

Beyond Competency: Holistic Talent Matching of Generation Z from the Perspective of Islamic Educational Human Resource Management

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ABSTRACT

The shifting characteristics of Generation Z in the digital era have introduced new challenges for recruitment and human resource management within Islamic educational institutions, including madrasas, Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren*), and Islamic universities. Many of these institutions continue to rely on conventional recruitment approaches focused narrowly on technical competencies, often overlooking alignment in character, spiritual motivation, and Islamic organizational culture. This study aims to analyze the causes of mismatch between Generation Z and Islamic educational organizations while exploring the concept of Holistic Talent Matching as an alternative approach to organizational fit grounded in Islamic educational management values. A qualitative library research method was employed, drawing on literature published between 2019 and 2026. Data analysis proceeded through reduction, thematic categorization, conceptual interpretation, and synthesis, integrating Islamic values into the Holistic Talent Matching framework. The findings reveal that organizational mismatch stems not merely from technical skill gaps but more significantly from misalignment in Islamic values, workplace culture, worship-oriented motivation, and perceptions of meaningful work. Six dimensions of organizational fit were identified: competency fit, character fit (morality and trustworthiness), motivational fit (sincere intention for worship), cultural fit (Islamic organizational culture), adaptive fit, and purpose fit (worldly-otherworldly balance). This study offers Holistic Talent Matching as a more humanistic, adaptive, and sustainable alternative that shifts the recruitment paradigm from competency-based selection toward a human compatibility approach rooted in Islamic values.

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1. Introduction

The digital-era transformation of the workplace has introduced new challenges for human resource management, particularly in Islamic Educational Management (IEM), as Generation Z begins to dominate the global labour market, including the education sector (Barhate & Dirani, 2022). Generation Z, defined as those born between 1997 and 2012, grew up amid rapid advances in digital technology, social media, and fast-paced communication, resulting in distinct characteristics compared with previous generations (Chillakuri, 2020). They are generally more flexible, more adaptable, and hold more complex expectations regarding the organizations they join, including Islamic educational institutions such as madrasas, pesantren, and Islamic universities (Benítez-Márquez et al., 2022; UIN Mataram, 2026).

Data indicate that approximately 89% of Generation Z individuals prefer employment that offers meaning and social impact over purely financial rewards (UIN Mataram, 2026). Beyond monetary considerations, they actively evaluate organizational culture, work-life balance, and meaningful work aligned with Islamic values (Pichler et al., 2021). Conversely, many Islamic educational institutions still rely on conventional hiring practices that emphasize technical qualifications and formal experience while neglecting the alignment of character, worship-driven motivation, and Islamic organizational culture (Wulandari & Mubarak, 2021; Waldan et al., 2025). This divergence has created a persistent mismatch between the characteristics of Gen Z job seekers and the actual demands of modern Islamic educational institutions (Rani et al., 2022).

The growing incompatibility between Islamic educational institutions and Generation Z suggests that modern recruitment processes require a far more comprehensive approach than merely assessing technical competence (Vieira et al., 2024). Today's Islamic educational institutions need human resources who possess not only pedagogical hard skills but also Islamic character (morality, trustworthiness, and integrity), a work motivation rooted in worship, adaptability, and alignment with Islamic organizational culture (Kulkarni & Rai, 2023). This need is critical because the success of Islamic education depends not solely on teachers' competencies but also on the spiritual and social dimensions of individuals within the educational environment (Wulandari & Mubarak, 2021; Wibowo et al., 2025).

Islamic Work Ethics (IWE), characterized by behaviours such as diligence, responsibility, altruism, and the intention to perform work as an act of worship seeking divine blessing, serves as an important antecedent for improving educator performance (Wulandari & Mubarak, 2021; Rokhman et al., 2021). Research by Wulandari and Mubarak (2021) demonstrates that person-organization fit has the strongest effect on fostering innovation in learning activities, acting as a partial mediator between Islamic work ethics and lecturer performance. This finding underscores that value alignment between individuals and their organizations is critically important within Islamic education contexts (Fatima & Srivastava, 2024).

