

## The Role of Gus Miek in Education for Generation Z Santri

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### ABSTRACT

Islamic education ideally encompasses the development of cognitive, spiritual, moral, and emotional aspects to shape muttaqin individuals, especially in the context of Generation Z, who tend to rely more on social media than teacher guidance. This study aims to examine the role of Gus Miek in educating santri through an inclusive and contextual da'wah approach. The research employs a literature study method by analyzing secondary sources related to Gus Miek's thoughts and da'wah practices. The findings reveal that Gus Miek developed the concept of *jalan terabas*, a non-conventional da'wah approach that emphasizes empathy and openness, particularly for individuals engaged in deviant behavior. He conducted direct spiritual guidance in marginalized settings such as nightclubs and entertainment venues. His educational model is relevant to Generation Z, highlighting compassion, inclusiveness, and pressure-free learning. Gus Miek's contribution demonstrates that a humanistic religious approach can effectively engage youth segments and shape contextual religious character in modern times.

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## INTRODUCTION

Education should not only focus on cognitive development but also on the spiritual, moral, and emotional aspects of santri (Syarnubi Syarnubi, 2019). Although Islamic education has developed, many do not understand or practice Islamic educational values correctly. This leads to a moral and mental crisis, where many educated individuals fall into negative behavior. An educational system that pays less attention to character development and basic human values triggers various social problems such as addiction, brawls, and dropping out of school (Mulkhan, 2019).

Education should not only focus on knowledge and skills but also on instilling deep positive attitudes. To create pious individuals, Islamic education emphasizes the importance of forming Islamic character that leads to happiness in this world and the hereafter, and the pleasure of Allah. Islamic education is not just about transferring knowledge but also transferring values that can be applied in daily life (Lagulung, 2019). In the context of Generation Z, this approach is highly relevant, considering that santri need education that not only focuses on knowledge but also on character building that can guide santri towards a more meaningful life in accordance with Islamic values (Syarnubi, S., 2023).

Generation Z santri now often seek religious knowledge through social media, neglecting the role of teachers and books. This often leads them to understand religion in an extreme or secular

way, without sufficient guidance from experts. In the digital era, communication is mostly done through cyberspace, and students often trust information from social media more than from their teachers, which risks making them easily influenced by hoaxes and acting emotionally. Cases of violence, such as bullying and abuse among santri, have been rampant in various pesantren, worsening the educational atmosphere and adding challenges in forming the character of Generation Z santri.

The process of educating, each teacher, kyai, and ustad certainly has different methods and characteristics from one another, as done by K.H. Hamim Tohari Djazuli (hereinafter referred to as Gus Miek). The educational pattern developed with his tarekat has a unique method and is different from other figures. This method is his struggle with society, from educating santri, the general public, to "bromocorah" (perpetrators of immorality) in the glittering nightlife. Gus Miek guided and approached them because of his noble goal. Gus Miek realized that only a few preachers struggled to educate and guide people in immoral environments such as discotheques, localization areas, and other communities. With an approach that frees his followers and santri to follow him. Gus Miek, as one of the Islamic figures and mursyid tarekat, certainly has many roles in education with the methods and strategies he used that deserve in-depth study, especially for the learning of Generation Z.

## METHODS

This research uses the library research method as explained by Zed (Zed, 2020), which is the collection of data or information sourced from literature or library materials relevant to the research topic. The author collected data through the process of reading, taking notes, and examining various scientific books that discuss themes of Islamic education, the role of figures, and characteristics of Generation Z. Data analysis was conducted using descriptive analytical methods. According to Zed (Zed, 2020), this method is used to organize, process, and interpret existing data systematically and critically. Furthermore, as explained by Moleong (Moleong, 2019), this approach aims to describe the object of study comprehensively, systematically, and thoroughly. In this context, the author describes and explains Gus Miek's role in education, particularly his contribution to character formation of Generation Z santri through a unique and contextual approach to dakwah (Islamic preaching/outreach).

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

### A. Biography of K.H. Hamim Tohari Djazuli (Gus Miek)

K.H. Hamim Tohari Djazuli, better known as Gus Miek, was born on August 17, 1940. He was the son of KH. Jazuli Utsman, a Sufi scholar and founder of Pondok Pesantren Al Falah Mojo in Kediri. His father, whose childhood name was Mas'ud, was born on May 16, 1900, in Ploso, Kediri, into a family involved in Islamic religious affairs at the sub-district level. Mas'ud completed his education at junior high and high school levels in Kediri, then continued his studies at Stovia Medical School (now the Faculty of Medicine, UI) at the age of 16. However, for certain reasons, he eventually chose to leave the medical faculty and continue his education at a pesantren after receiving guidance from KH. Ma'ruf Kedunglo, who was known for his sainthood (Ruzasndy, 2017).

