The Role of Social Media in the Religiosity of Islamic Adolescents Through a Descriptive Qualitative Approach

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Abstract

This research aims to analyze and determine the role of social media in influencing religious doctrinal, ritual experiences, and socio-religious interactions among students at SMA Negeri 1 Cibitung. Qualitative with a phenomenological approach is the type researchers apply and use for this research, the data sources used are primary and secondary data. The data techniques collection used are depth interviews, and FGD (Focus Group Discussion). The research results show that social media helps students think about religion, increase their level of religiosity, obey religious commandments, and remember God more often. In addition, online communities on social media play an important role in supporting religiosity through interaction, discussion, and moral and emotional support. Although there is a small percentage of students who feel confused about certain religious concepts, the majority feel helped by the content they consume on social media. This research provides new contributions in understanding how social media can be used as an effective tool to support religious education and practice among the zillennial generation.

Keywords: Social Media; Religiosity; Zillenial Generation; SMAN 1 Cibitung

Introduction

The development of technology in Indonesia in recent years has often brought significant impacts on the lives of Indonesian society, especially in the use of social media. In response to this development, the government and private sectors have been making maximum efforts by gradually increasing internet access from one region to another, supporting and developing existing technological innovations, and strengthening technological infrastructure to improve the welfare of the society. Undoubtedly, such phenomena greatly assist and facilitate various aspects of Indonesian society's life and its resources. One of the benefits of technology for humans is that it helps technology users acquire knowledge or information about religion. According to data obtained from the Indonesian Internet Service Providers Association (APJII), internet usage in Indonesia in 2024 reached 221,563,479 people, or 79.5% of the Indonesian population.[1] This number increased by approximately 1.4% from internet users in 2023, which was 78.1%. Among these internet users, some certainly use it for social media activities. The Data Indonesia 2024 report revealed that as many as 139 million people were active social media users in 2024. Among these social media users in Indonesia, a significant portion utilizes social media to gain knowledge and insight, including knowledge related to their faith or religion.[2] This aligns with a statement by a young preacher in Islam, Irfan Rizki, a young Da'i of Muhammadiyah, on the Muhammadiyah Persyarikatan website in 2024, who stated that the younger generation today greatly appreciates religious preaching (Islamic sermons) delivered with powerful narratives and speech. According to him, when he preaches through social media platforms such as YouTube, TikTok, and Instagram, he receives positive responses from the younger generation. He also mentioned that the type of preaching favored by young people is one that is efficient, concise, and relevant to youth.[3]

Technology indeed plays a significant role today as it is utilized by its users to facilitate their activities such as assisting with work, obtaining information, and more. According to Puspitarini and Nuraeni, social media offers many benefits for its individual and community users, including in aspects of education, health, communication, and religion.[4] The benefits of social media in the religious domain include the dissemination of religious values, norms, and teachings, support for religious ceremonies and *ibadah* by individuals or communities, empowerment of religious communities, support for effective preaching approaches, communication with religious figures on social media, and more.

Researchers found information from the Pew Research Center about online religious services for the American public.[5] In the Pew Research Center report, it was stated that the internet has brought positive changes to various aspects of human life, particularly in the religious field, such as streaming religious services, applications for reading holy books, prayer applications, and participation in online religious groups. The PRC report revealed that 79% of adults in America prefer reading online books about scriptures and religious books

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[1] APJII, "Jumlah Pengguna Internet Indonesia Tembus 221 Juta Orang," 2004.

[2] Monavia Ayu Rizaty, "Data Jumlah Pengguna Media Sosial Di Indonesia Pada 2024," *Data Indonesia*, 2024.

[3] Persyarikatan Muhammadiyah. (2024). Generasi Milenial dan Gen Z Cenderung Menyukai Model Dakwah yang Efektif dan Efisien. Retrieved April 15, 2024, from https://muhammadiyah.or.id/2024/03/generasi-milenial-dan-gen-z-cenderung-menyukai-model-dakwah-yang-efektif-dan-efisien/

[4] D S Puspitarini and R Nuraeni, "Pemanfaatan Media Sosial Sebagai Media Promosi," *Jurnal Common*, 2019, 71–80.

[5] Pew Research Center, "Online Religious Services Appeal to Many Americans, but Going in Person Remains More Popular," *Https://Www.Pewresearch.Org/Religion/2023/06/02/Online-Religious-Services-Appeal-to-Many-Americans-but-Going-in-Person-Remains-More-Popular/*, 2023.

compared to watching religious videos, which stands at only 45%. Additionally, 61% of religiously inclined adults in America participate in and attend online scripture study groups.[6] In the evolving digital era, technology through social media applications has indeed been very helpful, as explained in the previous paragraph. However, among the numerous benefits of social media, young people in Indonesia also experience the advantages firsthand when they use social media, such as watching their favorite religious figures and preachers even if they cannot attend the preacher's events in person. Additionally, they can create interesting content about religion and share positive messages based on Hadith and the Qur'an with valid and reliable data. Young people in Indonesia are categorized into several groups, and one that utilizes social media extensively is Generation Zillennial.

