



TEACHER CREATIVITY IN ISLAMIC CULTURAL HISTORY SUBJECT TO FOSTER STUDENTS' LEARNING INTEREST AMONG ZOOMER GENERATION AT MAS TELADAN UJUNG KUBU

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to explore the role of teacher creativity in the subject. Therefore, teachers need to apply innovative and interactive teaching approaches. This research employs a descriptive qualitative method with data collected through observation, interviews, and document study. The findings reveal that SKI teachers' creativity, demonstrated through the use of game-based methods such as ball relays, the integration of digital media like YouTube videos, and a friendly and communicative teaching style, successfully created an engaging learning atmosphere. In addition, the teachers' wise and polite attitudes contributed to shaping students' positive character. Although many teachers still rely on conventional methods, this study emphasizes the importance of innovation in teaching to foster students' learning interest. Thus, the creativity of SKI teachers at MAS Teladan Ujung Kubu proves effective in nurturing the learning interest of Generation Z students, making the learning process more meaningful and positively impacting the development of students' competencies in the digital era of Islamic Cultural History (SKI) in enhancing the learning interest of Generation Z students at MAS Teladan Ujung Kubu. Generation Z, who were raised in the digital era, possess unique characteristics that influence their learning methods.

ARTICLE INFO

Article History:

Submitted/Received 08 Sep 2025

First Revised 12 Sep 2025

Accepted 22 Sep 2025

First Available online 24 Sep 2025

Publication Date 01 Dec 2025

Kata Kunci:

Teacher Creativity; Generation Z;
Learning Innovation.

1. INTRODUCTION

With the rapid advancement of technology and information, the field of education has undergone significant changes, particularly in teaching methods and approaches. The Zoomer generation, commonly referred to as “Gen Z,” consists of students who were born and raised in the digital era. They are highly familiar with technology, social media, and various digital platforms that shape the way they learn and interact. Therefore, teachers need to adapt their teaching approaches to suit the characteristics and needs of this generation (Purba, 2025).

In the learning process, these characteristics require teachers to employ more creative teaching methods. Students’ learning interest is strongly influenced by the teaching strategies used by their teachers. Creativity is a process that involves observing and sensing a problem, making assumptions about shortcomings, evaluating and testing those assumptions or hypotheses, and then modifying and re-examining them until the desired results are achieved. By applying creativity in the teaching system, new and innovative ideas are expected to emerge to address existing problems, so that diverse and progressive ideas can compete in an ever-changing global context (Taufik, 2012). As explained in educational science literature, students’ learning interest is highly affected by the methods applied by teachers. The use of appropriate methods—adapted to the situation, conditions, and subject matter—can increase students’ engagement and create a more effective learning process (Hidayat, 2019).

In Islam, although the term “creativity” is not explicitly mentioned in the Qur’an, the religion strongly encourages humans to think, reflect, and make the best use of their intellect. Many Qur’anic verses invite people to tafakkur (deep reflection), critical thinking, and understanding the signs of Allah’s greatness in the universe. Thinking is the foundation of creativity, as it arises from reflection, the exploration of new ideas, and the application of solutions in life. Islam teaches that utilizing reason and innovating in various fields—such as da’wah, education, and socio-economics—is a form of practicing Allah’s commands. Thus, creativity is part of the optimal use of intellect, which is a divine gift, and is very important in a Muslim’s life (Taufik, 2012).

Creativity, therefore, is essentially a representation of the intellect that distinguishes humans from other creatures. It is the way an individual utilizes the intellect bestowed by Allah to solve problems or discover new ideas. Moreover, every form of creativity demonstrated by teachers should serve as a good example for their students. Teachers’ attitudes during the learning process also greatly influence students’ learning interest; therefore, teachers’ daily behavior—including speech, manners, and dress—becomes a standard followed by their students. This aligns with the meaning contained in the Qur’anic verse An-Nahl/16:125:

“Invite (all) to the Way of your Lord with wisdom and beautiful preaching, and argue with them in ways that are best and most gracious. Truly, your Lord knows best who has strayed from His path, and He knows best those who are rightly guided.”

As explained by Wahbah al-Zuhaili in Tafsir al-Munir, the term al-Hikmah refers to clear speech supported by strong evidence that can lead someone to truth and eliminate doubt.

Al-Mau'izhah al-Hasanah refers to kind advice and beneficial lessons delivered politely. Meanwhile, al-Mujadalah al-Ahsan means engaging in discussion or debate with courtesy, a friendly expression, strong arguments, and generally accepted introductions (Zuhaili, 2016).

