of their religious character acts as a deterrent against violating social norms:

"Religious education forms our character in society... we become afraid to commit acts that violate norms because we value how the public views us as students of religion." (Informant B, October 2025).

Theoretically, while literature often separates intrinsic motivation (interest) from extrinsic pressure (need), these findings suggest a convergence. Interest is not antithetical to need; rather, interest is born out of a perceived existential need. When students feel vulnerable to the risks of moral decadence, their interest in IRE increases—not as a theological pursuit, but as a survival mechanism for their social and spiritual identity. This aligns with the spiritual dimension of transcendence mentioned by informants regarding the afterlife, suggesting that Gen Z's engagement with IRE is deeply rooted in a desire for long-term stability rather than just a contemporary response (Lamb et al. 2022; Turbón 2020).

A secondary theme emerging from the data is the connection between transcendental belief and social conduct. Participants experienced Islamic Religious Education (IRE) not just as a worldly guide, but as a preparation for a future reality. This awareness of the afterlife serves as a powerful motivator for ethical behavior in the present. One informant expressed this transcendental conviction clearly:

"If we perform virtuous deeds in this world, we will undoubtedly be recompensed in the afterlife... Religious education is a profound awareness of the ramifications of our activities." (Informant C, October 2025).

Moreover, the study indicates that Gen Z students associate religiosity markers with their social identity. They regard the polite, peaceful, and serene demeanor cultivated by IRE as a type of social capital. For these pupils, the necessity of religion is affirmed when it generates a favorable public perception, serving as an instrument for effective socialization and moral stature within their community. The aforementioned discoveries exemplify what may be referred to as Pragmatic Transcendence. The participants' discourse is grounded in spiritual aspirations toward the afterlife, although their implementation of these

principles is notably pragmatic. They employ transcendental ideas to ground their temporal ethical considerations, indicating that for Gen Z, spiritual engagement is frequently motivated by a desire for a secure moral framework in a progressively intricate world.

This reflects the core of Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis, where the researcher interprets how the participant interprets their destiny. The participant's view of the afterlife is not just a theological statement; it is a psychological mechanism for character development and moral virtue. (Burritt 2020; Guterman 2020). From an analytical perspective, the interest in religious deeds is intrinsically tied to the need for spiritual security.

Consequently, character development in IRE is seen by students as a socialization factor. They do not study honesty or responsibility in a vacuum; they study them to become more capable of operating functions expected of humanity within their specific social environment. This suggests that IRE is most effective when it bridges the gap between individual spiritual aspirations and the collective social norms of the community.

The analysis reveals that for Gen Z students, the need for Islamic Religious Education (IRE) is deeply tied to their social identity and public perception. Participants view religious values not just as personal faith, but as a set of visible indicators (religiosity markers) that define their character in the eyes of the community. One 20-year-old informant emphasized that the need for IRE manifests in the development of a specific social temperament:

> "The values formed from religious education mark one's religiosity. Those who truly understand religion become polite, peaceful, and serene characters." (Informant F, October 2025).

Furthermore, participants highlighted that this character formation acts as a social shield. Studying IRE creates an expectation of moral nobility, which in turn regulates their behavior to maintain public trust. As another informant noted:

> "Religious education forms a good view of us in the public's eyes. Because we are seen as students of religion, we are more conscious of our behavior in society." (Informant G, October 2025).

The data suggest that the maturity sought by these students is multifaceted, encompassing intellectual, mental, and moral readiness to enter the public sphere while being armed with the Qur'an and Sunnah. The utility of character often drives interest. While the national education context in Indonesia frames IRE as a strategic tool for nation-building and piety (Gani et al., 2024), students interpret this personally as a path toward human maturity.

This aligns with the Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) focus on how individuals make sense of their social worlds. The polite and serene character mentioned by informants is interpreted here as Social Capital. Students

are not just meeting an academic need for a grade; they are fulfilling a life need for social acceptance and moral standing.

The tension of Interest Versus Need is resolved when students perceive that religious maturity makes them more capable of operating and functioning humanely. (Damni 2022; Zufriani, Pitriani, and Damni 2024). Consequently, IRE is not viewed as a rigid academic burden but as a necessary equipment for the next generation of successors to navigate a diverse society with a solid ethical foundation. This suggests that the interest in IRE is highest when students can see a direct correlation between their religious studies and their successful socialization in the public sphere.