After studying at Pesantren Tebu Ireng, Mas'ud changed his name to Hamim Djazuli. In 1924, Hamim Djazuli returned to his hometown in Kediri to establish a pesantren with a santri and 12 people interested in attending his recitation. On January 1, 1925, the pesantren was officially named Pesantren Al Falah. Gus Miek's mother, Nyai Rodhiyah, was the third wife of KH. Djazuli. Nyai Rodhiyah, born Roro Marsinah, was a pious young widow and the daughter of KH. Mahyin. Previously, Roro Marsinah divorced her first husband, KH. Ihsan Jampes.

Gus Miek was known as a great scholar who had a unique way of preaching. He did not choose to only teach in pesantren but often went down to the streets and preached in places usually visited by people far from religion, such as discotheques and nightclubs. In fact, almost every night he walked along the streets of East Java, entered various entertainment venues, and

even chatted with pedicab drivers and coffee sellers on the roadside, just to give a little enlightenment. One of his famous teachings is "Suluk Jalan Terabas," which can be interpreted as a shortcut way of thinking (Ibad, 2019).

Once, Gus Miek entered a discotheque and saw visitors enjoying alcoholic beverages. Gus Miek approached a santri, took a bottle of alcohol, and put it in his mouth. One of the visitors who recognized him asked, "Gus, why are you drinking with us? Don't you know this drink is forbidden in religion?" Gus Miek calmly replied, "I'm not drinking it, I'm just throwing it into the sea!" The visitor was surprised because the santri clearly saw Gus Miek drinking the alcohol. Gus Miek then opened his mouth wide and said, "You don't believe I'm throwing it into the sea?" Unexpectedly, inside Gus Miek's mouth, a wavy ocean appeared, and sure enough, the alcoholic drink seemed to disappear into the sea. This incident shocked the santri, and finally, all the santri were given guidance by Allah to repent and stop drinking alcohol. This is one example of the *karomah* (miraculous power) of sainthood possessed by Gus Miek.

When walking or going out, Gus Miek often wore jeans and a T-shirt. He always wore sunglasses because he often cried when he saw someone whose "future" was bleak and unfortunate in the afterlife. When he was preaching in Semarang, precisely at NIAC in Tanjung Mas port (Ibad, 2019). NIAC was a gambling paradise for big bosses, both indigenous and Chinese. Gus Miek, with all his advantages, was able to win every game, causing the bosses to suffer huge losses. NIAC, which was originally a gambling paradise, became a terrifying hell.

Gus Miek was known for his controversial *da'wah* approach, often visiting nightclubs and talking to people trapped in immorality. In one story, he entered a nightclub and approached a waitress, blowing cigarette smoke into her face to scare the woman and make her leave the place (Ibad, 2019). Gus Miek explained that he did not see women as objects of lust but as ordinary human beings. Although many scholars condemned his actions, Gus Miek remained consistent with his *da'wah*, using different ways to bring enlightenment to those who needed it. As the son of a great scholar, Gus Miek entered a world full of controversy and bad habits, but he still believed that his *da'wah* method had a noble purpose despite receiving much criticism.

## B. Gus Miek's Concept of Education

Gus Miek's famous concept of education is contained in the teaching of "Jalan Terabas." "Jalan Terabas" is a shortcut or the closest path among many paths to achieve a goal. Meanwhile, "Suluk Jalan Terabas" is a framework of thinking developed by Gus Miek as a guide to determine steps in achieving a goal, by determining the fastest and most appropriate side to reach it. The "Jalan Terabas" framework practiced by Gus Miek according to his life journey is as follows;

### 1. Regarding self-preparation for life, struggle, and effort to become a great person

It cannot be denied that Gus Miek was born into a family that played an important role in religious traditions and scholarly thought. Therefore, as part of that family, there was an expectation that he would continue and maintain the greatness inherited. If not, from a social and cultural perspective, he risked being looked down upon or even considered a form of parental failure in educating and shaping the child's character according to family and societal expectations. Gus Miek's thoughts and steps were:

#### a. Gus Miek did not attend formal madrasah studies

Gus Miek did not attend formal madrasah studies, yet he mastered knowledge more deeply than many santri who followed structured education. With the "Jalan Terabas" approach, Gus Miek learned knowledge directly without being bound by curriculum or material hierarchy. As the son of a scholar, he chose not to associate too closely with other santri, avoiding comparisons in knowledge mastery, and maintaining harmonious relationships with teachers and fellow santri (Ibad, 2019).

