DOI: 10.15642/JIIS.2022.16.1.27-48

CAMPUS-BASED MILLENNIALS' LEARNING PREFERENCES TOWARD *DA'WAH* IN URBAN CITY OF SURABAYA

Agus Aditoni | UIN Sunan Ampel Surabaya – Indonesia
Zuliati Rohmah | UIN Sunan Ampel Surabaya – Indonesia and Universitas Brawijaya Malang – Indonesia
Corresponding author: agusaditoni@uinsby.ac.id

Abstract: This article aims at describing urban millennials' preferences in learning Islam in the digital era. Since such a research project collecting data from the field is still rarely found in Indonesia, we set off to carry out the present research to address the issue. Preliminary in nature, the current study, uncovers the digital natives' preferences toward religious *da'wah*—both online and offline. Data collated from students and teachers of Islamic courses at a university in Surabaya, East Java. A total 134 people were surveyed and three people were interviewed. The results of the analysis portray the shift in learning preferences compared to those of the older generation. The millennial students choose Islamic ethics, beliefs, and jurisprudence in preference to Sufism, Islamic politics, and civilization. In addition to learning on campus, they prefer watching YouTube than reading books and attending *pengajian*. They were also found to prefer popular *ustādh*s on YouTube as their role models.

Keywords: Millennials, digital natives, urban city, religiosity

Introduction

Millennials are well-known for their competence in handling digital machines effortlessly due to their upbringing at a period of rapid technological advancement.[1] The millennials are those born in 1980s onwards.[2] Because of their extensive involvement with gadgets, they

[1] Judith Lower, "Brace Yourself: Here Comes Generation Y," *Critical Care Nurse* 28, 5 (2007), 80–85;

[2] Lucy Cennamo and Dianne Gardner, "Generational Differences in Work Values, Outcomes and Person Organization Values Fit," *Journal of Managerial Psychology* 23, 8

are so familiar with digital devices that they are referred to as "digital natives," a phrase used by Corey[3] to refer to those who have grown up with technology as a part of their life. As learners, millennials tend to be visual and tactile in their learning. Although they have an inclination to the community, they also display insufficiency in interpersonal abilities, love interactivity, and favor image-rich learning experiences over reading books. Despite their ability to multitask, they become bored easily. They are forward-thinking individuals who like being entertained and stimulated, and who can quickly assimilate new information. [4] Thanks to the internet, references to knowledge, particularly that which is related to religions, are becoming more readily available. Additionally, millennials, who are known for their openness and their connectedness, are increasingly turning to the internet as an alternative source of information.

A number of studies have been conducted in various parts of the world on the use of digital technology by millennials and their preferences in learning Islam or enacting their religious identity. Schoemaker [5] observed that digital technology impacted religious identity in Pakistan. He defines "digital secularization" as millennials exercising religious identity on social media since it makes religious uniqueness solitary, free, rationalist, and performative. The millennials, who comprise mostly middle-class people and have not attended religious school, find it hard to adapt to conventional methods of learning Islamic law; therefore, to meet their immediate and urgent needs for timely, practical, and readily available Islamic guidance, they use the internet as "one way for them to navigate the divide between

(2008), 891–906; Meigan Robb, "Effective Classroom Teaching Methods: A Critical Incident Technique from Millennial Nursing Students' Perspective," *International Journal of Nursing Education Scholarship* 10, no. 1 (2013): 301–306; Ann C. Schwartz et al., "Keeping up with Changing Times in Education: Fostering Lifelong Learning of Millennial Learners," *Focus: The Journal of Lifelong Learning in Psychiatry* 16, no. 1 (2018): 74–79.

[3] Robert C. Corey, "Digital Immigrants Teaching Digital Natives: A Phenomenological Study of Higher Education Faculty Perspectives on Technology Integration with English Core Content" (Drake University, 2012).

[4] Angela Weiler, "Information-Seeking Behavior in Generation Y Students: Motivation, Critical Thinking, and Learning Theory," *The Journal of Academic Librarianship* 31, 1 (2004), 46–53; Lower, "Brace Yourself: Here Comes Generation Y."

[5] Emrys Schoemaker, "Digital Faith: Social Media and the Enactment of Religious Identity in Pakistan" (London School of Economics and Political Science, 2016).

the normative orders of preaching traditional Islamic values and the demands of secular modernism."[6] Furthermore, millennials prefer to attend religious lectures online since face-to-face lectures are no longer able to meet their requirements, which tend to be highly dynamic;[7] hence the rise of social media has allowed them to renegotiate and challenge the notion of traditional, well-established religious authority.[8]

Researches on a related issue have also been conducted, this time looking at how news is consumed by digital natives who are enrolled in universities. Valkama[9] discovered that the millennials want to have control over the news they read, want to be provided with alternatives, and do not want a ready-made program. Furthermore, Muslim millennials' attitudes on religion and religious leadership in the Arab world were surveyed by Tabah Foundation.[10] The results show that fostering Islamic values in society and promoting the development of the country are seen as the two most important religious responsibilities; religious program on television is the most important place the young Arabs get guidance and direction from; they recognize *muftī* and *ulama* (religious scholars) as having the right and authority to issue religious edicts (*fatwā*); the local *imām*, followed by the local *fatwā* center and religious TV show phone-in is where most young Arabs would go to have their questions answered.

On the other hand, while the millennial students prefer to have transformations and changes, the teachers as digital immigrants seem to find big challenges in integrating technology into their teaching. Corey examined teachers' perspectives on the integration of

[6] Nadirsyah Hosen, "Online Fatwa in Indonesia: From Fatwa Shopping to Googling a Kiai," in *Expressing Islam: Religious Life and Politics in Indonesia*, ed. Greg Fealy and Sally White (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2008), 162.