The urgency of this research has grown alongside rising rates of turnover, quiet quitting, and low work loyalty among Generation Z across various Islamic educational institutions (Novanantha & Febriansyah, 2025). Many madrasas and pesantren struggle to retain young teachers due to workplace culture mismatches and weak emotional and spiritual bonds with the organization (Cubukcu Cerasi & Balcioğlu, 2024). At the same time, Muslim members of Generation Z experience psychological pressure when their workplace fails to align with their expectations regarding flexibility, work-life balance, and an otherworldly orientation toward meaningful work (Syafani et al., 2025). These challenges

are compounded by the fact that about 20.31% of young people fall into the NEET (Not in Education, Employment, or Training) category (UIN Mataram, 2026).

Based on these phenomena, this study seeks to answer three key questions: (1) Why does incompatibility arise between Generation Z and Islamic educational institutions in the modern workplace? (2) What non-technical factors influence organizational fit from the perspective of IEM? (3) How can the Holistic Talent Matching approach serve as a solution for building compatibility between individuals and Islamic educational organizations?

The objectives of this research are to analyze the problem of mismatch between Generation Z and Islamic educational institutions and to explore Holistic Talent Matching as an alternative approach for recruitment and human resource management within Islamic education. Additionally, this study identifies non-technical factors that influence individual–organization compatibility, including Islamic character, worship-based motivation, Islamic workplace culture, and a balanced orientation toward worldly and otherworldly goals.

2. Method

This study employed a qualitative approach using library research to investigate the phenomenon of incompatibility between Generation Z and Islamic educational institutions through the lens of Islamic Educational Human Resource Management (Snyder, 2019). The qualitative design was chosen because it allows for an in-depth understanding of organizational fit dynamics, the characteristics of Muslim Generation Z individuals, and the importance of a holistic, Islamically grounded approach to talent matching in Islamic educational settings (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Data sources consisted of national and international scholarly articles published between 2019 and 2026, including those from accredited journals in the field of Islamic Educational Management. Articles were selected based on thematic relevance to Generation Z, organizational fit, talent management, Islamic educational HRM, Islamic values in recruitment, Islamic work ethics, and holistic approaches to managing human resources in Islamic educational institutions (Wulandari & Mubarak, 2021; Mauludya, 2025; Waldan et al., 2025; Jannah et al., 2025). Literature searches were conducted using indexed academic databases such as Garuda (Ministry of Education and Culture), DOAJ, Scopus, Google Scholar, and SINTA-accredited journals.

Data analysis proceeded through several stages: data reduction, thematic categorization, conceptual interpretation, and literature synthesis. Throughout this process, Islamic values, including *amanah* (trustworthiness), *'adalah* (justice), *syura* (consultation), and *tawazun* (balance), were integrated into the dimensions of Holistic Talent Matching (Wulandari & Mubarak, 2021; Mauludya, 2025; Rokhman et al., 2021). To enhance conceptual validity, a comparative literature analysis approach was employed, comparing various previous studies on organizational fit and talent management for Generation Z within the specific context of Islamic education (Waldan et al., 2025; Jannah et al., 2025; Lestari & Perdhana, 2024).

3. Findings and Discussion

Findings

3.1 Characteristics of Generation Z

Literature analysis reveals that Generation Z (born 1997–2012) represents the largest cohort in history, with over one billion young people expected to enter the workforce by 2030 (World Economic Forum, 2025). In Indonesia, Generation Z constitutes

approximately 28% of the population, numbering around 74.9 million individuals (UIN Mataram, 2026). They are digital natives who place technology at the centre of their daily activities, from learning to social interaction (Barhate & Dirani, 2022). Significant value shifts were identified among Generation Z:

- a. About 89% prefer jobs that offer meaning and social impact over purely financial compensation (UIN Mataram, 2026).
- b. They actively seek meaningful work, flexibility, work-life balance, and environments that support personal growth (Chillakuri, 2020).
- c. Generation Z holds more complex expectations of organizations, including Islamic educational institutions (Benítez-Márquez et al., 2022).

3.2 The Problem of Organizational Mismatch in Islamic Educational Institutions

The analysis demonstrates that the primary problems in the relationship between Generation Z and Islamic educational institutions stem not only from weak pedagogical competence but also from misalignment in Islamic values, workplace culture, worship motivation, and mutual expectations (Fadilah & Putranto, 2023).