#### b. Discovery of the existence of Prophet Khidzir and learning from him

The concept of "Jalan Terabas" in this context contains the understanding that individuals who are able to find and obtain direct guidance from Prophet Khidzir will master knowledge comprehensively, both through formal and non-formal learning

methods. This is due to the fact that such individuals receive a direct emanation of knowledge from Allah SWT, which transcends conventional boundaries in the process of knowledge transfer .

- c. Approaching and associating with revered and respected figures of that time

The content of "Jalan Terabas" carried out by Gus Miek includes two important aspects. First, he studied the steps taken by great figures in achieving glory and greatness. Second, in Islamic tradition, a person who is close to an individual who is respected or considered sacred will automatically gain a high and respected position, even recognized by their followers (Ibad, 2019).

- d. Visiting the graves of saints throughout Java

In Islamic tradition, the highest degree after a prophet is to become a wali (saint), which can be achieved through two scholarly views. Some scholars believe that becoming a wali is an absolute right of Allah that cannot be achieved through human effort, while others believe that anyone can achieve the degree of wali by fulfilling certain conditions. Visiting the graves of wali is considered a form of closeness to santri, because the soul of a wali is believed to remain alive. Gus Miek could feel this closeness and receive blessings from the wali who had reached such high degrees, as well as understand the journey taken to achieve sainthood (Ibad, 2019).

## 2. Regarding the world of santri or seekers of religious knowledge

Gus Miek, as a seeker of knowledge and a santri who inherited his father's greatness and would always be surrounded by santri, had planned and implemented strategic steps through the "Jalan Terabas" approach to achieve these goals as follows:

- a. Regarding intellectual ability

Knowledge is vast, so to achieve success, one needs to choose a branch of knowledge that suits one's abilities and character. Focusing on one field of knowledge will allow one to master knowledge more deeply. Gus Miek, although only completing the Alfiyah level, was still recognized for his knowledge and intelligence. For santri with limited intelligence, Gus Miek offered two choices: drawing closer to the teacher to get direct guidance or drawing closer to Allah through good deeds, because Allah is the source of all knowledge that can facilitate life's journey (Ibad, 2019).

- b. Regarding Time

A santri does not need to be bound by class schedules or believe that knowledge only comes from books taught in madrasahs. Life itself is an unlimited lecture, where theories created by humans are imperfect and can become obsolete when new ideas are discovered. Gus Miek considered studying irrelevant theories to be a waste of time, because beneficial knowledge always develops with time (Ibad, 2019).

## 3. Regarding the knowledge sought

In facing life, the "Jalan Terabas" that santri should take is to master knowledge according to their abilities so as not to waste energy, time, and thought. In addition, useful skills to meet life's needs are also important, because knowledge without sufficient livelihood can degrade dignity. If knowledge and skills are not enough to overcome problems, closeness to God through dhikr and wirid becomes an invaluable guide, because by drawing closer to Him, blessings will pour down from heaven and earth (Ibad, 2019).

## 4. Regarding guiding the Muslim Ummah

Gus Miek prepared himself to be a guide by learning from renowned figures, realizing the importance of background as a means to gain blessings and provide perfect service to the ummah. In choosing the ummah, Gus Miek often associated with various groups, from homeless people to coffee sellers, to understand the character of santri and determine the right way to convey the truth. With a different approach, he succeeded in

changing the lives of people who were previously immersed in sin into obedient individuals. Gus Miek also understood that giving and receiving attention was a way to build closeness with the ummah, both materially and spiritually. His da'wah method touched all aspects of life, making followers feel cared for and encouraged to follow his teachings. To attract the ummah, Gus Miek sold dreams that they wanted to achieve together, creating a spirit of togetherness in the struggle. He never considered himself a kyai, but rather as someone ready to be called to carry out Allah's task by accompanying the ummah in pursuing their dreams together.

### 5. Regarding Immorality

Gus Miek, in his efforts to spread the truth, often entered the world of immorality such as gambling, discotheques, and prostitution, to understand the various characters and sources of such immorality. With a deep approach, Gus Miek believed that to prevent immorality, it was important to know the perpetrators and their backgrounds. He not only conveyed prevention from the outside but also from within, by approaching santri personally. Gus Miek succeeded in changing the world of gambling by winning games and making bookies run out of money, which eventually made santri interested in approaching him and accepting his teachings of goodness. His approach was also effective with female entertainers, giving gifts and building psychological communication, until finally the santri stopped their immoral acts. Gus Miek avoided destroying the sources of immorality directly, realizing that in that world there were still good people who depended on it. Gus Miek received extraordinary support from the santri he met in the nightlife for his struggle to create great works for the ummah (Ibad, 2019).