According to Rosariana, Generation Zillennial, often referred to as Gen Z, is the generation that follows the millennial generation. Generally, Zillennials are young people born in the late 1990s to the early 2000s, with an estimated birth range between 1997 and 2012.[7] Data compiled by BPS (Badan Pusat Statistik) indicates that the number of Zillennials in Indonesia in 2023 is around 60 million people. With such a large number, many Zillennials have accessed and created social media accounts such as Instagram, TikTok, YouTube, and others. However, differing opinions and reception of information on social media have made some characteristics of this generation more open, allowing them to possess high levels of pluralism and tolerance in understanding religious differences in Indonesia. On the other hand, some Zillennials exhibit a lack of participation in formal religious activities. This could be due to changing cultural values. Other characteristics commonly associated with Zillennials include their tendency to seek purpose and meaning in life by exploring their personal spirituality to find what is meaningful and relevant to them.[8]

Generation Zillennial can be influenced by social media regarding their perceptions of faith and religion, and it can also affect their interactions in religious matters, even if only online. This generation is not homogenous; both individuals and groups within Generation Zillennial have unique religious views and experiences. Their levels of faith and religious experiences can change over time due to the abundance of information and insights they obtain from social media.[9] Therefore, the role of social media in enhancing the religiosity of Zillennials is a fascinating topic for more in-depth research.

Previous research discussing the influence of social media on the evolution of the times includes a study by Eka and Claudia titled "Positive Influence of Social Media on the Spiritual Development of Generation Zillennial," published in Illuminate: Journal of Theology and Christian Education. The findings and discussions of this study indicate that social media has a positive impact on the spiritual development of Zillennials, such as easy access to new information, plans, and the ability to change themselves through social media, resulting in young people feeling calm and happy.[10] Further, previous research conducted by [author]

[6] Pew Research Center, "Online Religious Services Appeal to Many Americans, but Going in Person Remains More Popular," *Https://Www.Pewresearch.Org/Religion/2023/06/02/Online-Religious-Services-Appeal-to-Many-Americans-but-Going-in-Person-Remains-More-Popular/*, 2023.

[7] B Rosariana, "Generasi 'Milenial' Dan Generasi 'Kolonial.,'" *Https://Www.Djkn.Kemenkeu.Go.Id/Kpknl-Pontianak/Baca-Artikel/14262/Generasi-Milenial-Dan-Generasi-Kolonial.Html#:~:Text=Adapun Gen Z%2C Merupakan Generasi,Berusia 24%2D39 Tahun*, 2021.

[8] L Y Hastini, R Fahmi, and H Lukito, "Apakah Pembelajaran Menggunakan Teknologi Dapat Meningkatkan Literasi Manusia Pada Generasi Z Di Indonesia?," *Jurnal Manajemen Informatika (JAMIKA)* 10, no. 1 (2020): 12–28.

[9] Widodo Hesti Purwantoro, "Media Sosial, Media Dakwah," UII, 2022.

[10] K Z Eka and A Claudia, "Pengaruh Positif Media Sosial Terhadap Perkembangan Spiritualitas Generasi Zillenial," *ILLUMINATE: Jurnal Teologi Dan Pendidikan Kristiani* 6, no. 2 (2023): 106–23.

found that social media usage can enhance mental health and social well-being for teenagers during the COVID-19 pandemic.[11] Another study by Putri, Nurwati, and Santoso revealed that teenagers use social media to depict their daily life styles in keeping up with the times, and the use of social media or virtual interaction spaces influences their behavior in dealing with loneliness in real life.[12]

Further research on religious experiences includes a study by Tia and Syafrinal, which states that of the three expressions of religious experience proposed by Joachim Wach, religious expression and experience are expressed in various doctrines to affirm religious practitioners. An empirical examination of a person's devotion and worship practices, with love and thought, shows that people strengthen their religious experiences by forming groups to support their religious practices.[13]

Another previous study by P. Triyani states that a person's religious experience can be expressed in the form of thoughts in religious doctrines, actions in worship and service, and fellowship through religious groups that have been formed.[14]

Additionally, other studies discussing the role of social media have been published in Invotek: Journal of Vocational Innovation and Technology, stating that social media plays a role in the health sector, making it easier for individuals to consult with doctors and medical personnel online.[15] Social media also helps online sellers promote their businesses through Facebook ads and other social media advertisements.[16] In the field of communication, social media plays a role in expanding information accessibility for the public.[17] Instagram, for example, enhances entrepreneurial interest among students by providing a platform for online selling, thereby adding to the savings and pocket money of students at SMK Plus Pelita Nusantara.[18] Among the relevant previous studies, only the research by Eka Kurniawan & Claudia discusses the influence of social media on the spirituality of Generation Zillennial. Therefore, the researcher is interested in conducting similar research but with new insights presented in this study.

Social media has become an important and beneficial communication channel as it is accessed by many users as a medium for obtaining information from news sites and as a communication medium for many people. Social media is beneficial for: 1) disseminating news and information, 2) continuous use leading to dependency among users, 3) expanding the audience of mass media through references to major news sites that appear due to link postings and online conversations, and 4) being a communication tool used by all elements

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[11] N Z Septiana, "Dampak Peggunaan Media Sosial Terhadap Kesehatan Mental Dan Kesejahteraan Sosial Remaja Dimasa Pandemi Covid-19," *Nusantara of Research: Jurnal Hasil-Hasil Penelitian Universitas Nusantara PGRI Kediri* 8, no. 1 (2021): 1–13.