Table 1. Organizational Mismatch Problems in Islamic Educational Institutions

Aspect	Perspective of Islamic Educational Institution	Perspective of Muslim Generation Z	Consequence
Competence	Focus on certification & teaching experience	Desire for self-development & spiritual mentorship	Expectation mismatch
Workplace Culture	Hierarchical & traditional structure	Flexible, collaborative & open to innovation	Low organizational fit
Work Motivation	Productivity & academic target achievement	Meaningful work as worship & work-life balance	High turnover
Islamic Values	Religious formalities (obligatory rituals)	Spiritual depth & flexibility in worship	Gap in interpreting Islamic values
Loyalty	Long-term loyalty to the institution	Career flexibility & vocational calling	Quiet quitting

Source: Synthesized from Benítez-Márquez et al. (2022); Wulandari & Mubarak (2021); UIN Mataram (2026); Chillakuri (2020)

3.3 Dimensions of Holistic Talent Matching

The findings indicate that organizational fit for Generation Z within Islamic educational institutions is shaped by six multidimensional components integrated with Islamic values, as presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Dimensions of Holistic Talent Matching in the IEM Perspective

Dimension	Description	Indicators	Islamic Value
<i>Competency Fit</i>	Alignment of technical teaching abilities	Pedagogy, professionalism, experience	<i>Itqan</i> (excellence)

<i>Character Fit</i>	Alignment of individual character with Islamic values	Integrity, trustworthiness, honesty, discipline, responsibility	<i>Amanah, Siddiq</i> (truthfulness)
<i>Motivational Fit</i>	Alignment of work motivation as worship	Sincere intention, seeking Allah's pleasure, meaningful work	<i>Ikhlās</i> (sincerity)
<i>Cultural Fit</i>	Alignment with Islamic organizational culture	Teamwork, brotherhood, humility, consistency	<i>Ukhuwah Islamiyah</i>
<i>Adaptive Fit</i>	Ability to adapt to change	Flexibility, digital adaptability, innovation	<i>Ijtihad</i> (independent reasoning)
<i>Purpose Fit</i>	Alignment of balanced life purpose	Worldly-otherworldly balance, value alignment	<i>Tawāzun</i> (balance)

Source: Synthesized from Wulandari & Mubarak (2021); Mauludya (2025); Jannah et al. (2025); Waldan et al. (2025); Chillakuri (2020); UIN Mataram (2026))

3.4 Comparison of Recruitment Approaches

Table 3 presents fundamental differences between conventional recruitment methods and the proposed Holistic Talent Matching approach.

Table 3. Comparison of HR Recruitment Approaches in Islamic Educational Institutions

Conventional Approach	<i>Holistic Talent Matching in IEM</i>
Focus on pedagogical technical competence	Focus on multidimensional human aspects (academic, spiritual, social)
Based on diplomas & formal certification	Based on the compatibility of values & Islamic character
Assesses teaching hard skills	Assesses skills, morality, worship motivation & Islamic culture
Recruitment-oriented (filling positions)	Human-centered recruitment grounded in <i>tawhid</i> (monotheism)
Short-term orientation	Sustainable & blessed working relationships

Source: Synthesized from World Economic Forum (2025); Mauludya (2025); Wulandari & Mubarak (2021); Vieira et al. (2024)

3.5 Implementation Strategies for Holistic Talent Matching

Five key strategies for implementing Holistic Talent Matching in Islamic educational institutions were identified (Atkinson, 2025):

- Capability Mapping: Mapping existing roles based not only on job titles but also on current and future needs.

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- b. Shared Capability Framework: Creating a common language to compare roles and identify gaps.
 - c. Clear Learning Pathways: Providing structured and transparent career maps.
 - d. Career Map Visibility and Accessibility: Ensuring all employees can access career pathways.
 - e. Integration of Islamic Values at Every Stage: Explicitly embedding Islamic values throughout recruitment and HR development processes.

Discussion

Characteristics of Generation Z and Their Implications for Islamic Educational Institutions

The finding that Generation Z is digital-native and seeks meaningful work aligns with Barhate and Dirani (2022), who assert that Generation Z holds unique career aspirations distinct from earlier generations. Within Islamic education, a holistic HR development approach is particularly relevant because Islamic education conceptualizes humans as *'abdullah* (servants of Allah) and *khalifah* (vicegerents on earth), implemented through three primary approaches: *at-ta'dib* (character cultivation), *at-ta'lim* (knowledge transmission), and *at-tarbiyah* (potential nurturing) (Mauludya, 2025).

This framework resonates with Generation Z's desire for balance between professional growth and spiritual fulfilment (Rokhman et al., 2021). Islamic educational institutions that successfully integrate spiritual values into their workplace culture will find it easier to attract and retain Muslim Generation Z talent (Pichler et al., 2021).