[7] Y.Z. Rumahuru et al., "The Constrution of Religiosity in Social Media: Reponses of Ambon's Millennial Generation to Online Sermons," in *Annual International Conference on Islamic Studies (AICIS)*, 2020.

[8] Bouziane Zaid et al., "Digital Islam and Muslim Millennials : How Social Media Influencers Reimagine Religious Authority and Islamic Practices," *Religions* 13, no. 335 (2022).

[9] Suvi Valkama, "The News Consumption of Digital Natives" (University of Jyväskylä, 2015).

[10] Tabah Foundation, *Muslim Millennial Attitudes on Religion & Religious Leadership: Arab World* (Abu Dhabi, 2016); Tabah Foundation, *Key Findings and Analysis: Muslim Millennial Attitudes on Religion and Religious Leadership II (Algeria, Iraq, Lebanon, Libya, Mauritania, Oman, Qatar, Sudan, Tunisia, Yemen)* (Abu Dhabi, 2017).

technology into the teaching of English.[11] Even though they were well aware that pedagogy, material, and technology need to be integrated into learning, the continuous evolution of technology remained challenging for teachers. When it comes to the learning about religion, millennials who are immersed in technology and social networks are often religiously committed and enthusiastic to explore their emotional and spiritual selves, but teachers are clearly positioned to grapple with the unfortunate situation that they are digital immigrants, making it difficult for them to equip millennial students with critical skills for information that is prevalent on the internet, especially on social media.[12]

The findings above show that millennials who are tech-savvy prefer to participate in learning activities that allow them to choose from a variety of options and allow them to express themselves without being confined by a ready-made package. [13] They are continuously looking to expand their experiences; they feed on perpetual change. Despite this situation, when Muslim millennials are connected to their religion and religious teaching, the emerging literature on this generation is far from consistent. Some younger generations of Muslims such as those of Arabs choose to seek answers on religious issues from their local *imām* and even take formal education in college as Australian Muslim millennials have demonstrated. On the other hand, some other Muslim millennials choose to learn Islam through short videos uploaded on social media to get information at their fingertips. This is an interesting phenomenon to discuss, especially in the Indonesian context wherein the Muslim population is the biggest in number throughout the globe, millennials are half of the total population and nearly half of them live in cities either as natives or immigrants.[14] For millennials, city life is not only about commerce and industry; it is about access to jobs, resources,

[11] Corey, "Digital Immigrants Teaching Digital Natives: A Phenomenological Study of Higher Education Faculty Perspectives on Technology Integration with English Core Content."

[12] Whitney Bauman et al., "Teaching the Millennial Generation in the Religious and Theological Studies Classroom," *Teaching Theology and Religion* 17, no. 4 (2014): 301–322.

[13] Schwartz et al., "Keeping up with Changing Times in Education: Fostering Lifelong Learning of Millennial Learners."

[14] Lilik Purwandi and Hasanuddin Ali, *Indonesia 2020: The Urban Middle-Class Millennials*, 2016.

and education, as well as the opportunity to interact with people from diverse backgrounds.

Despite considerable research has been conducted to shed light on millennials' preference on digital experience, to the best of our knowledge, little has been undertaken on addressing whether the Indonesian Muslim millennials who live in urban areas are interested in learning about their religion, who their role models are, and how they nurture their religiosity. The existing research in Indonesian Islamic education mainly covered the history of Islamic education systems in Indonesia, [15] the Islamic educational reform in Indonesia, [16] the influence and relationship of Islamic moral values to the students' behavior,[17] development of a model of English instructional materials in accordance with the students' characteristics of Islamic universities, [18] concept of future Islamic education [19] and the development of Islamic education in Indonesia from its formation up to this point which collected data from the existing literature.[20] There is only one study focusing on millennials and Islamic character building; [21] yet, this study was merely a conceptual paper with secondary empirical data mainly drawn from the existing literature. Since it was not conducted by collecting first-hand empirical data from the field, the previous researcher's statement needs to be verified through data collection and analysis from the field.

---

[15] Saeful Anam, "Karakteristik dan Sistem Pendidikan Islam: Mengenal Sejarah Pesantren, Surau dan Meunasah di Indonesia," *JALIE: Journal of Applied Linguistics and Islamic Education* 1, no. 1 (2017): 146–167.

[16] M. Ihsan Dacholfany, "Reformasi Pendidikan Islam dalam Menghadapi Era Globalisasi: Sebuah Tantangan dan Harapan," *Akademika* 20, no. 1 (2015): 173–194.

[17] Nuriman and Fauzan, "The Influence of Islamic Moral Values on the Students' Behavior in Aceh," *Dinamika Ilmu* 17, no. 2 (2017): 275–290.

[18] Syamsul Rizal, "Developing a Model of Islamic Educational Studies Based Reading Comprehension Instructional Material through Schema Theory Approach for Tarbiyah Students of IAIN of Bengkulu," in *Proceedings of ISELT FBS Universitas Negeri Padang*, 2014, 402–208.

[19] Mohammad Salik, "Menggagas Pesantren Masa Depan (Kritik Cak Nur Atas Pola Pendidikan Tradisional)," *El-Qudwah* (2013): 1–17.

[20] Ali Mas'ud, Ah Zaki Fuad, and Ahmad Zaini, "Evolution and Orientation of Islamic Education in Indonesia and Malaysia," *Journal of Indonesian Islam* 13, no. 1 (2019): 21–49.

[21] Nana Sutarna, "Strengthening Character Education Based on Islam for Millennial Generation in Digital Era," in *Proceeding the 3rd International Conference on Education* (Batusangkar, 2018), 221–228.