[12] W S R Putri, N Nurwati, and M B Santoso, "Pengaruh Media Sosial Terhadap Perilaku Remaja," *Prosiding Penelitian Dan Pengabdian Kepada Masyarakat* 3, no. 1 (2016).

[13] S Tia and N Syafrinal, "Akikat Pengalaman Keagamaan Dan Ekspresi Keberagamaan Dalam Pandangan Joachim Wach. Jurnal Al-Aqidah" 15, no. 1 (2023): 25–36.

[14] P Triyani, "Konsep Pengalaman Keagamaan Joachim Wach," *Jurnal Ilmiah Syi'ar* 17, no. 2 (2017).

[15] L Emy and J Nizwardi, "Peran Media Sosial Dalam Upaya Promosi Kesehatan: Tinjauan Literatur," *INVOTEK: Jurnal Inovasi Vokasional Dan Teknologi* 18, no. 2 (2018): 25–34.

[16] Anak Agung Manik Pratiwi, "Peran Media Sosial Dalam Meningkatkan Penjualan Online Saat Pandemi Covid-19," *Jurnal Ilmiah Satyagrah* 3, no. 2 (2020): 73–81.

[17] A. H. Muzahid et al., "Peran Media Sosial Dalam Komunikasi Politik," *Jurnal Indonesia Sosial Teknologi* 2, no. 1 (2021): 104–14.

[18] C Nadia and D H Rosalina, "Peran Media Sosial Instagram Dalam Meningkatkan Minat Berwirausaha Peserta Didik Di SMK Plus Pelita Nusantara," *Research and Development Journal of Education* 1, no. 1 (2020): 91–101.

of society today. Examples of social media include Instagram, Telegram, TikTok, YouTube, Twitter, WhatsApp, and Facebook.[19]

Meanwhile, Zillennials are considered the successor generation behind the hidden future of Generation Y, where Zillennials can easily adapt to the rapid development of technology. Zillennials, or Gen Z, generally consist of those born between 1995 and 2010 and have unique characteristics compared to previous generations. Hence, this generation can also be referred to as the internet generation.[20]

The structural functional theory is a theory proposed by Talcott Parsons. This theory aims to achieve social order. According to Talcott Parsons' principles, human actions are directed towards goals. Additionally, these actions occur in conditions with defined elements, and other elements are used as tools to achieve these goals.[21] There are four essential functions for all human actions in Talcott Parsons' theory:

1. Adaptation: A system must cope with critical external situations. The system must be able to adjust to the environment and also adapt the living environment to its needs.

2. Goal Attainment: A system must define and achieve its primary objectives.

3. Integration: A system must manage the relationships among the three other functions, namely adaptation, goal attainment, and pattern maintenance. This system must also regulate the relationships among the parts that make up its components.

4. Pattern Maintenance: A system must be able to maintain, repair, and complete individual motivations as well as cultural patterns that create and support motivation.[22]

According to Joachim, religion is viewed as a focus on a person's thoughts, where religion is seen as an expression of noble human actions related to God as the creator and true faith. According to Wach, religious experience for a person is an intrinsic aspect that connects the mind and humans with God.[23] The forms of expression of religious experience based on Joachim Wach's theory are:

1. Expression in the form of thoughts: Religious expression in this form appears as theological doctrines. It is called theological because it discusses the origins, development, nature, essence of God, and the relationship between humans and God. There are three functions of doctrine: explanation and affirmation of faith, defense of faith (apologetics), and foundation for regulating normative life.

2. Expression in the form of actions: Religious expression in this form appears as rituals through serious contemplation of the absolute reality of humanity, resulting in an attitude of humility before the absolute reality or God. This expression appears in two forms: *ibadah* (religious practices that evoke a person's piety) and service (service to God and fellow humans).

3. Expression in the form of fellowship: Religious expression in this form appears as a group that contemplates God and practices it within a religious community. Several factors give rise to a group, such as age, ethics, background, and social status. Within religious groups, there are fundamental differences such as differences in prestige, social status, and power.

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[19] N Vitri, A R Sintje, and J W Grace, "Peranan Media Sosial Instagram Dalam Interaksi Sosial Antar Mahasiswa Fakultas Ilmu Sosial Dan Politik UNSRAT Manad," ACTA Diurna Komunikasi 7, no. 4 (2018)

[20] J H Lurusman, "Strategi Pelayanan Misi Gereja Di Era Digital Dan Integrasi Terhadap Generasi Zillenial," Danum Pambelum: Jurnal Teologi Dan Musik Gereja 3, no. 2 (2023): 187–98.

[21] Cuek Julyati Hisyam. (2020; 63). Sistem Budaya Indonesia. Jakarta Timur: PT Bumi Aksara.