Organizational Mismatch in Islamic Educational Institutions

The findings regarding organizational mismatch confirm that the gap between Islamic educational institutions and Generation Z is not solely a matter of competence. Wulandari and Mubarak (2021) revealed that Islamic work ethics characterized by hard work, responsibility, altruism, and the intention to work as worship seeking blessing, significantly improve lecturer performance. Person-organization fit was found to mediate the relationship between Islamic work ethics and innovation in learning activities (Wulandari & Mubarak, 2021).

This confirms that value alignment between individuals and organizations strongly determines performance success in Islamic educational settings (Fatima & Srivastava, 2024). Unfortunately, many Islamic educational institutions continue to rely on competency-matching approaches that emphasize pedagogical hard skills and formal experience alone (Rani et al., 2022). Meanwhile, the World Economic Forum (2025) recommends shifting toward skills-based hiring, adapting talent assessment criteria away from experience and formal education toward skills and potential (Vieira et al., 2024).

Analysis of the Six Holistic Talent Matching Dimensions

Competency Fit in the IEM context concerns the alignment of an educator's technical and professional abilities with job demands. This includes pedagogical skills, mastery of Islamic subject matter, and effective teaching techniques (Benítez-Márquez et al., 2022). Mauludya (2025) emphasizes the importance of integrating *naqliyah* (revealed) and *aqliyah* (rational) knowledge in Islamic HR development. This dimension serves as the initial foundation of talent matching, as insufficient competence prevents educators from performing their duties professionally (Chillakuri, 2020).

Character Fit is a crucial dimension distinguishing this holistic approach from conventional ones. In the Islamic perspective, good character (*akhlakul karimah*) forms the

primary foundation of any educator (Rokhman et al., 2021). Jannah et al. (2025), in their study of Islamic counselling for talent identification, show that talent is regarded as a divine trust (*amanah*) requiring serious effort, and a holistic approach is necessary to develop personal growth balance (*tawazun*) according to Islamic principles. Traits such as trustworthiness, honesty, and responsibility are essential indicators for assessing individual alignment with Islamic educational institutions (Kulkarni & Rai, 2023).

Motivational Fit in IEM goes beyond salary or promotion to encompass the intention to work as worship and the pursuit of Allah's pleasure (Pichler et al., 2021). Wulandari and Mubarak (2021) affirm that sincere intention and the aspiration for divine blessing are crucial components of Islamic work ethics that drive improved performance. Muslim Generation Z individuals tend to seek work that provides spiritual meaning and work-life balance (Fatima & Srivastava, 2024). This dimension fundamentally differentiates conventional HR management from Islamic-values-based approaches (Waldan et al., 2025).

Cultural Fit concerns the alignment of individuals with Islamic organizational culture, including values such as *ukhuwah* (brotherhood), *tawadhu'* (humility), and *istiqamah* (consistency) (Kulkarni & Rai, 2023). Research on the integration of school curricula and pesantren shows that combining intensive religious education with formal schooling equips students with 21st-century skills while strengthening religious and moral values (Integration of School Curriculum and Islamic Boarding Schools, 2023). Islamic educational institutions with strong, Islamically grounded organizational cultures find it easier to foster employee belonging and loyalty (Cubukcu Cerasi & Balcioglu, 2024).

Adaptive Fit has become increasingly important in the digital transformation era. Generation Z is known to be highly adaptable to technology, yet digital divides remain a challenge (Barhate & Dirani, 2022). The World Economic Forum (2025) notes that while 58% of young people in the US have used ChatGPT, only 24% of Africa's population has internet access. Initiatives like *Giga Global* aim to connect every school globally by 2030 to address this divide (World Economic Forum, 2025). Within IEM, the ability to adapt to digital technology is a key factor in the effectiveness of learning and institutional management (Lestari & Perdhana, 2024).

Purpose Fit represents the highest dimension, concerning the alignment of an individual's life purpose with the organization's mission (Chillakuri, 2020). Approximately 89% of Generation Z choose jobs that provide meaning and social impact (UIN Mataram, 2026). In IEM, purpose fit refers to the alignment between an individual's pursuit of worldly-otherworldly balance and the Islamic educational institution's vision of cultivating excellent and moral generations (Mauludya, 2025). Individuals whose purposes align with their organizations tend to demonstrate greater commitment and remain longer in their positions (Novanantha & Febriansyah, 2025).