This verse highlights the importance of wise, polite, and effective approaches in teaching. Teachers should use wisdom—clear teaching based on evidence—so that students can easily understand and avoid confusion. They should also provide kind and polite advice (mau'izhah hasanah) to motivate and shape students' positive character. When engaging in discussions or addressing differences, teachers must be courteous, use strong arguments, and remain friendly (mujadalah ahsan). Thus, teacher creativity is not limited to innovative methods but also includes wise and polite communication skills, ensuring that learning runs smoothly and meaningfully, thereby fostering students' learning interest.

However, in reality, many teachers in today's educational environment have not fully realized the importance of making changes and innovations in teaching. Many still rely on traditional methods, such as lectures, especially in history-related subjects like Islamic Cultural History (SKI). In fact, an effective teacher should be creative and keep up with the times (Nurhayati, 2024).

Previous research relevant to this study includes Muliana (2024) in "The Efforts of SKI Teachers in Increasing Students' Learning Interest at MA NW Penendem." This study examined the importance of teacher creativity in fostering students' learning interest but did not specifically discuss how SKI teachers' creativity can nurture Gen Z students' learning interest, particularly in the context of madrasah aliyah. Existing studies have largely focused on conventional methods, without directly linking them to the needs and characteristics of Gen Z, who are closely connected to digital technology and interactive learning. Another study by Rambe (2023), "SKI Teachers' Creativity in the Learning Process at Ash-Shobriyah Islamic Boarding School, Titi Aloban Village, Bandar Tinggi District, Bilah Hulu, Labuhan Batu Regency," discussed SKI teachers' creativity but did not explain students' learning interest, Gen Z characteristics, or how teachers adapt their teaching methods to students' traits.

Teacher creativity plays a vital role in the learning process, particularly in addressing the challenges of Gen Z characteristics, who tend to prefer interactive and innovative learning methods. Generation Z, raised in the digital era, learns differently compared to previous generations, requiring more creative and adaptive approaches from educators (Arifin, 2024). The creativity demonstrated by teachers not only benefits students but also positively impacts the teachers themselves. This is in line with the Prophet's hadith:

"Whoever introduces a good practice in Islam will have its reward and the reward of those who act upon it after him, without their reward being diminished in the slightest. And whoever introduces an evil practice in Islam will bear its burden and the burden of those who act upon it after him, without their burden being diminished in the slightest." (HR. Muslim)

This hadith emphasizes that every good effort brings benefits both to others and oneself. In other words, each creative innovation by a teacher not only creates a more engaging learning experience but also enriches students' professional and spiritual journeys. When students follow and benefit from the creativity introduced by their teachers, they gain

not only knowledge but also spiritual rewards from the learning process. Furthermore, if those students later become teachers and apply the same creative methods they once learned, the original teacher, as their inspiration, will continue to receive ongoing rewards (*amal jariyah*). This happens because every good deed continued by students becomes a never-ending flow of rewards, in accordance with the Prophet's statement on the virtue of *sunnah hasanah* (good traditions) being followed by others.

Thus, teacher creativity does not only provide temporary benefits but also creates an enduring educational legacy, the rewards of which continue to flow as the knowledge is taught and practiced by future generations. In this context, the researcher is interested in conducting a study on the creativity of Islamic Cultural History (SKI) teachers at MAS Teladan Ujung Kubu, focusing on their efforts to foster the learning interest of Generation Z students.

The aim of this study is to identify and describe various forms of creativity applied by SKI teachers in the learning process, and how such creativity can enhance students' learning interest. The results of this research are expected to make a significant contribution in addressing the challenges of modern education and improving the quality of SKI learning in the digital era. Furthermore, this study will explore strategies employed by SKI teachers and their impact on the students' learning process, thereby providing deeper insights into the importance of creativity in education, particularly in the context of SKI learning among Generation Z students. In this way, the research is expected not only to contribute to the development of teaching methods but also to serve as a reference for other teachers in improving classroom learning effectiveness.

2. RESEARCH METHODS

The type of research applied in this study is qualitative research. The approach used is descriptive qualitative, in which the researcher directly conducts field observations at the research site to collect data relevant to the topic under investigation. The collected data are then analyzed to address the research questions and presented in narrative form. Simply put, qualitative research—also known as the naturalistic or ethnographic method—is employed to explore objects in their natural setting without intervention from the researcher. This method is grounded in post-positivist philosophy, which views social reality as holistic, complex, and dynamic. In this approach, the researcher functions as the main instrument and must possess a deep understanding to analyze and interpret the social situations under study. Data collection is conducted using triangulation techniques, namely by combining several methods simultaneously. The data analysis is inductive, meaning that facts discovered in the field are used to develop hypotheses or theories. Qualitative research emphasizes understanding the meaning behind data rather than generalization; thus, its results focus more on transferability of meaning than on universal conclusions.