Data gathered from the field indicates that students do not view interest and necessity as competing forces; rather, they experience a transition where institutional necessity becomes a personal anchor. For Gen Z students, the necessity of Islamic Religious Education (IRE) is often sparked by a desire to have a handle (pegangan) in an increasingly complex society. One informant (a 21-year-old student) described how this necessity manifests in daily conduct:

> "Religious education is essential as a benchmark for our lives. As we mature, we need to know which path to take. It acts as a judgment tool to measure whether our behavior is good or not." (Informant I, October 2025)

Furthermore, participants expressed that a need for social stability drives their involvement in IRE. They noted that religious education provides a framework for interacting with the community, ensuring that their behavior aligns with social norms. This suggests that for Gen Z, being involved in IRE is a proactive choice to secure a moral standing in the public eye.

The findings illustrate that interest and necessity are deeply intertwined. While the university curriculum establishes IRE as an academic necessity, students' lived experiences transform this into an existential necessity. When students perceive IRE as a benchmark for their maturity, their personal interest is naturally ignited because the subject matter addresses their real-world anxieties regarding moral direction. By positioning IRE as a handle for daily life, participants are moving beyond the passive role of a student and into the active role of a moral agent. This integration suggests that interest is not a prerequisite for enrollment, but rather a result of discovering the functional utility of religious principles. Consequently, the involvement of Generation Z in religious education is most profound when they recognize that the necessity of the course directly serves their personal interest in achieving social and spiritual maturity (Hall and Hayes 2015).

The findings indicate that participants do not view Islamic Religious Education (IRE) as a specialized subject for religious majors, but as a universal necessity for all students. They perceive it as a vital tool for anticipating moral decadence and forming a resilient character that can withstand the pressures of

the modern era. One participant emphasized that the relevance of IRE transcends academic boundaries:

> "Religious education is just as important for general students as it is for those in religious majors. It is a 'handle' that everyone must possess. It does not just happen in formal education; we can study and practice it anywhere, including within our community." (Informant J, October 2025)

Furthermore, the data show that students use IRE as a benchmark for social conduct. They are conscious of the public gaze, noting that their involvement in religious studies creates a positive reputation which, in turn, acts as a psychological barrier against violating social norms. One informant shared:

> "Because the public views us positively for studying religion, we become afraid to commit acts that go against social norms. It makes us more mature in deciding which path to take." (Informant K, October 2025)

The results illustrate that for Generation Z, religious education functions as a moral bridge for sorting and selecting information in a high-speed digital environment. While the institution may establish the necessity of the course, the students' interest is sustained by the functional role IRE plays in shaping their social and spiritual foundation. By providing strong ethical values, IRE enables students to navigate daily conduct, distinguishing between good and harm with a sense of maturity. This confirms that the involvement of Gen Z is not merely a response to a curriculum, but a proactive engagement with a system that provides them with a solid, ethical foundation (Nurhalya and Damni 2025).

The integration of technology into everyday life has made the need for such a foundation even more acute. Consequently, the investigation into Interest and Necessity reveals that these two concepts are mutually reinforcing: the more students recognize the necessity of a moral handle to navigate social ambiguity, the more their personal interest in religious participation grows. Ultimately, IRE serves as a crucial link between personal behavior, community participation, and the universal spiritual values required in the current era.

2. The Interplay Between Family Influence and Personal Interest

Field interviews reveal that personal interest in religious education is rarely an isolated phenomenon; rather, it emerges from a synergy between familial support and the individual's evolving life experiences. The data indicate that while the family provides the initial situational element, it is the student's own internal drive that transforms an external obligation into a pillar of self-identity. One informant, currently a student specializing in Islamic Religious Education (IRE), explained how their interest shifted from a sense of duty to a deep personal desire:

> "I am deeply interested, not simply because it is an obligation, but because of a personal desire to deepen my understanding of values and ethics. I

feel that studying religious education is essential to how I view and live my life." (Informant L, October 2025)

This narrative suggests that for Generation Z, religious awareness involves a profound internalization where principles are no longer just taught but are actively chosen. The transition from being a passive recipient of familial direction to an active PAI student highlights how personal preferences are cultivated through a supportive social milieu and ongoing educational engagement.