[22] Nikodemus Niko, dan Yulasteriyani, "pembangunan masyarakat miskin di pedesaan perspektif Fungsionalis struktural", jurnal dakwah dan sosial, volume 3 nomor 2, 2020. Hal. 218

[23] W Joachim, *Ilmu Perbandingan Agama : Inti Dan Bentuk Pengalaman Keagamaan* (Raja Grafindo Persada, 1996k

Examples include the emergence of religious groups in Islam such as Ahmadiyya, Sunni, and Shia.

Furthermore, the researcher has identified a research gap related to the main focus of this study, as reported by Kathryn (2022) in an article on Ugatoday, which states that many teenagers tend to use social media to play games, thereby affecting their emotional condition, making them compulsive and addicted to social media games.[24] This research gap related to the role of social media has attracted the researcher's attention to investigate whether teenagers only use social media for online gaming or if there are other aspects that can provide a positive role in their lives. Finally, the researcher found that students from SMAN 1 Cibitung use social media as a medium that influences their spirituality.

From all the explanations above, the researcher aims to understand how social media plays a role in enhancing the religiosity of Generation Zillennial, specifically focusing on students at SMA Negeri 1 Cibitung, Kabupaten Bekasi. The researcher chose this subject due to the easy accessibility of the location. Therefore, the objectives of this research are: 1) to analyze and understand the role of social media in influencing the religious doctrines of SMA Negeri 1 Cibitung students; 2) to analyze and understand the role of social media in influencing the religious ritual experiences of SMA Negeri 1 Cibitung students; 3) to analyze and understand the role of social media in influencing the social religious interactions of SMA Negeri 1 Cibitung students.

In relation to this study, the researcher uses Talcott Parsons' role theory and Joachim Wach's theory of religious experience, which states that religious experience is an intrinsic aspect that connects humans with God. There are three forms of expression of religious experience: thoughts, actions, and fellowship.[25] When connected with Talcott Parsons' Role Theory and Joachim Wach's Theory of Religiosity, the research question or problem formulation is how social media plays a role in enhancing the thoughts, actions, and fellowship of religious practices among SMA Negeri 1 Cibitung students. This research is expected to provide benefits and usefulness, especially for Generation Zillennial, in their efforts to enhance their religiosity.

The subjects of this research are students of SMA Negeri 1 Cibitung. However, the sample used by the researcher consists of a few selected students, with sampling conducted based on simple random sampling. Broadly speaking, the simple random sampling technique is a sampling technique that provides equal opportunity for every member of the population to be included in the sample, provided that the population meets the following criteria: 1) the population is homogeneous, in this case, students of SMA Negeri 1 Cibitung; 2) there is a base list for sampling each element of the population. Overall, the sample used as interview informants and questionnaire participants consists of third-year students, although some first and second-year students also filled out questionnaires to ensure results are evenly distributed across all strata of the population.

This research design employs qualitative methods. In qualitative methods, there is more room for participants or research subjects, as subjects will feel highly valued by providing information within themselves, and data collection in this method is qualitatively analyzed, focusing on meaning.[26] Thus, qualitative research can help researchers reveal the concept of

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[24] Kathryn, K. (2022). Study links Social media, gaming addictional to emotions. (Artikel UGATODAY). Diakses pada 28 Juni 2024 melalui https://news.uga.edu/study-links-social-media-gaming-addiction-to-emotions/

[25] W Joachim, *Ilmu Perbandingan Agama : Inti Dan Bentuk Pengalaman Keagamaan* (Raja Grafindo Persada, 1996).

[26] Sugiyono, *Metode Penelitian Kuantitatif, Kualitatif, Dan R&D* (CV. Alfabeta, 2018).

religiosity present in each participant or research subject, in this case, the students of SMA Negeri 1 Cibitung.

The approach used is the sociological approach of symbolic interactionism for this study. The researcher chose this approach because it was introduced by Herbert Blumer, who outlined three famous propositions within symbolic interactionism: (1) humans act toward things based on the meanings those things have for them; (2) these meanings are derived from social interaction; (3) social actions performed by humans are due to their alignment with their individual social actions. Additionally, this approach is grounded in recognizing the urgency of religion for humans, as religion itself can influence individuals and social relationships.[27]

The sources of data in this research include primary and secondary data. According to Umar, primary data is obtained from first-hand sources, such as individuals or groups. In this research, primary data is gathered through interviews, observations, and documentation collected from the research subjects, namely the students of SMA Negeri 1 Cibitung. Secondary data, on the other hand, is primary data that has been processed and presented further by the researcher. In this research, secondary data includes data from the Central Bureau of Statistics (BPS), articles, journals, books, relevant experts, and processed primary data.[28]

There are two data collection techniques applied in this research:

1. In-depth interviews, where the researcher formulated several questions based on Joachim Wach's theory. These questions were then posed in in-depth interviews with selected students of SMA Negeri 1 Cibitung. In this study, the students chosen as informants were determined by the teacher, amounting to six individuals. The interviews were conducted in two sessions, on Saturday, May 4, 2024, and Tuesday, May 14, 2024. This staged approach was necessary to determine whether social media plays a role in enhancing students' religiosity, thereby identifying whether students' religiosity increases, decreases, or remains stable over these two sessions. Online interviews were also conducted by providing an online questionnaire to first and second-year students of SMA Negeri 1 Cibitung who were willing to support the study's findings.