Therefore, the present study is undertaken to address the lack of data on the preferences of Indonesian millennials for studying Islam, particularly in urban areas, which covers their interest and ways of learning Islam, and their role models. To have a more complete picture, this article also describes the views of the *ustādh* (Islamic studies teachers) concerning the students' preferences and how the Islamic teachers respond to the changes in it. Having such a preliminary nature, this study took place in Universitas Islam Negeri Sunan Ampel (henceforth UINSA) considering that not only it is the immediate setting of the researchers, but also that it is located in Surabaya, the fast-growing secondary city in Indonesia after Jakarta, and the rapid development of industrial activities and the increase of infrastructure quality have encouraged urbanization, and therefore, it is appropriate to refer Surabaya as a suitable representation of the urban city. Moreover, UINSA is considered appropriate to represent a general depiction of millennials in Surabaya city because it is the only big Islamic university which is not formally affiliated with a certain social and religious organization, such as Universitas Nahdlatul Ulama Surabaya (UNUSA) which is affiliated with Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) and Universitas Muhammadiyah Surabaya which is affiliated with Muhammadiyah. Therefore, the study has anticipated a more comprehensive look into urban millennials' attitudes on online *da'wah*.

The current study collected data from millennial students who were studying at UINSA, and *ustādh*s of Islamic study subjects at the same campus using questionnaires and interviews. An online questionnaire consisting of nine items was developed and distributed to millennial students. A total of 134 people completed the survey, 20.3 percent of them were male and 79.7 percent female. Another online questionnaire was responded to by 25 *ustādh*s of Islamic studies at the same university. The second questionnaire collected information related to the *ustādh*s' views on the millennial students' interests in *da'wah* and their ways of teaching Islam in the era of digital technology. In-depth interviews with two millennial students and one *ustādh* in the above-mentioned context were also conducted to gather more detailed information regarding the millennial students' preferences toward *da'wah*. Hence, the article presents the millennial students' preferences toward *da'wah* which includes their attitudes toward learning Islam and their sources of learning Islam, and the students' role models.

Millennial Students' Preferences toward *Da'wah*

Computers, cell phones, social networking, and other mobile gadgets have been a part of the millennial generation's daily lives since they were born. [22] They do not see technology as something extraordinary; rather, it is an essential component of their daily lives and means of communication. The digital natives are always-on learners: fast-paced, visually oriented, and nonlinear. Changes in the educational landscape demand a shift in teachers' responsibilities. Online classrooms, Wikipedia, and social networks such as Facebook and Twitter allow students to access an almost limitless amount of information, and many of these resources are written in international languages, particularly English.

This phenomenon is likely different from the preference of most teachers and educators who are mostly 'digital immigrants,' that is, generations who learn technology after they grew up. There are new waves of educators nowadays who fight against their incapability to keep up with the latest technology. As digital immigrants, they grapple with the newest digital obsession, fight against the use of cell phones and texting in their classrooms, and are cranky about the technology and tend to warn students of the dangers of social networks via Facebook and the potential for cybercrime. The majority of teachers apply technology in their classrooms just to replace outdated equipment. Instead of requiring students to turn in printed papers, they may just request that they send them in through email. In an era of rapid technological advancement and relentless innovation, educators face the challenge of adapting to students' changing tastes and requirements while maintaining the moral ideals that have long guided their professions.[23]

Regarding the millennial students' preferences toward *da'wah*, the discussion will cover the students' attitude toward learning Islam, the religious areas preferred by the students, and the sources of learning Islam preferred by the students. Almost all of the millennial students

[22] Cennamo and Gardner, "Generational Differences in Work Values, Outcomes and Person Organization Values Fit."; Nicholas J. Beutell, "Generational Differences in Work-Family Conflict and Synergy," *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health* 10, no. 6 (2013): 2544–2559.

[23] Corey, "Digital Immigrants Teaching Digital Natives: A Phenomenological Study of Higher Education Faculty Perspectives on Technology Integration with English Core Content."

(99%) think that learning Islam is important. When asked about the importance of learning Islam, only 1% of the students responded with 'No'. The majority of students believe that learning Islam is essential because they believe that comprehending their own religion's teachings is fundamental. Others believe that it is essential because Islamic teachings are relevant to their everyday life; it relates to their worldly life as well as the life in the day after, and it can guide them to have a more beautiful life because they live with knowledge and understanding. The millennials, just as determined as their elderly, acknowledge that there must be universally applicable guidelines for what constitutes good and bad. They frequently extend their full support to the authorities to maintain morality and the efforts of houses of worship and their followers to express their socio-religious views.[24] As a result of the dynamic changes in urban life, they might find themselves searching for meaning and solace in the embrace of spirituality and religion as a way of escape from the materialistic metropolitan environment. This information matches with the responses of the *ustādh*s to a similar question directed to them. When the *ustādh*s were asked about their students' responses to their teaching, they admitted that the students are mostly enthusiastic (86%) and very excited (4%). There is only 5% of the students who are not enthusiastic and 5% others are partly eager and partly not.

This information illustrates a very positive attitude of the millennials on the process of refining their religiosity. Most of the millennial students have positive attitudes towards Islamic learning most of which take place on campus. The *ustādh*s also have affirmative views on the students' attitudes towards learning Islam. The *ustādh*s think that most students learn Islam devotedly. This is a very good starting point since motivation is central to determining the quality of learning[25]. Besides, motivation correlates significantly with autonomy[26];

[24] Allison Pond, Gregory Smith, and Scott Clement, "Religion among the Millennials," *Pew Research Center*, last modified 2017, accessed May 2, 2022, https://www.pewresearch.org/religion/2010/02/17/religion-among-the-millennials/.