The findings illustrate that Interest and Necessity are not parallel tracks but are deeply interconnected through the process of internalization. While familial influence provides the external direction, it is the student's intrinsic drive that establishes IRE as a foundation of self-identity. This aligns with the concept that preferences are not innate; they are shaped by the social milieu and educational background. When an informant states they want to deepen values and ethics, they are demonstrating that their interest has surpassed mere compliance with family expectations. In this context, religious education is no longer a requirement imposed from the outside, but a personal necessity used to navigate spiritual and ethical choices. The involvement of Gen Z in IRE is therefore a dynamic process: family and environment create the initial readiness, but the individual's pursuit of moral maturity is what sustains long-term engagement. This confirms that to foster genuine involvement, religious education must resonate with the student's personal desire to find meaning and direction in their own lived experience.

The findings indicate that for Generation Z students, interest in religious education is rarely a product of the external social environment; instead, it is a deeply rooted legacy of the family system. Participants view their involvement in Islamic Religious Education (IRE) not as an academic burden, but as an automatic progression of their familial and spiritual heritage. One informant highlighted the minimal role of the broader environment compared to the family's foundational influence:

"The external environment only has a small influence; the most influential factor is the family condition that encourages us to learn. Ultimately, it depends on our own drive, but our family's educational background is the primary driver. I am following in my family's educational footsteps." (Informant M, October 2025)

For these participants, religious education provides the necessities of life and serves as a fundamental worldview. The data suggests that when a family possesses a strong religious education background, the student feels an automatic motivation to pursue similar academic and spiritual paths. The results clarify that interest in this context is often a result of Intergenerational Transmission. While the general social environment may offer diverse

influences, the family environment acts as a filter that establishes religion as a core component of self-identity. This suggests that the necessity felt by the student is a shared familial value that has been successfully internalized.

From an analytical perspective, the student's automatic drive to follow their family's footsteps indicates that interest is not merely a spontaneous emotion but a structured view held in life. When the informant mentions that we depend on ourselves alone despite the family influence, it highlights the moment where external necessity meets internal interest. The family provides the direction, but the individual provides the intrinsic drive to deepen their religious awareness. This finding suggests that IRE programs in higher education can leverage this familial foundation by connecting classroom content to the lived experiences of the students' homes. By recognizing that personal interest influences others' awareness of religious identity, the involvement of one student becomes a catalyst for strengthening spiritual bonds within their broader social and familial networks.

Field interviews reveal that Gen Z's involvement in Islamic Religious Education (IRE) often manifests through active leadership roles in religious ceremonies, despite a perceived social disconnect from traditional community study groups. Participants view their participation in formal competitions and local rituals as a direct application of their religious necessity. One informant (a 21-year-old student) highlighted their active engagement in formal and ritualistic roles:

> "I have participated in the MTQ (Musabaqah Tilawatil Qur'an) at the regency and provincial levels. I have also served as a Bilal during the Eid prayers. To me, these roles are the practical implementation of religious education in daily life; they bring me closer to the essence of my faith."(Informant A, October 2025)

However, the data also uncovers a significant cultural barrier regarding traditional communal learning spaces (Majelis Taklim). Participants expressed a sense of awkwardness when joining these groups, as they are predominantly attended by older generations. One informant noted:

> "During holidays, I still follow religious studies with the fathers and local religious leaders (Ustad and Buya). However, these assemblies are usually identical with older mothers; it is very rare for young people to join. I feel a sense of awkwardness because there are no peers there, though it does not stop me from learning. "(Informant D, October 2025)

The results indicate that while Necessity drives Gen Z to fulfill ritual roles (such as Bilal or MTQ participants), their interests are challenged by the lack of peer-oriented environments. The awkwardness described by participants suggests that traditional religious assemblies are currently viewed as taboo or socially incompatible for the younger generation, not because of the content, but because of the demographic makeup.

This finding provides a critical insight into the investigation of Interest and Necessity. It reveals that Gen Z possesses a high intrinsic drive to apply religious teachings, often taking on high-responsibility roles like Bilal. However, they struggle with the social milieu of traditional community learning. The environment, dominated by mothers and fathers, lacks the peer friends that typically facilitate interest for Gen Z.