2. Focus Group Discussion (FGD), where the researcher conducted in-depth interviews not individually but by gathering the six selected students from SMA Negeri 1 Cibitung for a group discussion in a predetermined location. This method was chosen due to time constraints, yet it proved effective in obtaining directed and comprehensive research results.

Qualitative Interview Guidelines Table

Section	Question	Objective
General Experience	Please describe how you typically use social media in your daily life?	Understand the overall context of social media use
	Which social media platforms do you frequently use? And why do you choose those platforms?	Gain context about favorite platforms and the reasons for their selection

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[27] Ilyas Ba-Yunus dan Farid Ahmad, *Sosiologi Islam; Sebuah Pendekatan*, terj. Hamid Ba-Syaib (Bandung: Mizan, 1996), hal 20.

[28] H Umar, *Metode Penelitian Untuk Skripsi Dan Tesis* (Rajawali Pers, 2023).

Section	Question	Objective
Interaction with Religious Influencers	Tell me about the religious influencers you follow on social media?	Identify the influencers followed and the reasons for following them
	How did you first decide to follow those religious influencers?	Understand the process of how these influencers became part of their social media feed
	What makes the content from those religious influencers appealing to you?	Identify what is appealing about the influencer's content
Influence of Content on Religious Identity	Can you provide an example of how the content from these religious influencers has influenced your thoughts or beliefs about religion?	Obtain specific examples of how the content influences religious thoughts or beliefs
	Is there a particular experience inspired by this religious content that has had a significant impact on your life?	Investigate the real-life impact of the content
	How has your interaction with this content affected your relationships with others, especially those of different beliefs?	Assess the content's influence on tolerance and social interactions
Reflection and Impact	In your opinion, what are the positive and negative impacts of following religious influencers on social media?	Gain their views on the positive and negative aspects of influencer influence
	How should religious content on social media be presented? Do you have any suggestions for improvement?	Understand their views on how ideal content should be and gather suggestions for improvement
	Have you noticed any changes in your religious practices since following these influencers?	Understand changes in religious practices that may have been influenced by the influencers
Closing	Is there anything else about the influence of social media on your religious identity that you would like to add?	Provide an opportunity for respondents to add any information or perspectives not yet discussed

After collecting the data, the researcher will analyze it qualitatively. In qualitative research, data sources typically relate to events, locations, people, objects, archives, and documents. The analysis process in qualitative research generally begins simultaneously with the data collection process. Generally, qualitative data analysis techniques involve data collection, data qualification, linking relevant theories to the research problem, and concluding to determine and process the research results, which will eventually become the research report.

Result and Discussion

Social Media Usage Among Students

This research identifies the most popular social media platforms among students of SMA Negeri 1 Cibitung through interviews, Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), and the dissemination of online interview questionnaires. Interviews and FGDs were conducted with several 12th-grade students, while questionnaires were distributed to 10th and 11th-grade students. The data indicates that Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube are the most frequently used platforms by students to access various types of content, including religious content.

Based on interviews, Natasha, a 12th-grade student, stated, "I often use Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube. I follow religious content from the late Melisha on YouTube." Similarly, Reina mentioned that TikTok and YouTube are her main platforms for following well-known religious figures such as Ustadz Hanan Hataki. The use of social media as a source of religious information demonstrates how these platforms play a role in shaping and enhancing students' religiosity.

In an FGD held on May 4, 2024, other students such as Yola and Daffa also expressed their preferences for Instagram and TikTok. Yola, who is Catholic, often watches content from Pastor Refi Halim on Instagram, while Daffa frequently accesses religious content from Ustadz Adi Hidayat on YouTube. "I find that the content on Instagram helps me understand religious teachings more deeply," Yola said. This reflects that social media functions not only as entertainment but also as a tool for religious education.

Rosyid and Nurdin, also 12th-grade students, indicated that Facebook is still used, although it is not as popular as Instagram and TikTok. Rosyid admitted that he often watches content from Habib Ja'far on TikTok, Instagram, and Facebook, while Nurdin uses WhatsApp in addition to Instagram and TikTok to share and receive religious content. "My study group on WhatsApp often shares inspiring religious videos," said Nurdin. This diversity of platforms shows that each student has different social media preferences for accessing religious content.

The results of the online interviews distributed to 36 10th and 11th-grade students show that 89% of respondents frequently think about religion due to their active social media use. From the survey results, Instagram and TikTok are the two most frequently used platforms by students, with YouTube in third place. Only a few students use Facebook and WhatsApp for the same purposes. Table 1 below presents the distribution of social media usage among students of SMA Negeri 1 Cibitung.

Social Media Platform Usage

Social Media Platform	Number of Users (N=36)	Percentage
Instagram	27	75%
TikTok	31	86%
YouTube	16	44%
Facebook	2	5%
WhatsApp	3	8%

Table 1. Social Media Usage Among Students of SMA Negeri 1 Cibitung

The results of interviews, FGDs, and online interviews indicate that social media plays a significant role in the daily lives of students, including in terms of religiosity. Social media not only provides entertainment but also serves as a significant source of information for students to deepen their understanding of their religious teachings. This conclusion is supported by consistent qualitative and quantitative data, indicating that social media use can enhance students' religiosity through easy access to various religious content.