[25] Z Hidayat, Asep Saefudin, and Sumartono Sumartono, "Motivation, Critical Thinking and Academic Verification of High School Students' Information-Seeking Behavior," *Record and Library Journal* 3, no. 1 (2017): 10–24.

[26] Hassan Soodmand Afshar, Ali Rahimi, and Masoud Rahimi, "Instrumental Motivation, Critical Thinking, Autonomy and Academic Achievement of Iranian EFL Learners," *Issues in Educational Research* 24, no. 3 (2014): 281–298.

therefore, the students who have finished their Islamic study courses on campus might still learn Islam autonomously via mass and social media. This is the ideal learning environment for millennial students, whose views toward learning dictate their ability and desire to improve as Muslims. In this situation, educators and Islamic preachers do not need to put extra effort to motivate the students in their religious education. The *ustādh*s may allocate their energy to some other aspects other than the students' motivation, such as, switching their ways of teaching to suit the students' learning preferences.

Related to religious areas preferred by the students, the biggest number of the students (36%) prefer Islamic ethics (*al-akẖlāq*), followed by Islamic belief (*al-'aqīdah*) as many as 25%, Islamic jurisprudence (*al-fiqh*) 22%, Sufism (*al-taṣawwuf)* 10%, and politics (*al-siyāsah*) 6%. There is only 1% of the students who chose various other topics, such as contemporary issues in Islam, Islamic civilization, and language. These findings suggest that apart from providing them with high access of information, the millennials with their open-minded and connected nature prefer learning about their religion especially dealing with the *fatwā* related to the ethics, beliefs, and jurisprudence in the internet because online *fatwā* provided by the Muslim scholars provide them with a wide range of alternative religious opinions and interpretations other than traditionally relying on the ulama or referring to mainstream religious institutions and organizations.[27]

Interestingly, when asked about their views or predictions on the students' areas of interest related to Islamic studies, the *ustādh*s respond to, and show similar tendency in, the students' interests where Islamic ethics becomes the most interesting area. Similar to the students' responses showing that Islamic civilization and language are the least interesting topic, the *ustādh*s also predict that the students put their least favor for these focuses (each 6%). Politics which is the second least favored by the students is also predicted correctly by the *ustādh*s. To some degree, the hesitation of millennials to learn about Islamic civilization and history is the reason for concern since it may provide them a chronological framework for thinking about the past and a sense of direction for the future growth of Islamic society and diversity in society. Inadequate knowledge of Islam's complex civilization may result in religious exclusivism and an intolerance of any differences.

[27] Hosen, "Online Fatwa in Indonesia: From Fatwa Shopping to Googling a Kiai."

The millennial's preferences for studying Islam via watching videos on YouTube rather than reading books are also supported by interviews with the *ustādh*s, as follows:

> "…Yes, because it (the students' needs to learn) is fulfilled by the media. Yes, they are mostly instant. What I mean by 'instant' is like this ... Reading a book for them is a bit heavy. They like to learn directly from the internet. In the internet, there is also an element of truth… And the community is not the same. Some people who are satisfied when it is shown, "This is the source." Some are satisfied as long as the explanation makes sense. That's it. And I more often than not always prepare ppt. I always prepare the PowerPoint. Even if the mosque is not ready, I order the staff to prepare it. Finally, they prepare it. So that all the mosques where I give speeches are ready with the LCD projector."

This preference is also acknowledged by the students as apparent in questionnaire data that, in addition to having learning sessions on campus, they also love to improve their understanding of Islam via YouTube channels. This just highlights Christodoulou and Kalokairinou's findings that millennials prefer to learn via instant feedback and technology integration.[28]

With regard to source of learning Islam, the biggest number of the millennial students (33%) admitted that they learn it in campus, the second biggest one (28%) learn it via YouTube channels, and a lesser number (14%) learn it through radio/TV program. Whatsapp group is also used by 10% of the students to learn Islam. Others learn Islam through Instagram, Facebook, Islamic boarding house, book, *majelis taklim* (religious learning forums), *majelis shawalat* (religious gatherings specialized in collective prayers and recitations), and other religious knowledge-seeking activities; however, the number is not significant. Although the millennial students learn Islam via blended learning, that is, a combination of face-to-face interaction and online learning, however, they mostly do online learning through YouTube channels.

Whilst there is a tendency of Muslims to learn and spread Islamic knowledge online, there are differences in each group of Muslims. Millennial students in the current research prefer YouTube channels to other online learning sources to broaden their horizons about Islam. This is dissimilar to the tendency of the young Muslim scholars who

[28] Eleni Christodoulou and Athina Kalokairinou, "Net Generation's Learning Styles in Nursing Education," *Studies in Health Technology and Informatics* 213 (2015): 119–121..

prefer to put their online *fatwā* on the online Islamic knowledge websites[29] and the preference of the female activists who use Twitter to educate people socially[30]. We might be able to say that students who are still learning tend to involve more elements of entertainment while learning Islam via YouTube channels. Meanwhile, the young scholars and the female activists, who have finished, at least, their undergraduate studies choose to use websites to spread the knowledge of Islam through the online *fatwā* and to inspire their followers via Twitter, which means less aspect of entertainment in it.