Gus Miek's concept of education focuses on the "Jalan Terabas" approach, which allows one to achieve goals quickly and precisely. Gus Miek emphasizes the importance of choosing knowledge that suits one's abilities, drawing closer to teachers and Allah, and understanding the world in a broader way. He also believes in guiding the ummah by delving into the character of santri and overcoming immorality through direct approaches. His da'wah method touches all aspects of the ummah's life to achieve happiness in this world and the hereafter.

## C. Gus Miek's Role in Education and its Relevance for Generation Z

Gus Miek, as a scholar and preacher born into a large family with strong religious traditions, played an important role in the world of education. With an unconventional approach, he introduced the concept of "Jalan Terabas" as a way to achieve life goals more quickly and effectively. For Gus Miek, education was not just about theories taught in madrasahs, but also about how to understand life deeply, draw closer to Allah, and master knowledge in a way that suits individual character and abilities. Through wise steps, Gus Miek made a great contribution to the development of education and da'wah, not only in terms of understanding religious knowledge but also in applying life values that can shape the character of the ummah. Some of Gus Miek's roles in education include:

### 1. Gus Miek's Role in Building Character Education

Character education according to Lickona (2014) is a serious effort to help individuals understand, care for, and act based on ethical values. One value that supports character education in Indonesia is social care, which includes attitudes and actions to help others and communities in need. This value originates from religion, Pancasila, culture, and the national education goals (Lickona, 2014).

Islamic education according to Daradjat (2020) aims to form Muslim individuals who are in accordance with Islamic teachings, namely worshipping Allah, being gentle, and respecting others. Its main goal is to create "insan kamil," which is a perfect human being in all aspects of life (Daradjat, 2020).

Daradjat (2020) divides the goals of Islamic education into four categories. General goals include all aspects of humanity, such as attitudes, behavior, habits, and worldview.

The ultimate goal is the realization of "insan kamil," a perfect human being. Temporary goals are achieved after students gain experience according to the education curriculum. Operational goals are practical results obtained through specific educational activities designed to achieve desired outcomes (Daradjat, 2020). From these four goals of Islamic education, the value of character education can be seen from the concept developed in his "Jalan Terabas" thinking:

a. Becoming a santri and understanding the character of santri

Gus Miek, as a santri and heir to his father's greatness, realized the importance of understanding the character of santri because his life would always be surrounded by santri. He formulated steps relevant to the goals of Islamic education, which include understanding intellectual abilities, the importance of time in the learning process, and focusing on knowledge that suits one's abilities and skills needed for life. Gus Miek emphasized the importance of being honest in recognizing one's potential and developing talents to become professional in a certain field, by mastering one science deeply rather than spreading to many fields that are not mastered well (Ibad, 2019).

In the dzikrul ghafilin recitation, Gus Miek taught tolerance towards other tarekats, prioritizing unity of the ummah and abandoning fanaticism. He emphasized the importance of a practical and amal-based approach, not just theory. In the context of globalization, Gus Miek reminded kyai and ulama to focus on the humanitarian task of santri as Allah's caliph, prioritizing human rights and obligations in carrying out their mission, not just their kyai status. His teachings taught that being a guide must be able to integrate knowledge and amal in daily life (Ibad, 2019).

Gus Miek's teachings are very suitable for character education for Generation Z, emphasizing religious moderation and inclusivity. In this context, Islamic education that prioritizes respect for differences and interfaith dialogue can help shape tolerant attitudes in young generations (Hamzah, Muhamad, Nuruddin, Muhammad Mamduh, & Budiman, 2025). Gus Miek taught the importance of ummah unity through an approach that involves cross-tarekat discussions and themes of harmony. To accommodate Generation Z who grew up with technology, moderate da'wah can be delivered through digital platforms such as videos, infographics, and podcasts. The active role of teachers and kyai as guides in creating this content is very important to ensure that pesantren values are maintained.

Islamic character education for Generation Z needs to involve a more practical and contextual approach, such as direct learning that allows santri to understand values and knowledge through real experiences. Gus Miek can develop practical methods, such as zakat simulations, muamalah practices, or time management to teach morals and life skills (Isgandi, 2022). In addition, the ta'zir tradition remains relevant, by providing evaluations or advice that encourage discipline and responsibility. A light ta'zir model, such as reflection after prayer or a weekly journal, can be an effective way for character building and spiritual evaluation (Sholikhah, I'annatus & Kurniawan, 2025).