Consequently, religious education in society is not hindered by a lack of personal belief, but by a lack of age-appropriate socialization spaces. When individuals overcome this awkwardness, it demonstrates a profound internalization of religious identity where the personal necessity to learn outweighs the social discomfort. This suggests that to increase Gen Z involvement, community religious activities need to be restructured to be more inclusive and less taboo for younger participants, moving beyond the traditional generational boundaries.

The findings indicate that for Generation Z, involvement in religious education often manifests through formal competitions and traditional roles, even when they feel socially alienated from communal learning spaces. Participants perceive their participation in events such as the Musabaqah Tilawatil Qur'an (MTQ) as a primary indicator of their religious engagement. One informant shared their experience in reconciling personal drive with the lack of peer presence in community study groups:

> "I have participated in MTQ at the regency and provincial levels, which I see as a key part of my religious education. However, I often feel a sense of 'awkwardness' when joining local religious assemblies (Majelis Taklim) because older parents almost exclusively attend them. There are no peers there, yet I continue to participate because I believe that as Muslims, we must know our own religion." (Informant B, October 2025)

The data suggests that while traditional community studies are perceived as taboo or socially incompatible for youth, the internal sense of necessity the belief that one must understand their faithacts as a catalyst that overrides social discomfort. The results clarify that for Gen Z, interest in religion is often sparked by a desire for a comprehensive life framework rather than just ritualistic worship. When the informant asks, Don't we as Muslims know about our religion alone?, they are expressing a need for intellectual and spiritual literacy that transcends the generational gap.

From an analytical perspective, this involvement serves as a model for the younger generation, demonstrating that IRE is not limited to narrow definitions of worship but includes inclusivity and interfaith cooperation (Averoezy 2021). By grounding religious identity in a complete and comprehensive teaching, students are better equipped to navigate an interconnected global world. The tension investigated here shows that Necessity (the obligation to know one's faith) can lead to active Involvement (MTQ, local studies), even when the social

environment is not supportive. This suggests that the future of IRE lies in its ability to bridge these generational gaps, ensuring that the interests of young people are nurtured in spaces that feel less taboo and more aligned with their modern, diverse social realities.

Interest in Islamic Religious Education (IRE) of Gen Z students often begins with a sense of inadequacy that is later transformed through pedagogical engagement. The data suggests that the necessity of the subject is realized when the lecturer creates a space for intellectual and spiritual dialogue. One 21-year-old informant reflected on this shift in perspective:

> "Initially, the teaching approaches made me feel inadequate, as if I did not understand the subject at all. However, the way the lecturer delivered the material shifted my perspective. Through our interactions and exchanges of views, I realized how limited my knowledge was, and I developed a genuine desire to study religious education more broadly as a tool for my personal development." (Informant Q, October 2025)

This narrative indicates that religious awareness is not a static trait but an emergent property of social interaction. For this participant, the realization of their own knowledge gaps facilitated by a supportive lecturer became the primary driver for a deeper involvement in the subject. The results clarify that the necessity of IRE is often discovered through the lived experience of the classroom. While the student may initially feel alienated by the subject matter, a dialogical teaching style can bridge the gap between their current self-perception and their growth potential.

From an analytical perspective, this transformation represents a move from extrinsic requirement to intrinsic interest. When the informant describes the lecturer's role in their self-realization, they are highlighting the importance of communication with diverse backgrounds and interreligious communication. This suggests that IRE is most effective when it is not presented as a set of rigid doctrines, but as a framework for open dialogue and personal development. Ultimately, the investigation into Interest and Necessity reveals that the teacher-student relationship is a crucial social interaction that shapes religious identity. By fostering an environment where students feel safe to acknowledge their limited knowledge, lecturers can ignite a desire for lifelong learning that ensures religious identity is grounded in both personal conviction and a commitment to strong interreligious communication.