Influence and Impact of Social Media on Religious Identity

The use of social media has proven to play a significant role in enhancing the religiosity of students at SMA Negeri 1 Cibitung. Based on the results of interviews and FGDs, many students admit that they often think about religion because they are exposed to religious content on social media. As one student expressed, "I often think about the origins of the world, the stories of prophets, and the afterlife because I frequently see such content on Instagram and YouTube." Interview data shows that out of 36 respondents, 32 students often think about religion because of social media, while only 2 students never think about religion despite using social media, and 2 students occasionally have fleeting thoughts about religion when watching religious content on social media.

Furthermore, social media also plays a role in increasing students' levels of religiosity. Based on the table of online interview results, 27 out of 36 respondents feel that they have become more religious because of social media. Only 3 respondents reported no increase in religiosity, and 6 respondents stated they felt slightly more religious because of social media. This aligns with the statement of Nurdin, a student who said, "Content from Ustadz Hanan Hataki and the late Syekh Ali Jaber on TikTok helps me better understand and practice the teachings of Islam."

Social media also helps students adhere to religious commands. A total of 31 out of 36 respondents admitted that social media makes them more obedient in following religious commands. Reina, a student who frequently watches content from Ustadz Hanan Hataki, stated, "I have become more diligent in performing prayers on time because I am often reminded by content on TikTok." This shows that social media is not only a source of information but also an effective reminder tool for students in fulfilling their religious obligations.

Another positive impact of social media on religious identity is the high level of tolerance and social interaction among students, especially with those of different beliefs. In-depth interview results show that 6 informants reported that content from influencers fosters high tolerance even though there are students with different beliefs in their school. "I have always maintained good relationships with my friends despite our different religions, and content about racism in my social media feed does not decrease my tolerance towards friends of different religions," explained Nurdin and Reina, who had similar statements during in-depth interviews. Online interview results also echoed Nurdin and Reina's responses, with 32

respondents stating that they always maintain relationships and interactions with people of different beliefs, while 4 respondents felt they did not want to interact with friends of different religions.

However, social media does not always have a positive impact. Random interview results revealed that 33 respondents did not feel confused about religion because of social media, but 3 respondents occasionally felt confused. Rasyid, a student who follows content from Habib Ja'far, said, "Sometimes, there is content that makes me confused about the concept of the afterlife, even though I am actually confident in my religion." Nonetheless, the number of students who feel confused is much smaller compared to those who feel helped.

Social media also plays an important role in helping students remember God more frequently. According to online interview data, 33 out of 36 respondents often feel they remember God more because of the content presented on social media. "Content about the torments of the grave and the afterlife that often appears on social media makes me think more about God and my sins," said Yola, who frequently uses Instagram and TikTok.

Religious influencers on social media play a key role in shaping students' religiosity. Names like Ustadz Hanan Hataki, Ustadz Adi Hidayat, Habib Ja'far, Syekh Ali Jaber, and Pastor Refi Halim are often mentioned by students as sources of inspiration and religious knowledge. "I often watch videos from Ustadz Adi Hidayat on YouTube, and it helps me understand Islam better," said Daffa, a student who is active on social media.

Below is a table showing the results of an online interview that indicates the increase in students' religiosity through social media:

No.	Question	Never	Sometimes	Often
1	Thinking about religion because of social media	2	2	32
2	Becoming more religious because of social media	3	6	27
3	Social media making one obedient in following religious commands	3	2	31
4	Social media causing confusion about religion	33	3	0
5	Social media making one remember God more	0	3	33

Table 2. Increase in Students' Religiosity Through Social Media

Interaction with Influencers and Online Communities

The role of online communities in supporting the religiosity of students at SMA Negeri 1 Cibitung is a crucial aspect revealed by this study. Online communities, especially those formed on social media, have become platforms where students can interact with peers who share the same interests and beliefs. These interactions not only strengthen social bonds but also deepen their understanding and practice of their religion.

In an interview, Natasha, one of the students, explained that joining a Christian community group on *Instagram* has helped her find answers to her religious questions. "I often discuss various theological topics with community members and gain new perspectives that enrich my understanding," she said. Natasha is part of a student community at her church, which she attends weekly. This indicates that online communities can be valuable sources of knowledge and support self-directed learning in the context of religiosity.

Another student, Reina, expressed that she feels more connected to the global Muslim community through social media platforms like *Tiktok* and *YouTube*. "I follow many scholars on Tiktok, and we often discuss in the comment sections. This makes me feel part of a larger

community, even though I am not physically present with them," she said. Reina's experience shows that social media can bridge physical distances and allow students to feel part of a broader religious community.

Furthermore, online communities also play a significant role in facilitating virtual religious activities. Yola, a Catholic student, mentioned that she often participates in online mass broadcasts on *Instagram*. "I feel connected to the church and community even though I can't attend in person. This helps me stay consistent in my worship," she explained. Thus, online communities enable students to continue participating in religious activities despite physical or geographical barriers.