Gus Miek emphasized the importance of recognizing one's potential and focusing on mastering one field of knowledge deeply, rather than spreading to many fields that are only superficially known. Santri need to be given an initial assessment to know their strengths and be directed to deepen certain fields according to the needs of the times. In addition, it is important to build synergy between family, pesantren, and the community in forming the character of santri (Mutiarra, Lokhananta, Japar, Muhammad, Silvana, 2025). Communication forums such as parent WhatsApp groups can be a means of spiritual guidance, while social activities such as community visits help instill humanitarian values directly.

Gus Miek's teachings on tolerance and respect for differences are increasingly relevant in facing the challenges of globalization and pluralism. Based on the values of the Qur'an, Gus Miek can strengthen the character of young generations through

thematic studies that emphasize tolerance and justice (Aini, Fadhilah, & Husna, 2025). In the dzikrul ghafilin recitation, he not only focused on dhikr but also encouraged inter-tarekat dialogue and cross-cultural interaction, which proved effective in forming moderate religious attitudes in Generation Z (Suntara, Reza Adriantika, Zahri, Tsulis Amiruddin, Tohari, Mustofa, Hijran, Muhamad, Rozani, Muhammad, 2024). This approach prioritizes social interaction-based learning that is relevant to the needs of the times.

b. Guiding the Ummah

Gus Miek, in guiding the ummah, took three important steps. First, preparing himself by mastering religious knowledge deeply and learning from great people. Second, choosing the ummah to be guided, mostly santri who were trapped in immorality, by approaching them in places of immorality. Third, establishing a reciprocal relationship, where Gus Miek was always ready to give to his ummah, both material and non-material, and appreciated their giving to maintain a good relationship. These steps are in line with the goals of Islamic education that emphasize character development and harmonious relationships (Ibad, 2019).

Gus Miek, in his spiritual and social guidance methods, took three important steps that are highly relevant to be applied in education for Generation Z. First, Gus Miek emphasized the importance of preparing oneself by studying religious knowledge deeply and learning from great scholars, which is in line with the classical view that knowledge should be applied in real actions (Stimpson, 2021). For Generation Z, who prioritize authenticity and relevance, this approach can be translated into practical learning, such as real case discussions, deliberations, and in-depth study with mentors who have direct experience, not just theory. This forms character and Islamic competence that is more applicable and beneficial in daily life.

Gus Miek's second step was to approach marginalized people, by visiting places considered problematic to help santri return to the right path. This approach is relevant to the education of Generation Z, who often face social pressure and identity crises. Programs such as spiritual counseling in schools, peer support groups, and digital mentoring through social media can be effective ways to overcome these problems, by prioritizing empathy and an approach that suits the context of the times.

Gus Miek's third step was to create a reciprocal relationship with his ummah, which strengthened mutual respect and cooperation. This approach reflects the value of mutual help in Islam, which can be applied in Generation Z education through peer mentoring programs, where senior santri voluntarily guide junior santri, and through co-creation programs where students actively participate in designing digital da'wah content, learning modules, or social activities. On the other hand, non-material rewards such as public appreciation, special access to activities, or roles in the community can be given to santri who show active contributions. This is in line with findings in the interfaith harmony forum of pesantren in Jombang which showed that mutual respect and reciprocal relationships between teachers and students strengthen the sustainability of Islamic values in the community (Abidin, Achmad Anwar, Fatawi, Izzul & Kausar, 2025).

The three processes above can be designed in a modern Islamic education curriculum in three phases. The first phase focuses on preparation, namely training mentors with an understanding of classical Islamic theory and leadership practices. Santri are also given in-depth learning in one specific field of knowledge, such as tafsir or digital literacy. The second phase involves outreach and mentoring, where spiritual consultation rooms are formed in schools and campuses, and santri are involved in social dialogue outside the pesantren. The third phase is the formation of reciprocal relationships between teachers and students through collaboration in the creation of

da'wah content and intergenerational mentoring. With this approach, Generation Z not only gains knowledge but also develops as empathetic, active individuals who are ready to be agents of change based on moderate and humanistic Islamic values (Qadafi, Muammar, Sidik, 2024).

c. Fighting Immorality

Gus Miek applied three steps in overcoming immorality. First, he delved into the world of immorality by directly going to places like gambling dens and discotheques to understand the situation and existing problems. Second, he approached the perpetrators of immorality to more easily guide santri towards repentance. Third, he focused on destroying the sources of immorality, both from the outside by closing down immoral places and from within by changing the behavior of the perpetrators. Gus Miek preferred to guide the perpetrators of immorality from within, changing santri through direct approaches and guidance towards goodness. These steps are in line with the goals of Islamic education in forming the character and morality of the ummah (Ibad, 2019).