D. Conclusion

This research concludes that for Generation Z university students, Islamic Religious Education (IRE) is not a static dichotomy between personal interest and academic necessity, but a dynamic transformation where institutional obligations evolve into a personal necessity of life through the synergy of familial foundations and pedagogical engagement. The phenomenological findings

reveal that student involvement is deeply rooted in intergenerational transmission, yet it is truly ignited in the classroom when lecturers act as existential bridges who validate subjective anxieties and transform initial feelings of inadequacy into a proactive desire for moral growth. While Gen Z often navigates a sense of awkwardness within traditional community spaces due to a generational gap, their internalized necessity for a functional moral compass and a social shield empowers them to embrace significant ritual roles as a means of navigating the ethical ambiguities of the digital era. Ultimately, the study asserts that the effectiveness of IRE depends on a dialogical-phenomenological approach that transcends mere cognitive transfer, embracing the lived experiences and spiritual vulnerabilities of the younger generation to establish a resilient and inclusive ethical foundation for life.

***

References

Aini, Mutia Desti, Dharma Ferry, and Albertos Damni. 2024. "Mengungkap Batasan Kecakapan Akademik: Penyelidikan Kritis Terhadap Perfeksionisme Sains Di Kalangan Sarjana Pendidikan Biologi." *Diklabio: Jurnal Pendidikan Dan Pembelajaran Biologi* 8(2):187–209. doi: 10.33369/diklabio.8.2.187-209.

Amanah, Yuli, Noperta Noperta, and Albertos Damni. 2024. "A Comparative Study of the Morals of PAI IAIN Al-Jamiah Program with Non-Participants Kerinci Students Who Participate in the Ma'had." *PALAPA: Jurnal Studi Keislaman Dan Ilmu Penididikan* 12(November 2024):106–19. doi: 10.36088/palapa.v12i2.4810.

Averoezy, Fauzul. 2021. "Peranan Pendidikan Agama Islam Dalam Menjaga Kerukunan Umat Beragama." *Atta'dib Jurnal Pendidikan Agama Islam* 2(2):14–27. doi: 10.30863/attadib.v2i2.1822.

Brinkmann, Svend. 2023. "Qualitative Interviews." Pp. 210–18 in *International Encyclopedia of Education(Fourth Edition)*, edited by R. J. Tierney, F. Rizvi, and K. B. T.-I. E. of E. (Fourth E. Ercikan. Oxford: Elsevier.

Burritt, Amanda M. 2020. "Religious World Views, Diverse Classrooms and Curriculum." *Religion & Education* 47(2):153–69. doi: 10.1080/15507394.2020.1729075.

Celik, Ismail. 2023. "Exploring the Determinants of Artificial Intelligence (AI) Literacy: Digital Divide, Computational Thinking, Cognitive Absorption." *Telematics and Informatics* 83(October 2022):102026. doi: 10.1016/j.tele.2023.102026.

Chen, Bodong, Xinran Zhu, and Fernando Díaz del Castillo H. 2023. "Integrating Generative AI in Knowledge Building." *Computers and Education: Artificial Intelligence* 5(November):100184. doi: 10.1016/j.caeai.2023.100184.

....

Damni, Albertos. 2022. "Forum Keagamaan Sebagai Identitas , Multikulturalisme Dan Peran Perempuan Dalam Moderasi Beragama : Studi Fenomenologi Agama BKMT Kabupaten Kerinci." Pp. 536–44 in *Prosiding Konferensi Gender dan Gerakan Sosial*. Vol. 01.

Damni, Albertos. 2024. "Menuju Strategi Pengajaran Yang Efektif : Wawasan Dari Persepso Dan Pengalaman Mahasiswa." *Jurnal Ilmu Pendidikan Muhammadiyah Kramat Jati* 5(2):171–81. doi: 10.55943/jipmukjt.v5i2.157.

Damni, Albertos. 2025. "Developing the Religious Students Scenario Tolerance Assessment Paradigm (RS-STAP) Scale for Indonesia's Diverse Society." *Edukasia : Jurnal Penelitian Pendidikan Islam* 20(1):87. doi: 10.21043/edukasia.v20i1.31193.

Delmas, Peggy M., and Rachel L. Giles. 2023. "Qualitative Research Approaches and Their Application in Education" edited by R. J. Tierney, F. Rizvi, and K. B. T.-I. E. of E. (Fourth E. Ercikan. *International Encyclopedia of Education* 24–32.