The millennials preferences for YouTube is reasonable because the videos are usually shorter, as a result of professional editing, and less time demanding than face-to-face religious sermons. This adds to the empirical evidence for what has been stated by Lower[31] that millennials, especially in urban cities, like entertainment. Learning Islam via YouTube gives them entertainment as well as knowledge and understanding of Islam. The message of *da'wah* will optimally reach the community if the medium and techniques used are in line with the realities of the community to which it is being delivered. *Da'wah*, as a solution to societal problems, must be able to present itself as a pleasant thing. While in some literature the millennial generations are referred to as tech-savvy, adaptable, and socially aware generations, it is speculated that this is a direct consequence of the cultural and academic context in which they are situated.[32]

Interviews with both millennial students strengthen the data collected from the questionnaire. When they finished learning Islam on campus, YouTube is the first alternative for them to further their learning about Islam. An interview with one of the students reveals that once she finished her Islamic study courses on campus, she makes herself learn Islam from YouTube channels as she said, "I usually

[29] Rusli, Muhammad Syarif Hasyim, and Nurdin, "A New Islamic Knowledge Production and Fatwa Rulings How Indonesia's Young Muslim Scholars Interact with Online Sources," *Journal of Indonesian Islam* 14, no. 2 (2020): 499–518.

[30] Evi Fatimatur Rusydiyah, "Social Education through Digital Literacy among Indonesian Female Muslim Activists the Experience of Abdurrahman Wahid's Daughters," *Journal of Indonesian Islam* 14, no. 1 (2020): 210–247..

[31] Lower, "Brace Yourself: Here Comes Generation Y."

[32] Patrisius Istiarto Djiwandono, "The Learning Styles of Millennial Generation in University: A Study in Indonesian Context," *International Journal of Education* 10, no. 1 (2017): 12–19.

watch YouTube, Yes, usually before going to bed until I fall asleep. Maybe around one hour before sleeping. But I don't attend Islamic sermon (*pengajian*) in the mosque." Another student also relies on YouTube channels to learn Islam once she does not take any Islamic courses on campus. She reveals this way, "Yeah, I usually watch YouTube. And in the weekend, when I go home, my father usually listens to the radio, Nabawi Radio, then I join him in listening to the radio."

In addition to that, almost half of the students also learn Islam from TV, and very small number from radio, magazine, and newspaper. While more than half of the students learn Islam through mass media (3% through magazine and newspaper, 7% via radio, and 49% via TV), there is only 13% *ustādh* who uses mass media regularly to spread Islamic teachings to the public. The biggest number of the *ustādh*s (65%) admitted to use mass media but not intensively. The rest of the number (22%) do not use mass media because they think it is complicated. Hence, there is a discrepancy here between the millennials' preferences in learning via mass media and the *ustādh*s' use of the media. Meanwhile, broadcasting through TV is not in the *ustādh*s' interest. The *ustādh* has considered enough to have his speeches recorded and broadcasted via YouTube by the organizers of the events where he is invited to give speeches.

With regard to the learning of Islam from social media, 75% of the students use it to learn Islam. The biggest number is YouTube use (32%) followed by Instagram (17%), WhatsApp (14%), Twitter (7%), and the last is Facebook which is only 5%. A similar preference is also shown by the *ustādh*s. While a quarter of the students do not learn Islam through social media, slightly less than a quarter of the *ustādh*s do not use social media to educate the public about Islam. The reasons are because it is complicated (14%) and because they do not have social media accounts (5%). What we need to highlight here is the response of the students who admit YouTube as the most often used social media. When asked slightly differently what sources of learning they use to understand more about Islam, as mentioned previously, they chose YouTube after campus learning. This just shows consistency in the students' responses regarding YouTube is the most often used source of learning and most widely utilized social media.

The *ustādhs*, however, do not have the same enthusiasm in making use of social media for their *da'wah* activities. 36% of them use it but

not intensively. More importantly, while students mention more detailed information regarding the kinds of social media they have used, which includes YouTube, Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp, and Twitter, the *ustādh*s do not mention the kinds of social media. This can be understood that the digital immigrant *ustādh*s' attention to and familiarity with the social media might be more limited compared to the millennial students' as digital natives. Hence, a discrepancy is also found here.

The data collected from the interviews reveal that when the *ustādh*s speeches appear on YouTube, they were produced from his offline speeches in the mosques which were then videotaped and uploaded on YouTube by the organizers of the events who are mostly millennials. The *ustādh* explicated this:

> "…. it's on video, it's been several times. It means they (the committee) have their own YouTube channel. When I have speeches in the mosque, they video-tape them. But they ask for a short video. In the long one, for example, Al-Falah has its own YouTube channel. Then, there's also another one in Deltasari, Gedangan. Yes, they edit the video. Some videos are original as they are; some are with the editing process. The one being processed is the one cut into five-minutes duration. The long ones are rarely watched. The five-minutes video is better."

Hence, the *ustādh* needs the millennials' help to make his speeches available online via YouTube channels. The *ustādh* also explains that the preferred video is the one with a short duration. Videos with longer duration are not preferred. The *ustādh* is also ready to provide the shorter speeches to suit the audiences' preference. These show that the *ustādh* is ready to adapt himself to the situation resulting from the technological advancement in the digital era. He just needs to collaborate with a team ready to put his speeches on YouTube channels.

While most students rarely attend Islamic learning in their community, slightly more than half of them learn Islam via mass media (TV, radio, magazine and newspaper) which is pretty closer to the urban life. Millennials, particularly those in urban settings, look to popular figures as sources of religious information. With regard to this, however, the teachers rarely appear in the mass media. Hence, there is a discrepancy between the students' preference in mass media with the teachers' involvement in the media. As a result, the *ustādh*s must

demonstrate their scientific popularity if they want to serve as role models for millennials in their religious lives. They or the university authorities are advised to build collaboration with radio/TV stations as well as magazine and newspaper publishers. In the collaboration, the campus may propose to provide the radio/TV stations with *ustādh*s who have the Islamic expertise needed to educate the public, including the millennials, about Islam. On the other hand, the radio/TV stations may provide broadcasting technology and staff skillful in broadcasting-related issues. The collaboration will not only be beneficial for the spread of Islam among the public, but also improve the students' trust to their *ustādh*s that enable them to consider their *ustādh*s as role models similar to the popular figures they adore so far.