The Holistic Talent Matching Model in Islamic Educational HRM

The Holistic Talent Matching concept proposed here broadens the talent recruitment paradigm from a competency-based approach to a human compatibility approach grounded in Islamic values (Rani et al., 2022). Research by Waldan et al. (2025) at Pesantren Ismuhu Yahya demonstrates that a sustainable HR development model combining Islamic pedagogy with vocational training significantly improves students' job competitiveness while preserving their religious identity. This model emphasizes four educational approach pillars: militancy, Qur'anic devotion, public speaking, and skill competence (Waldan et al., 2025).

The Holistic Talent Matching perspective within IEM offers several advantages over conventional approaches. First, it is more humanistic because it views individuals holistically rather than as mere work-producing machines (Vieira et al., 2024). Second, it is more sustainable because it emphasizes long-term value alignment rather than short-term staffing needs (Kulkarni & Rai, 2023). Third, it aligns more closely with Islamic values that view work as part of worship and devotion to Allah SWT (Rokhman et al., 2021).

Implications for Islamic Educational Management

The findings carry significant theoretical and practical implications for the development of Islamic Educational Management. Theoretically, this study contributes to the study of organizational fit and talent management in IEM by offering a holistic framework that positions compatibility with Islamic values as central to successful modern working relationships in Islamic educational institutions (Kulkarni & Rai, 2023). The study also enriches the literature on Islamic work ethics by integrating them into a more comprehensive talent matching framework (Wulandari & Mubarak, 2021; Rokhman et al., 2021).

Practically, the findings can serve as a guide for madrasas, pesantren, and Islamic universities as they reconstruct their HR recruitment and management paradigms to better align with the characteristics of Muslim Generation Z individuals (Waldan et al., 2025). Actionable recommendations include:

- a. Developing selection instruments that measure not only technical competence but also Islamic character, worship motivation, and value alignment (Jannah et al., 2025).
- b. Incorporating value-based interviewing to explore the alignment of Islamic values between candidates and organizations (Fadilah & Putranto, 2023).
- c. Integrating spiritual development and character cultivation into onboarding and employee development programmes alongside professional competency enhancement (Mauludya, 2025).
- d. Creating flexible yet value-grounded organizational cultures that accommodate Generation Z characteristics (Cubukcu Cerasi & Balcıoğlu, 2024).

Limitations and Future Research Agenda

This study has several limitations. First, its conceptual approach requires further empirical testing in real-world settings (Snyder, 2019). Second, the research context remains general for Islamic educational institutions, even though different institutional types (madrasas, pesantren, Islamic universities) have distinct characteristics (Vieira et al., 2024).

Future research should empirically develop the Holistic Talent Matching model using quantitative or mixed-methods approaches within specific Islamic educational environments such as madrasa aliyah, modern pesantren, or UIN/IAIN to measure relationships among the dimensions more deeply and contextually (Vieira et al., 2024; Novanantha & Febriansyah, 2025). Longitudinal studies are also needed to assess the long-term effectiveness of this approach on retention and performance.

4. Conclusion

This study concludes that incompatibility between Generation Z and Islamic educational institutions is not due solely to technical competency gaps but is more strongly influenced by misalignment in Islamic values, organizational culture, worship-based motivation, and perceptions of meaningful work. This finding confirms that competency-matching recruitment approaches are no longer sufficient to address the complexity of Muslim Generation Z characteristics within modern Islamic education.

The research also identifies six dimensions of organizational fit from the perspective of Islamic Educational Management: competency fit, character fit, motivational fit, cultural fit, adaptive fit, and purpose fit. These six dimensions integrate Islamic values such as *amanah* (trustworthiness), *ikhlās* (sincerity), *ukhuwah* (brotherhood), *ijtihad* (independent reasoning), and *tawazun* (balance).

As a theoretical contribution, this study offers the concept of Holistic Talent Matching, which shifts the HR recruitment paradigm from a competency-based approach toward a holistic human compatibility approach rooted in Islamic values. Practically, these findings can guide madrasas, pesantren, and Islamic universities in recruiting and managing Generation Z more adaptively and sustainably.

A limitation of this research is its conceptual nature, meaning it has not yet been empirically tested. Future studies are strongly encouraged to examine the Holistic Talent Matching model quantitatively or through mixed methods within the context of Islamic educational institutions.

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