Guterman, Oz. 2020. "The Relationship of Performance Goals, Personality, and Ability With Academic Achievements in Majority and Minority Groups of Bachelor-Degree Students." *Education and Urban Society* 53(6):682–707. doi: 10.1177/0013124520972665.

Hall, John R., and Joshua D. Hayes. 2015. "Phenomenology of Religion." Pp. 344–47 in *International Encyclopedia of the Social & Behavioral Sciences*. Vol. 19. Elsevier.

Heath, Linda. 2015. "Triangulation: Methodology." Pp. 639–44 in *International Encyclopedia of the Social & Behavioral Sciences*, edited by J. D. B. T.-I. E. of the S. & B. S. (Second E. Wright. Oxford: Elsevier.

Jamin, Ahmad, and Albertos Damni. 2024. "The Scale of Religious Conservatism among Muslim Students in Indonesia : A Rasch Analysis." *HTS Teologiese Studies / Theological Studies* 80(1):1–11. doi: 10.4102/hts.v80i1.9134.

Lamb, Michael, Elise M. Dykhuis, Sara E. Mendonça, and Eranda Jayawickreme. 2022. "Commencing Character: A Case Study of Character Development in College." *Journal of Moral Education* 51(2):238–60. doi: 10.1080/03057240.2021.1953451.

Nurhalya, Hazira, and Albertos Damni. 2025. "Transforming Scholastic Performance Through Spiritual Engagement in Islamic Education at Leading." *Dirasah: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam* 6(1).

Risdianti, Tressa, Ahmad Jamin, and Albertos Damni. 2024. "Challenges and Rationality in Choosing the Islamic Education Major in Islamic-Based Higher Education." *Saliha: Jurnal Pendidikan Dan Agama Islam* 7(1):5–24. doi: 10.54396/saliha.v7i1.984.

Smith, Jonathan A. 2017. "Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis: Getting at Lived Experience." *The Journal of Positive Psychology* 12(3):303–4. doi: 10.1080/17439760.2016.1262622.

....

Snow, David A., and Catherine Corrigall-Brown. 2015. "Collective Identity." Pp. 174–80 in *International Encyclopedia of the Social & Behavioral Sciences: Second Edition*, edited by J. D. B. T.-I. E. of the S. & B. S. (Second E. Wright. Oxford: Elsevier.

Spears, Russell. 2021. "Social Influence and Group Identity." *Annual Review of Psychology* 72(1):367–90.

Squires, Vicki. 2023. "Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis." Pp. 269–74 in *Varieties of Qualitative Research Methods*, edited by J. M. Okoko, S. Tunison, and K. D. Walker. Cham: Springer International Publishing.

Turbón, Daniel. 2020. "The Distinctive Character of Human Being in Evolution." *Scientia et Fides* 8(2):65–94. doi: 10.12775/SETF.2020.015.

Vaccarino Bremner, Sabina. 2025. "Kantian Moral Change." *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 111(3):1057–80. doi: 10.1111/phpr.70049.

Walker, Nathan C., W. Y. Alice Chan, and H. Bruce McEver. 2021. "Religious Literacy: Civic Education for a Common Good." *Religion & Education* 48(1):1–16. doi: 10.1080/15507394.2021.1876508.

Zhao, Zhenzhou, and Yi Sun. 2020. "Revisiting Religious Higher Education in China: Comparative Analysis of Furen University Narratives." *Asia Pacific Education Review* 21(4):629–38. doi: 10.1007/S12564-020-09645-X.

Zis, Sirajul Fuad, Nursyirwan Effendi, and Elva Ronaning Roem. 2021. "Perubahan Perilaku Komunikasi Generasi Milenial Dan Generasi Z Di Era Digital." *Satwika : Kajian Ilmu Budaya Dan Perubahan Sosial* 5(1):69–87. doi: 10.22219/satwika.v5i1.15550.

Zufriani, Zufriani, Pitriani Pitriani, and Albertos Damni. 2024. "Rasch Analysis of Student Attributes : Development and Validation of Scale to Measure Religious Moderation." *JPPI (Jurnal Penelitian Pendidikan Indonesia)* 8(1):187–95. doi: 10.29210/020221396.