Daffa also acknowledged the benefits of online communities in supporting his religiosity. "I attend online studies organized by an Islamic community on *YouTube*. Every week we discuss various topics, and this helps me continuously learn and delve deeper into Islam," said Daffa. This demonstrates that online communities not only provide passive content but also actively engage their members in discussions and religious activities.

Rosyid, who frequently follows religious communities on *Tiktok* and *Instagram*, added that these communities also offer moral and emotional support. "When I face issues or questions about religion, I can immediately ask in the group and get many responses from other members. This helps me feel supported and not alone," he explained. This support is crucial for maintaining students' emotional and spiritual well-being.

Besides individual benefits, online communities also encourage collaboration among members in religious projects. Nurdin, who is active in several religious *WhatsApp* groups, shared his experience about social projects organized through online communities. "We often hold charity events and fundraising to help those in need. This makes me feel that being religious is not just about personal worship but also about benefiting others," he said. Thus, online communities expand the meaning of religiosity from an individual to a social realm.

In the online interviews, respondents also indicated that religious influencers capture their interest, leading them to follow these influencers and watch the content they produce. Some respondents noted that "the way religious influencers convey their messages is very flexible and easy to understand."

Below is a table from the online interview results showing their interaction with religious influencers:

Religious Influencer	Interested Students	Interaction
Ustadz Abdul Somad	8 students	Has a lot of knowledge and many people watch him. The delivery method is good. Students watch content on social media or attend seminars directly.
Alm. Syekh Ali Jaber	3 students	The presentation of religious material is engaging and the knowledge imparted is very touching. Students watch content on social media.
Habib Ja'far	15 students	His delivery is very relatable to the Zillenial generation, incorporating humor and keeping listeners engaged. Often talks about religious tolerance.
Ustadz Hanan Hataki	5 students	His explanations are not boring and often discuss issues related to youth today. The delivery method is easy to

Religious Influencer	Interested Students	Interaction
		understand. Students frequently watch his content on social media.
Pastor Gilbert and Church Pastors	3 students	The influencers provide calming explanations and always teach good things. Students watch them on social media or at church.
Other Islamic religious influencers	2 students	Their explanations, knowledge, and delivery methods are excellent. Students watch their content on social media.

Based on the interview and observation results, it is clear that online communities play a significant role in supporting students' religiosity. Through interactions with other community members, participation in religious activities, and the moral support provided, online communities help students deepen their beliefs, practice their religion more consistently, and feel connected to a larger religious community. These experiences highlight the potential of social media as an effective tool in supporting and enhancing religiosity among young people.

This study identifies the role of *social media* in enhancing the religiosity of students at SMA Negeri 1 Cibitung. Based on interviews, FGDs, and questionnaires, platforms such as Instagram, Tiktok, and YouTube were found to be the most popular among students for accessing *religious content*. The results indicate that *social media* helps students to contemplate religion, enhance religiosity, adhere to religious commands, and remember God more frequently. Additionally, online communities on *social media* play a significant role in supporting religiosity through interaction, discussions, and moral as well as emotional support.

These findings are consistent with previous studies that demonstrate *social media's* effectiveness as a tool in religious education. In the study by Eka and Claudia, it is supported that *social media* assists Generation Z in learning and seeking new positive aspects such as obtaining information, gaining new ideas, and planning life goals as the initial increase in spiritual well-being.[29]

Similarly, Syaifuddin & Muhid's research found that "dakwah disseminated through social media is said to be effective because many adolescents use social media. Dakwah spread through social media can broaden adolescents' knowledge and alleviate their curiosity about things that have long been questions in their minds"[30]. However, this research does not align with the study by Siregar, which concluded that students at IAIN Padangsidimpuan had become addicted to social media, to the extent that it caused them to neglect their prayers, with some even abandoning worship entirely.[31] Only a few students indicated that social media helped enhance their religious spirit at IAIN Padangsidimpuan. This study also revealed a unique aspect: although social media increases religiosity, a small number of students felt confused about certain religious concepts. This suggests that social media content needs to be well-curated to avoid confusion among young users.

The findings of this research indicate that social media plays a crucial role in shaping the religious identity of Generation Zillennials. It reflects a broader phenomenon where digital

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[29] Eka, K Z, and A Claudia. "Pengaruh Positif Media Sosial Terhadap Perkembangan Spiritualitas Generasi Zillenial." ILLUMINATE: Jurnal Teologi Dan Pendidikan Kristiani 6, no. 2 (2023): 106–23.