The subjects of this study consist of Islamic Cultural History (SKI) teachers and students at MAS Teladan Ujung Kubu. Several techniques were employed for data collection: observation, interviews, and document study. Observation was conducted directly to examine the school environment and to identify the creativity of SKI teachers in the classroom. Semi-formal interviews were carried out with the SKI subject teachers to obtain

more detailed information about the creative strategies implemented in teaching SKI to enhance students' learning interest. In addition, interviews with students were also conducted to gather their perspectives on the teachers' creativity in teaching SKI. Finally, documentation studies were carried out to complement and strengthen the data obtained (Hardani, 2020). The data analysis used in this study follows the interactive model of Miles and Huberman, which consists of data reduction, data display in descriptive form, and conclusion drawing. Data validity was ensured using source triangulation by comparing information from interviews, observations, and documentation (Moleong, 2010).

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. The Creativity of Islamic Cultural History (SKI) Teachers in Fostering Learning Interest among Generation Z Students

Teacher creativity in classroom learning is essential for creating engaging learning experiences for students. Learners tend to feel more motivated and enjoy lessons when guided by teachers who bring creative ideas. A creative teacher can make learning more enjoyable, less monotonous, and not boring. For this reason, teachers of Islamic Cultural History (SKI) at MAS Teladan Ujung Kubu employ various creative approaches to foster students' interest in learning, particularly for Generation Z. The following methods are applied:

1. Ball Relay Method

The ball relay method used by the SKI teacher serves to create an interactive and enjoyable learning environment. In this activity, students are not merely passive listeners but actively participate in the learning process. Through this game, students can learn Islamic cultural history in a more engaging and enjoyable way. The physical activity involved also contributes to improving students' concentration and focus, making it easier for them to understand the material being taught. This aligns with the characteristics of Generation Z, who prefer dynamic learning methods that involve active interaction. The game also helps prevent students from becoming bored or feeling that the lessons are too monotonous.

The procedure of this method begins with the teacher explaining that the lesson will use the ball relay approach. Students are expected to pay attention and listen carefully because, after the explanation, a quiz will be given randomly. Once the teacher finishes explaining the material, each student is asked to write one question on a piece of paper related to the lesson, roll it up, and submit it to the front.

Afterward, the teacher plays music and throws a small ball to one student. That student must continue passing the ball to others until the music stops. When the music stops, the student holding the ball must come forward, select one of the papers, read the question aloud, and answer it. If the student answers correctly, the teacher records it as a daily quiz grade. However, if the student cannot answer, the question is passed on to another student who can.

2. Watching Videos from YouTube

According to the Islamic Cultural History teacher at MAS Teladan Ujung Kubu, the use of technology in learning is very important to enhance students' understanding. One of the media frequently used is the YouTube application.

The learning process begins with the teacher informing students through the class WhatsApp group about the material to be studied in the next meeting. Students are then asked to watch explanatory videos or films related to the topic before coming to class. In this way, students are expected to gain a deeper understanding of the material beforehand.

The purpose of this approach is to ensure that when the teacher, Mrs. M, explains the lesson in class, students are not entirely unfamiliar with the content. By having prior knowledge, students are expected to be more responsive and actively participate in class discussions. In addition, this approach helps create a more interactive and dynamic classroom atmosphere, making the learning process more effective and enjoyable.

The approach used by the SKI teacher is highly aligned with the characteristics of Generation Z, also known as the digital generation. Gen Z grew up in the era of technology and the internet; therefore, they tend to feel more comfortable using digital devices for learning. They possess the ability to access information quickly and generally prefer visual and interactive learning methods (Hayati, 2024).

By utilizing platforms such as YouTube, the SKI teacher not only meets students' learning needs but also adapts to their more modern learning styles that are in line with technological developments. The use of videos and visual materials helps students to better understand the concepts being taught.

However, Mrs. M, the SKI teacher, emphasized that in teaching Islamic Cultural History, the lecture method still plays an important role. While technology and digital media are highly beneficial, lectures serve as reinforcement of the material. Through lectures, the teacher can provide deeper context, explain historical nuances, and directly answer students' questions.

3. Teaching Style

In addition to using engaging methods, a teacher's teaching style also greatly influences students' learning interest. Teaching style here refers to the way teachers interact with students during the learning process (Gea, 2023). When a teacher has a teaching style that is well-liked by students, they are more likely to be interested in following the lessons. This is reflected in the following hadith:

"From Abu Wa'il, that Abdullah used to teach a group every Thursday. Then a man said to him, 'O Abu Abdurrahman, I wish you could teach us every day.' Abdullah replied, 'I am afraid that you will become bored, so I choose the right time for you to receive advice, just as the Prophet selected suitable times for us to learn so that we would not become weary.'" (H.R. Bukhari) .