Gus Miek is known for his very distinctive and transformative approach to dealing with immorality, which can be effectively adapted into the learning system for Generation Z. Gus Miek's first step was to apply a unique approach by directly immersing himself in the world of immorality to understand social and spiritual problems deeply. He visited places like gambling dens and discotheques to observe, not to judge. This approach prioritizes direct experience as the primary way of learning, which is effective in changing behavior through empathy and interaction. Gus Miek's approach of delving into the world of immorality can be applied to Generation Z through programs that involve santri in direct interaction with vulnerable youth communities, such as in online gaming spaces or digital discussions. After this experience, santri or students can discuss with mentors to reflect on what they encountered and design appropriate guidance strategies (Chan, 2021). This approach helps increase empathy, deepen understanding, and hone the social and spiritual skills of santri.

Gus Miek's second step, which is to approach perpetrators of immorality by building personal relationships, can be applied in Generation Z education through peer support groups. These groups are led by santri or trained santri in counseling, providing a space for teenagers to share problems and receive spiritual guidance. In addition, digital mentoring can also be optimized to reach teenagers who prefer to interact online, so that santri can still get personal spiritual guidance without having to be physically present in places of worship or educational institutions (Insyiraah, Noor, Bakar, Abu, Zalli, Mohd Muslim, Suppian, Zahari, Azlina Abu Faridah Yahya, 2024).

Gus Miek's third step is to destroy the sources of immorality, both by closing down immoral places and by changing the behavior of the perpetrators. He focuses on the internal transformation of individuals, helping santri improve their morals and character through an approach that involves spiritual, psychological, and medical aspects. This approach is effective in guiding character change, especially when supported by consistent guidance from a kyai or spiritual teacher. The consistent involvement of a kyai or spiritual teacher in guiding the transformation process is very effective in rebuilding the morals and character of teenagers (Nelson, Nelson, Indrawari, Karlana, Koriatul Sadea, 2024). This method can be applied to Generation Z through collaboration between schools, pesantren, and community organizations to limit teenagers' access to immoral spaces, including regulating internet use and harmful entertainment content. In addition, social project-based programs such as adventure therapy and positive youth development can divert teenagers' attention from negative activities to activities that develop character, leadership, and social awareness.



These three steps of Gus Miek—delving into the world of immorality, approaching perpetrators personally, and destroying the sources of immorality—are not only da'wah strategies but can also be developed into a model of character education based on social and spiritual reality that is very suitable for Generation Z. This model is also supported by various contemporary Islamic education studies and practices that prioritize experience, emotional involvement, and systemic transformation.

d. Determining a livelihood (job) to meet life's needs

Gus Miek taught the ummah to determine a livelihood that could meet their needs wisely. First, he emphasized the importance of understanding the level of need so as not to fall into greed, which would only bring suffering. Second, after determining a business, one must focus and avoid actions that would damage the course of the business. Third, Gus Miek advised that wealth obtained should be used wisely, both for personal needs and for charity and perpetual endowments. This approach is in line with the goals of Islamic education that emphasize balance and virtue in life (Ibad, 2019).

Gus Miek's teachings on wise business and balanced use of wealth are highly relevant to be applied in Generation Z learning, especially in forming an economic character that is in line with Islamic values. The first step that must be taken is to understand the level of need proportionally, without falling into greed that only brings suffering (Zusryn, Alyta Shabrina, Muhammad Rofi'i, Gani, 2021). This is relevant to efforts to increase Islamic financial literacy among teenagers, which is now implemented through various educational activities, such as workshops and financial management simulations. With this approach, young generations are invited to distinguish true needs from consumptive desires, while fostering awareness of the importance of financial management in accordance with Islamic principles.

Gus Miek's second step teaches the importance of staying focused on the chosen business and avoiding things that can damage the business journey, such as wastefulness or dependence. In the context of Generation Z, this approach can be applied through entrepreneurship education that emphasizes planned business management, capital management, and risk evaluation. Santri are invited to understand the importance of consistency and responsibility in running a business, and how to avoid habits that harm their business (Sukardin, 2024).

Gus Miek emphasized the importance of using wealth wisely, not only for personal needs but also for social and spiritual purposes, such as charity and perpetual endowments. This teaching is relevant for building social awareness in young generations. In education, santri can be involved in social programs, such as setting aside a portion of micro-business profits for charitable activities. After that, reflection sessions can be held to discuss the positive impact of these actions, so that santri understand that wealth is a trust that must be used wisely.