Similar to the use of mass media by the students, the use of social media by the Islamic study *ustādh*s tends to be less intensive than the students' preferences and familiarity with the social media. The less intensive use of the social media by the *ustādh*s is because the *ustādh*s are digital immigrants who learn the technology when they already grew up. Apparently, the *ustādh*s cannot fully catch up with the emergence of the new technology which is very fast and overwhelming. This strengthens Corey's statement that many teachers need adjustment to the rapid development of the digital technology.[33] Hence, the discrepancy between the digital natives' preferences in learning Islam and the *ustādh*s performance lies in the *ustādh*s lack of use of the social and mass media and this needs to be addressed by campus.

In addition to learning Islam on campus, almost half of the urban millennials in the study rarely attend *pengajian* in their community (47%), never attend it (21%), appear in it once or twice a month (15%), join it less than twice a month (2%), join it once or twice a week (6%), and attend it every day (5%). The data from the interviews explain why more than half of them rarely and never attend *pengajian*. They live in the lodging houses. They do not think that they belong to the society where they stay. Therefore, they do not attend religious learning in the local mosque. It is described by one of the students:

> "…when I was in the campus boarding house in semester 1 and 2, I attended the Islamic sermon. When I was in semester 3 and

[33] Corey, "Digital Immigrants Teaching Digital Natives: A Phenomenological Study of Higher Education Faculty Perspectives on Technology Integration with English Core Content."

> moved to the lodging house behind the campus, I stop attending the sermon. Although there are religious speeches in the mosques around my lodging house, I do not attend the speeches."

The results also expose the fact that the students living in their lodging houses are separated from the community. They live physically among the urban community, but their existence is not seen and considered important to be part of the community members. They are not involved in the community activities, including the religious meetings. Albeit not as significant as their preference for social media such as YouTube and Instagram to enrich their religious knowledge, the millennials' attendance to face-to-face religious lectures is also considered worth mentioning even though it is merely confessional or as a form of their presence in the urban socio-religious community.[34] To help them connect themselves to the community so that their Islamic learning does not stop in line with the completion of their Islamic courses in campus, the *ustādh*s might assign them to attend the religious meetings in the community when the students are still taking the compulsory Islamic courses in campus. This is a good way to engage the millennials through more active learning, although it is different from flipped classroom suggested by Rohl, Reddy and Shannon.[35] With this assignment, it is expected that they have been connected with the community once they finish their courses, the connection can be maintained and the students can continue their religious learning in the community more naturally. This is to help the millennial students mingle and become active members of the community.

In short, regarding the students' preferences in learning Islam, we can summarize that they have a very positive attitude toward Islamic *da'wah*, they prefer studies on *akhlāq*, *'aqidah*, *fiqh*, over *taṣawwuf*, *siyāsah,* contemporary issues in Islam, Islamic civilization, and language. Sources of learning Islam the millennial students prefer are YouTube channels and TV, in addition to learning on campus. Other types of social media (Instagram, Facebook) and printed mass media

[34] Rumahuru et al., "The Constrution of Religiosity in Social Media: Reponses of Ambon's Millennial Generation to Online Sermons."

[35] Amy Roehl, Shweta Linga Reddy, and Gayla Jett Shannon, "The Flipped Classroom: An Opportunity to Engage Millennial Students through Active Learning Strategies," *Journal of Family and Consumer Sciences* 105, no. 2 (2013): 44–49.

(newspaper and magazine) as well as radio broadcasts are less preferred. *Pengajian* is also less considered by the millennial students as the source of learning Islam. Hence, there is a shift in the students' preferences toward *da'wah* compared to those in the past.

Millennial Students' Role Models

In applying their Islamic belief, values, and teaching, most of the millennial students need role models. When asked whether they have an *ustādh* as their role model, 72% of the students responded positively. Only 38% students admitted that they do not have an *ustādh* as a role model. Among the Islamic teachers chosen by the students as role models are many famous Islamic scholars, they are, Abdul Shomad, Hanan Attaki, Emha Ainun Najib, Zakir Naik, Maulana, Maimoen Zubair, Musthofa Bisri, Adi Hidayat, Khalid Basalamah, Zulkifli, Baha', Anwar Zahid, Oki, Yahya Waloni, Umar Mita, Wirda Mansur, Yusuf Mansur, Felix, Mama Dedeh, Handy Bonny, and Salim A. Fillah. Shomad has the biggest fans among the respondents (15%) followed by Attaki (12%) and the rest of the *ustādh*s. The students know these *ustādh*s from their *da'wah* on YouTube channels. In addition to that, the students also mentioned their own teachers—mostly in their *pesantren*s—not in campus as their role models.

To confirm as to why these religious teachers are mentioned by the students as their role models, the questionnaire also scrutinized the students' reasons for taking an *ustādh/ah* as a role model. A half of the students admire them because of their knowledge in Islam, a lesser number of the students love them because they are humorous (12%), and 11% like them because other people also love them. Other reasons are because of their appearance on TV (6%), having social media and having big number of followers (2%), being their own *ustādh (1%)*, and some other reasons. There is only 4% of the students who choose the figure as their role model based on their physical appearance. The reasons put forth by the students are logical and easily acceptable. This shows that the students are on a normal situation.

The next part of the interview shows that the students take famous figures as their role models because their explanations can be easily understood. Another student said that she loves the famous *ustādh* because of the topic specialization, method of delivery and religious insight. She said:

> "Because of the topic, He discusses a lot about the Doomsday. And also (I like) the method of delivery and religious insight. In the past, I had never learned about Doomsday and how we can prepare for that. Before watching YouTube, I hadn't known that there are seven phases of the Doomsday. After watching YouTube, then I know it."