Based on the explanation of this hadith, it can be concluded that in the teaching process, it is important for teachers to consider the psychological condition and readiness of their students. The purpose of imparting knowledge is not merely to increase intellectual

understanding but also to refine hearts and actions. A wise teaching style is one that chooses the right time, does not burden students, and ensures that they do not feel bored. This is the method exemplified by the Prophet ﷺ and followed by his companions such as Abdullah ibn Mas'ud, showing that teaching must be carried out with wisdom, compassion, and care for students.

The teaching style applied by the SKI teacher at MAS Teladan Ujung Kubu reflects the meaning of the hadith above, as it includes several important aspects that contribute to the classroom learning environment. Among these are the teacher's choice of enjoyable methods to keep students from feeling bored, as well as the habit of always smiling during lessons. Even when experiencing personal difficulties, teachers are expected to leave those issues outside the classroom, because their expressions during teaching directly affect students' interest and engagement in learning.

When entering the classroom, the teacher strives to appear as if no problems exist. This is highly important because a gloomy or stern expression can negatively affect students' motivation and enthusiasm for learning. By maintaining a positive attitude, teachers not only create a pleasant environment but also demonstrate professionalism in line with the competencies expected of educators.

Furthermore, it is important for teachers to be friendly and respected, rather than feared. In class, the teacher often inserts humor during lessons to lighten the atmosphere. In this way, students feel more comfortable and are not afraid to ask or answer questions. Teachers also need to avoid being easily angered or frequently showing negative emotions, as such behavior may discourage students from participating in the learning process.

When students do not know the answer or make mistakes, the teacher prefers to remind and reteach in a positive manner. This is crucial because students often learn through mistakes. When a student gives an incorrect answer and the teacher corrects it constructively, the experience becomes more memorable for the student. Through this approach, the teacher not only imparts knowledge but also builds students' confidence in the learning process.

The teaching concept applied by the SKI teacher at MAS Teladan Ujung Kubu is consistent with the meaning of Surah Al-Anfal verse 125, which explains that when engaging in debate, one should do so in a good manner. This can be likened to how teachers should correct their students: with kindness, without embarrassing or discouraging them. This is also in line with Surah Thaha verse 44:

"But speak to him (Pharaoh) with gentle speech, that perhaps he may be reminded or fear [Allah]".

According to the commentary of Al-Jalalayn, this verse illustrates that even though Prophet Musa was chosen by Allah, he was still instructed to be gentle in calling Pharaoh, so as not to make him more arrogant and hardened in heart. The word *la'allah* here emphasizes the hope of Musa and Harun, even though Allah already knew that Pharaoh's heart would remain closed (Al-Jalalayn, 2004).

In addition, based on interviews conducted with several students, the researcher found a distinctive feature of the SKI teacher's teaching style: she begins the lesson by

inviting all students to recite shalawat together. This practice not only carries deep spiritual meaning—reminding students of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ and creating a blessed learning atmosphere—but also serves as an effective ice-breaking activity. By reciting shalawat, students can experience a positive “group energy” that helps them transition from the outside world into the learning space. This activity fosters a relaxed yet reverent environment, reducing students’ anxiety before the lesson begins. Moreover, shalawat as an ice breaker strengthens the sense of togetherness among students, making them feel more comfortable and connected with one another.

Thus, the “opening shalawat” practice applied by Mrs. Muliana not only adds spiritual value to learning but also creates a conducive and enjoyable classroom environment. This activity is consistent with the sequence of tasks a teacher should perform when beginning a lesson, commonly referred to as ice breaking before starting the learning process.

4. CONCLUSION

Based on the findings, it can be concluded that the creativity of Islamic Cultural History (SKI) teachers at MAS Teladan Ujung Kubu plays a crucial role in enhancing the learning interest of Generation Z students. Since Generation Z has grown up in the digital era, with a strong reliance on technology and a preference for interactive and innovative learning, teachers are required to adapt by applying creative and engaging teaching methods. The use of various approaches—such as the ball relay game, digital media through YouTube videos, as well as a friendly and communicative teaching style—successfully creates an enjoyable learning atmosphere, encouraging students to be more actively involved in the learning process. Beyond methods, teacher creativity is also reflected in their attitudes and the quality of positive interactions with students. Wise and respectful teachers are able to build students’ positive character while simultaneously motivating them to be more enthusiastic about learning. Although there remain challenges, as some teachers continue to rely on conventional methods, this study emphasizes that innovation in teaching is the key to effectively meeting the needs and expectations of Generation Z. Overall, the creativity of SKI teachers at MAS Teladan Ujung Kubu has proven effective in fostering students’ interest in learning, making the learning process more meaningful, and providing a sustainable positive impact on students’ competence development, particularly in facing the challenges of the digital era. The findings of this study are expected to serve as both inspiration and reference for other teachers in developing effective teaching strategies that are relevant to the characteristics of today’s learners.

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