The integration of the values above shows that learning is not only academic but also educates santri and young generations to become financially responsible, socially caring, and spiritually grounded individuals as exemplified by Gus Miek in his life and teachings.

Gus Miek's concept of education is highly relevant to the goals of Islamic education, as it focuses on guiding the ummah to become better individuals. Gus Miek taught values that may not be found in formal education, but still provided an example despite often being in places considered sources of immorality. The goal of Islamic education is to realize "insan kamil," which is a human being who develops holistically, including intellectually, spiritually, with common sense, and so on, even if it does not mean without mistakes (Nata, 2019). "Insan kamil" refers to a human being who has a healthy spiritual balance, is able to function well in his relationship with Allah and other

creatures, and acts in accordance with Islamic morals. Such a human being is expected to achieve spiritual salvation (Nata, 2019).

Building an environment that supports educational goals, especially for Generation Z, is very important. Gus Miek created synergy between pesantren, family, and society in supporting the educational process. A bad environment can hinder the achievement of educational goals and damage the character of the santri being formed.

## 2. Gus Miek's Role in Liberating Learning

Gus Miek used a unique approach in guiding the ummah, including santri involved in the nightlife. He did not judge, but chose to approach with empathy, such as associating without forcing change, only by giving examples and positive guidance (Ibad, 2018). This method proved effective, especially among santri who were difficult to reach with harsh approaches. Gus Miek showed that religious understanding can be conveyed in a more humane and loving way, creating change without violence.

Gus Miek taught that the path to God is very diverse, and there is a faster way through direct approach to people close to Allah. He believed that by approaching Allah's saints, one could feel closer to God more quickly (Ibad, 2011). Gus Miek also used exemplary methods and other approaches to invite his ummah to draw closer to Allah without coercion. This approach is very suitable for various segments of society, as it prioritizes freedom in worship and understanding religion.

Various methods used by Gus Miek illustrate liberating learning:

### a. Exemplary Method

Gus Miek emphasized that parents must be good role models for their children, as example is more influential than mere words. Parents must be ready to be imitated in worship and behavior, so that children grow up with strong principles and are not easily influenced. Gus Miek believed that children's education greatly depends on the example given by parents in daily life. In addition, in an organizational context, leaders must also be role models in maintaining the integrity and progress of the organization. Exemplary real behavior is key to guiding the ummah or organization members towards goodness and success (Ibad, 2019).

Gus Miek applied exemplary education by selecting appropriate figures as administrators of the Dzikrul Ghofilin and Jantiko Mantab organizations, who were not only influential but also good examples for the congregation. He emphasized the importance of the administrators' attitudes and words being in line with the values taught. Gus Miek was able to adapt to various groups, both within the pesantren environment and in worlds considered contradictory, such as nightclubs. He used a non-coercive approach, but by being a friend and giving direct examples (Ibad, 2018). In guiding the congregation, Gus Miek introduced a more independent way, such as when visiting the graves of saints, where the most important thing was the intention and courage to draw closer to Allah, not appearance or strict rules.

### b. Habituation Method

Gus Miek taught the importance of habituation in educating children, especially through the habit of listening to the Qur'an (sema'an). He encouraged families to involve children in sema'an activities so that santri would be accustomed to goodness from an early age, which would influence their behavior into adulthood. This habituation helps children develop discipline, patience, and other positive values in their lives. Gus Miek applied it in the dzikrul ghofilin event, where sema'an Al-Qur'an was performed daily between Fajr and Maghrib prayers with his congregation, forming a continuous habit.

Gus Miek always encouraged his children to get used to attending sema'an Al-Qur'an events, because he believed that listening to the recitation of the Qur'an has many benefits and wisdom. Even amidst rapid technological advancements and the digital

world, sema'an and dzikrul ghofilin events still attract many parents to bring their children. Gus Miek succeeded in creating effective habits to reduce children's dependence on the digital world. He was also proud to be the first to introduce the meaning and benefits of sema'an Al-Qur'an to children, which is still believed to bring blessings (Fuadi, F., Ibrahim, D., & Erlina, 2020).

Gus Miek emphasized the importance of educating his children by making them understand the greatness of the Qur'an, especially in this modern era. He taught that by drawing closer to the Qur'an, we will feel blessings and love from Allah. The Qur'an is not only a guide for life but also a source of goodness that leads us to the right path. Gus Miek believed that regularly listening to the recitation of the Qur'an (sema'an) can bring light to our lives, both in our attitudes and daily lives. In this way, Gus Miek tried to instill positive habits in his family and community, which are expected to lead them to a straight and blessed path (Fuadi, F., Ibrahim, D., & Erlina, 2020).

c. Amsal or Parable Method

Gus Miek used the amsal or parable method, which was easily understood by various segments of society. In recitations or casual conversations, he often conveyed messages with parables that were close to daily life. One of them was the parable of visiting graves, where he reminded that worldly life requires expenses, as does life after death, which requires many good deeds, especially correct worship. For this, it is important to gain knowledge by attending recitations. Gus Miek linked worldly success with success in the afterlife, where a person who builds a magnificent life in this world must also prepare a magnificent "building" in the afterlife (Ibad, 2019).