Regarding the role models preferred by the millennial students that include well-known public figures are mostly based on their knowledge of Islam and methods of delivery which help the millennials to understand the topics easily. Physical appearance is among the least element that motivates them to like the role models. The fact that they mostly like popular figures as their role models—not their own *ustādh*—might be able to be associated with the millennials' tendency to love alternatives and do not want to have ready-made program. In line with Corey's statement that millennials are grown-up with technology that put gadgets in their fingertips and use them as their toys, the millennial students of UINSA have vast opportunities to learn from various *ustādh* apparent on YouTube channels.[36] Furthermore, Valkama found that the millennials prefer choosing the news they read by themselves out of the provided sources, and they do not want to be prescribed to read the chosen materials.[37] Parallel with this, the UINSA students might see their own *ustādh*s as 'package' that has been provided by the campus—therefore, they do not see them as their role models. They want to find their own role models from the media that they have freely accessed so far, that is, YouTube channels. Dissimilar to their own *ustādh*s on campus, the well-known *ustādh*s are perceived by the students as figures who provide them with alternatives from the routine activities they have in campus, not necessarily they are better than their own *ustādh*. The reason might be merely because the students choose to watch the well-known *ustādh*, so when they choose the role models from popular figures, they feel that they have acclaimed their own freedom. Hence, the results of the current study support the findings in Corey's and Valkama's studies.

[36] Corey, "Digital Immigrants Teaching Digital Natives: A Phenomenological Study of Higher Education Faculty Perspectives on Technology Integration with English Core Content."

[37] Valkama, "The News Consumption of Digital Natives."

In addition to this, the reason why the millennial students do not choose their own *ustādh* in campus as their role models might be related to boredom aspect. They might get bored with the *ustādhs*—as millennials easily get bored as stated by Lower[38]–because they regularly see the *ustādh*s on campus. However, when the student is confronted with a question as to why she does not view their *ustādh*s as role models, she prefers saying, "*Ya, ndak aja*," which means that she actually has the reason for not considering her *ustādh*s as the role models, but she just does not want to express it.

Learning from this, the *ustādh*s of Islamic study courses need to learn from the well-known *ustādh*s of what aspects make them idolized by the millennial students. From the interviews with the two students, it is uncovered that they admire the public figures because their explanation is easy to understand, their topics of discussion are interesting, and their religious insights can be observed easily. Hence, the *ustādh*s need to attribute these three qualities to their process of educating the millennial students.

Conclusion

An ideal condition can be clearly seen in UINSA where the majority of the students view that learning Islam is of great importance. Both *ustādh*s and millennial students in the urban areas have positive attitudes toward the efforts in strengthening their religiosity. Putting Islamic ethics as their most preferred field, the majority of the students add YouTube channels and TV as their alternatives in nurturing their understanding of Islam. There is only a very small number of students who learn Islam via radio, magazine and newspaper. Instagram users that are slightly more than half of YouTube viewers, and WhatsApp users are slightly less than half of them portray the preference of the students toward *da'wah* in addition to religious courses they receive from the campus. Regarding the role models, most millennials prefer to have popular *ustādh*s that are often apparent on YouTube channels as their role models.

An incongruity between the millennials' preference in nurturing and honing their religiosity and the *ustādhs'* responses to the preferences can be found in the use of mass media in which nearly half

[38] Lower, "Brace Yourself: Here Comes Generation Y."

of the students watch TV programs to learn Islamic teachings, meanwhile only few *ustādhs* make their appearance on TV. Another discrepancy also occurs in the use of social media to learn and teach Islam. To overcome the incongruity, the *ustādhs* assisted by the university are suggested to make a better connection with TV or radio stations so that they will better contribute to the students' advancement of knowledge of Islam and Islamic characters based on the Islamic teachings. More intensive use of YouTube by *ustādhs* may also help the millennials to understand Islam more comprehensively since that is the media preferred by the millennial students.

The above situation of the mismatch between students' preferences and *ustādhs'* responses clearly affirms what has been indicated by the Prophet Muhammad in his saying which instructs the Moslems to educate their children with some understandings which are out of the era of the Moslems themselves as teachers, for the children have their own era. This insinuates that the Moslems are instructed to be out of the box, to entertain future possibilities for the good of the next generations. Our aforementioned discussion and the saying of the Prophet just affirm that the Moslems need to be futuristic. []

References

Anam, Saeful. "Karakteristik Dan Sistem Pendidikan Islam: Mengenal Sejarah Pesantren, Surau Dan Meunasah Di Indonesia." *JALIE: Journal of Applied Linguistics and Islamic Education* 1, no. 1 (2017): 146–167.

Bauman, Whitney, Joseph A. Marchal, Karline McLain, Maureen O'Connell, and Sara M. Patterson. "Teaching the Millennial Generation in the Religious and Theological Studies Classroom." *Teaching Theology and Religion* 17, no. 4 (2014): 301–322.

Beutell, Nicholas J. "Generational Differences in Work-Family Conflict and Synergy." *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health* 10, no. 6 (2013): 2544–2559.

Cennamo, Lucy, and Dianne Gardner. "Generational Differences in Work Values, Outcomes and Person Organization Values Fit." *Journal of Managerial Psychology* 23, no. 8 (2008): 891–906.

Christodoulou, Eleni, and Athina Kalokairinou. "Net Generation's

Learning Styles in Nursing Education." *Studies in Health Technology and Informatics* 213 (2015): 119–121.

Corey, Robert C. "Digital Immigrants Teaching Digital Natives: A Phenomenological Study of Higher Education Faculty Perspectives on Technology Integration with English Core Content." Drake University, 2012.