[30] Syaifuddin & Muhid (2021)

[31] Siregar (2021)

technology becomes an integral part of human daily life, particularly religious practices, as highlighted in the Nadhlatul Ulama article.[32] The article states that technology enhances *dakwah*, disseminates religious teachings, and benefits others by strengthening their faith. [33] Online communities provide a new platform for students to exchange thoughts and discuss religious matters. Students can share their opinions and information or content online, which they might not encounter in their physical environment. Additionally, online communities help students to worship together, such as by arranging meetings at places of worship through social media[^3]. This aligns with Nasrullah's statement that social media communities broadly attract individuals with similar beliefs and interests, based on the same background, to communicate, engage in activities, tag social media friends, and share comments on specific topics.[34]

The implications of these research findings are that educators and religious leaders need to utilize social media as a tool to support education and religious practices.[35] Social media can be used to spread educational and inspirational content and build communities that support spiritual development.[36] Furthermore, efforts are needed to minimize content that could cause confusion or misinformation about religion. This statement is consistent with the opinion of one young Islamic preacher, Irfan Rizki, a young *Da'i* of Muhammadiyah, who conveyed on the Muhammadiyah website (2024) that today's young generation enjoys *dakwah* (Islamic religious sermons) delivered with powerful narratives and speeches. According to him, when he preaches through social media platforms like YouTube, TikTok, and Instagram, he receives positive responses from the youth. He also mentioned that the model of *dakwah* preferred by young people is efficient, economical, and relevant to them.

The results of this research emerge because social media has become an inseparable part of students' lives. Intensive use and easy access to various content make social media a primary source for students to explore and understand their religion. Additionally, online communities offer a safe and comfortable space for students to discuss and receive support, which is challenging to obtain in their offline environment. Consistent with the statement by Irfan Rizki (2024), a young Da'i of Muhammadiyah, that the dissemination of religious teachings through social media content receives positive responses from the current generation.[37] Furthermore, Nasrullah's statement also explains that social media communities attract individuals with similar beliefs and interests based on the same background to communicate, engage in activities, tag social media friends, and share comments on specific topics.[38]

In the future, strategies need to be formulated to maximize the benefits of social media in enhancing students' religiosity. Educators and religious leaders must be more active in creating and disseminating quality content that meets the needs of the younger generation.

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[32] Nahdhatul Ulama. "Takwa Dalam Berinteraksi Dengan Teknologi: Menjaga Kehidupan Islami Di Era Digital," 2023.

[33] D.I. Ansusa, P., & Mohammad, H. (2020). The roles of technology in al-Quran exegesis in Indonesia. Science Direct, 63.

[34] Nasrullah, R. Teori Dan Riset Media Siber (Cybermedia). Prenada Media, 2022.

[35] D.I. Ansusa, P., & Mohammad, H. (2019). The Role of Technology and Social Media In Spreading the Quran and Hadith by Mubalig. DINIKA Academic Journal of Islamic Studies, 4(1), 45-64

[36] D.I. Ansusa, P., Ardiyansyah., & Melky, K. (2023). Promoting the spirit of nationalism through Quran-Hadis Lectures: A case of Gus Miftah's da'wah model. Islamic Communication Journal, 8(1), 1-20

[37] Persyarikatan Muhammadiyah, "Generasi Milenial Dan Gen Z Cenderung Menyukai Model Dakwah Yang Efektif Dan Efisien," *Https://Muhammadiyah.or.Id/2024/03/Generasi-Milenial-Dan-Gen-z-Cenderung-Menyukai-Model-Dakwah-Yang-Efektif-Dan-Efisien/*, 2024.

[38] Nasrullah, R. Teori Dan Riset Media Siber (Cybermedia). Prenada Media, 2022.

Additionally, monitoring and guidance on students' use of social media are essential to ensure they receive accurate information and avoid confusion. Training and education programs on digital literacy can also help students use social media more effectively and wisely in the context of religiosity.

Conclusion

Based on the results and discussion above, researchers can conclude that social media has a significantly positive impact on students' religiosity. This includes making students more religious due to content from religious influencers, encouraging students to be more obedient in following religious commands due to the influence of social media content, fostering good tolerance and social interactions among students of different faiths despite some social media content promoting division or racism, motivating students to join religious communities, and prompting students to remember their God more frequently due to the social media content they watch or encounter on their feeds. However, social media also has one negative impact on students' religiosity: it can cause confusion about religious concepts due to the diverse religious content available online.

This research reveals that social media plays a significant role in enhancing the religiosity of students at SMA Negeri 1 Cibitung. Platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube are used by students to access religious content that deepens their understanding of religion, increases compliance with religious commands, and helps them remember God more frequently. Online communities on social media also play a crucial role in supporting religiosity through interactions, discussions, and moral and emotional support. Although a small number of students feel confused about certain religious concepts, the majority find the content they consume on social media helpful.

This study provides new insights into how social media can be used as an effective tool to support education and religious practices among the Zillennial generation. The findings show that social media functions not only as an entertainment platform but also as a significant educational resource in the context of religiosity. Additionally, this research highlights the importance of online communities in shaping religious identity and providing moral and emotional support, an area that has not been extensively explored in previous studies.

This research has several limitations. First, the sample is limited to students of SMA Negeri 1 Cibitung, so the results may not be generalizable to all students in Indonesia. Second, this study predominantly uses qualitative methods, making the results highly dependent on the subjectivity of the informants. For future research, it is recommended to expand the sample to various schools in other regions and use more extensive quantitative methods to obtain more representative data. Further studies could also investigate the long-term impacts of social media use on religiosity and how online interactions can be translated into real-life religious practices.

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