Gus Miek's approach invites us to reflect on the balance between worldly life and the afterlife. Like the prayer after salat, we are asked to strive as best as possible in living this worldly life, while preparing provisions for eternal life in the afterlife. His concept reminds us that although the world is temporary, the effort to prepare for the eternal afterlife is far more important and must be done with full earnestness.

Gus Miek's da'wah approach, full of empathy and non-violence, proved effective in reaching groups difficult to touch by conventional approaches, including santri in the nightlife. He chose not to judge, but to build closeness through sincere association and example. This approach is in line with the principles of positive psychology interventions in an Islamic context, where warm relationships and spiritual activities such as dhikr can increase emotional well-being and spiritual connection. In the context of learning for Generation Z, this can be adapted through a relaxed but meaningful mentoring model, such as a "mentor for youth" program that facilitates senior santri or spiritual mentors to interact directly with santri through community activities or digital platforms that santri enjoy.

In addition, Gus Miek emphasized the importance of drawing closer to pious people or saints as a quick spiritual path to closeness with Allah. This exemplary approach is highly relevant in Generation Z education, who are more easily influenced by inspiring figures than by authoritative approaches (An, 2024). Activities such as involvement in social actions guided by charismatic figures or pesantren alumni can be a means of instilling religious values naturally. Gus Miek also encouraged liberating learning, where santri are given space to draw closer to God in a way that suits their soul, such as through pilgrimage or delving into the stories of saints. This is in line with the storytelling method that has proven effective in building moral and spiritual understanding of santri, especially Generation Z who respond well to real-life narratives that touch emotional aspects. This approach does not force, but rather forms spiritual awareness that grows from experience and example.

Gus Miek's teachings on exemplary behavior, the habituation of Qur'an recitation (sema'an), and the use of parables are highly relevant in Generation Z education. The exemplary behavior shown by parents, teachers, or organizational leaders has a much stronger impact than mere words. Direct role modeling is effective in forming children's

religious values. Worship attitudes, discipline, and care exemplified directly will be more easily imitated by young generations (Selvi, Issaura Dwi, Siregar, Maragustam, n.d.).

The habituation of Qur'an recitation (sema'an), as applied by Gus Miek in the dzikirul ghaflin tradition, forms a grounded spiritual discipline. In the school environment, daily morning sema'an activities have been proven to increase students' mental readiness, as shown by research that noted a 55.6% increase in learning readiness after the habituation of reading the Qur'an. In fact, a study in Surabaya showed that early childhood children who regularly memorized short surahs experienced a significant increase in discipline and responsibility (Sandy, Muhammad Kurnia, Suresman, Edi, Jenuri, Zaman, 2024).

Meanwhile, the parable method used by Gus Miek, such as the analogy between worldly life and the afterlife, proved effective in conveying moral values emotionally and meaningfully. Generation Z, who tend to be responsive to narratives, will more easily understand spiritual concepts through stories. This is in line with findings in early childhood learning, where storytelling has been proven to strengthen moral and religious understanding.

Its practical implementation can be applied in various contexts: in schools, teachers start the day with sema'an and become real examples in worship; at home, parents invite children to reflect on one verse every morning; in youth organizations, leaders become role models in attitude and convey motivation through meaningful stories. Gus Miek's approach proves that character and spirituality education can be instilled in a simple, consistent, and touching way.

## CONCLUSION

Gus Miek developed a distinctive da'wah approach through the concept of "jalan terabas," a strategy of education and spiritual guidance that directly addresses the root causes of problems in the ummah, especially those trapped in the world of immorality. With an inclusive, empathetic, and non-judgmental method, Gus Miek successfully formed a strong religious awareness without violence. This approach is highly relevant to be applied in the education of Generation Z, who tend to be critical, need exemplary figures, and require liberating and emotionally meaningful learning. Gus Miek's concept of education also reinforces the importance of exemplary behavior, positive habituation, and the use of narratives in character building. These findings contribute to the development of an Islamic education model based on social and spiritual reality, and open opportunities for further research related to the effectiveness of transformative da'wah approaches in shaping the character of young generations in the digital era.

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