Dacholfany, M. Ihsan. "Reformasi Pendidikan Islam Dalam Menghadapi Era Globalisasi: Sebuah Tantangan Dan Harapan." *Akademika* 20, no. 1 (2015): 173–194.

Djiwandono, Patrisius Istiarto. "The Learning Styles of Millennial Generation in University: A Study in Indonesian Context." *International Journal of Education* 10, no. 1 (2017): 12–19.

Hidayat, Z, Asep Saefudin, and Sumartono Sumartono. "Motivation, Critical Thinking and Academic Verification of High School Students' Information-Seeking Behavior." *Record and Library Journal* 3, no. 1 (2017): 10–24.

Hosen, Nadirsyah. "Online Fatwa in Indonesia: From Fatwa Shopping to Googling a Kiai." In *Expressing Islam: Religious Life and Politics in Indonesia*, edited by Greg Fealy and Sally White, 162. Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2008.

Lower, Judith. "Brace Yourself: Here Comes Generation Y." *Critical Care Nurse* 28, no. 5 (2007): 80–85.

Mas'ud, Ali, Ah Zaki Fuad, and Ahmad Zaini. "Evolution and Orientation of Islamic Education in Indonesia and Malaysia." *Journal of Indonesian Islam* 13, no. 1 (2019): 21–49.

Nuriman, and Fauzan. "The Influence of Islamic Moral Values on the Students' Behavior in Aceh." *Dinamika Ilmu* 17, no. 2 (2017): 275–290.

Pond, Allison, Gregory Smith, and Scott Clement. "Religion among the Millennials." *Pew Research Center*. Last modified 2017. Accessed May 2, 2022. https://www.pewresearch.org/religion/-2010/02/17/religion-among-the-millennials/.

Purwandi, Lilik, and Hasanuddin Ali. *Indonesia 2020: The Urban Middle-Class Millennials*, 2016.

Rizal, Syamsul. "Developing a Model of Islamic Educational Studies Based Reading Comprehension Instructional Material through Schema Theory Approach for Tarbiyah Students of IAIN of Bengkulu." In *Proceedings of ISELT FBS Universitas Negeri Padang*, 402–208, 2014.

Robb, Meigan. "Effective Classroom Teaching Methods: A Critical Incident Technique from Millennial Nursing Students' Perspective." *International Journal of Nursing Education Scholarship* 10, no. 1 (2013): 301–306.

Roehl, Amy, Shweta Linga Reddy, and Gayla Jett Shannon. "The Flipped Classroom: An Opportunity to Engage Millennial Students through Active Learning Strategies." *Journal of Family and Consumer Sciences* 105, no. 2 (2013): 44–49.

Rumahuru, Y.Z., A.C. Kakiay, A Latuconsina, J.S. Talupun, and S Ernas. "The Constrution of Religiosity in Social Media: Reponses of Ambon's Millennial Generation to Online Sermons." In *Annual International Conference on Islamic Studies (AICIS)*, 2020.

Rusli, Muhammad Syarif Hasyim, and Nurdin. "A New Islamic Knowledge Production and Fatwa Rulings How Indonesia's Young Muslim Scholars Interact with Online Sources." *Journal of Indonesian Islam* 14, no. 2 (2020): 499–518.

Rusydiyah, Evi Fatimatur. "Social Education through Digital Literacy among Indonesian Female Muslim Activists the Experience of Abdurrahman Wahid's Daughters." *Journal of Indonesian Islam* 14, no. 1 (2020): 210–247.

Salik, Mohammad. "Menggagas Pesantren Masa Depan (Kritik Cak Nur Atas Pola Pendidikan Tradisional)." *El-Qudwah* (2013): 1–17.

Schoemaker, Emrys. "Digital Faith: Social Media and The Enactment of Religious Identity In Pakistan." London School of Economics and Political Science, 2016.

Schwartz, Ann C., William M. McDonald, Arshya B. Vahabzadeh, and Robert O. Cotes. "Keeping up with Changing Times in Education: Fostering Lifelong Learning of Millennial Learners."

Focus: The Journal of Lifelong Learning in Psychiatry 16, no. 1 (2018): 74–79.

Soodmand Afshar, Hassan, Ali Rahimi, and Masoud Rahimi. "Instrumental Motivation, Critical Thinking, Autonomy and Academic Achievement of Iranian EFL Learners." *Issues in Educational Research* 24, no. 3 (2014): 281–298.

Sutarna, Nana. "Strengthening Character Education Based on Islam for Millennial Generation in Digital Era ." In *Proceeding the 3rd International Conference on Education*, 221–228. Batusangkar, 2018.

Tabah Foundation. *Key Findings and Analysis: Muslim Millennial Attitudes on Religion and Religious Leadership II (Algeria, Iraq, Lebanon, Libya, Mauritania, Oman, Qatar, Sudan, Tunisia, Yemen)*. Abu Dhabi, 2017.

———. *Muslim Millennial Attitudes on Religion & Religious Leadership: Arab World*. Abu Dhabi, 2016.

Valkama, Suvi. "The News Consumption of Digital Natives." University of Jyväskylä, 2015.

Weiler, Angela. "Information-Seeking Behavior in Generation Y Students: Motivation, Critical Thinking, and Learning Theory." *The Journal of Academic Librarianship* 31, no. 1 (2004): 46–53.

Zaid, Bouziane, Jana Fedtke, Don Donghee Shin, Abdelmalek El Kadoussi, and Mohammed Ibahrine. "Digital Islam and Muslim Millennials : How Social Media Influencers Reimagine Religious Authority and Islamic Practices." *Religions* 13, no. 335 (2022).