

## Exploring the Influence of Internet Usage on Religious Moderation: A Phenomenological Study Among Gen Z

Nur Jamaludin<sup>1</sup>, Muhammad Choirin\*<sup>2</sup>, Zulkefli Bin Aini<sup>3</sup>, Moh Khoirul Anam<sup>4</sup>

Universitas Cendekia Abditama, Indonesia<sup>1</sup>; Universitas Muhammadiyah Jakarta, Indonesia<sup>2,4</sup>; National University of Malaysia, Malaysia<sup>3</sup>

Email: jamaludin@uca.ac.id<sup>1</sup>, muhammad.choirin@umj.ac.id<sup>2</sup>, zulaini@ukm.edu.my<sup>3</sup>, m.khoirulanam@umj.ac.id<sup>4</sup>

### *Abstract*

The rapid advancement of the internet has significantly influenced how Generation Z engages with religious knowledge and practices, raising concerns about its impact on their perspectives, attitudes, and behaviors regarding religious moderation. This study aims to examine this influence, focusing on actively enrolled students who demonstrate internet addiction and rely heavily on online platforms for religious activities. Employing a qualitative phenomenological approach, data were gathered through in-depth interviews and observations to capture the lived experiences of these students. Findings reveal that most students spend over seven hours daily online, making the internet a primary source of academic and religious knowledge. This extensive use shapes their understanding of Islamic principles and their attitudes toward religious moderation, with online platforms perceived as convenient and reliable for accessing religious content. However, the study highlights the need for supervision and guidance to foster critical thinking and discernment, emphasizing the importance of digital literacy in promoting balanced and thoughtful religious perspectives among Generation Z in the digital era.

*Keywords:* Phenomenological, Religious Moderation, Gen Z, Internet.

### *Abstrak*

Pesatnya perkembangan internet telah membawa perubahan besar dalam cara Generasi Z mengakses pengetahuan dan menjalankan aktivitas keagamaan, sehingga memunculkan kekhawatiran terkait dampaknya terhadap pandangan, sikap, dan perilaku mereka dalam moderasi beragama. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis pengaruh penggunaan internet terhadap hal tersebut, dengan fokus pada mahasiswa aktif yang menunjukkan kecanduan internet dan sangat bergantung pada platform daring untuk aktivitas keagamaan mereka. Dengan pendekatan fenomenologi kualitatif, data penelitian dikumpulkan melalui wawancara mendalam dan observasi guna memahami pengalaman langsung para responden. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa mayoritas mahasiswa menghabiskan lebih dari tujuh jam per hari menggunakan internet, yang telah menjadi sumber utama pengetahuan akademik dan keagamaan mereka. Internet memainkan peran penting dalam membentuk pemahaman mereka tentang prinsip-prinsip Islam dan sikap terhadap moderasi beragama. Meskipun platform daring dianggap praktis dan andal untuk mengakses

konten keagamaan, penelitian ini menegaskan pentingnya pengawasan dan bimbingan untuk mendorong pemikiran kritis serta kemampuan memilah informasi. Selain itu, hasil penelitian ini menyoroti urgensi meningkatkan literasi digital guna mendukung pandangan keagamaan yang seimbang dan bijaksana di kalangan Generasi Z di era digital.

*Kata Kunci: Fenomenologis, Moderasi beragama, Generasi Z, Internet.*

## INTRODUCTION

Religious moderation in the Nusantara is not merely a normative concept but embodies the essence of the religious ethos that has evolved within Indonesian society for centuries. According to Inayatillah (2021), religious moderation in the Nusantara represents a noble value that has become an exemplar in maintaining religious harmony. Indonesia, with its ethnically and religiously diverse population, has long been regarded as a model for the world in promoting tolerance and inclusivity. The practice of religious moderation in the Nusantara is rooted in the principle of *tasamuh* (tolerance), which deliberately avoids the tendencies toward radicalism and secular liberalism. Abdalla (2023) and Lubis (2020) notes that religious moderation in Indonesia does not emerge from a cultural void, but rather from a historical lineage of religious ideologies promoted by major organizations such as Nahdlatul Ulama, Muhammadiyah, and various religious reform leaders.

Nevertheless, while Indonesia has developed these values in daily practice, the modern era, marked by rapid technological advancements in information technology, has presented significant challenges to the unimpeded application of religious moderation. Kosasih (2019) highlights how social changes driven by the digital revolution affect religious interpretations. The rapid development of information technology has profoundly impacted religious practices in Indonesia. Society, especially Generation Z, increasingly engages with digital information without adequate control, often encountering intolerant and non-moderate religious views. In this context, Lundby & Evolvi (2021) caution that the digital era weakens connections to traditional religious institutions, alters religious authority, and fosters individualistic attitudes that shift perspectives from inclusivism to exclusivism.

A survey conducted by the Alvara Research Center (2022) reveals that Generation Z in Indonesia is the demographic most prone to internet addiction. As much as 20.9% of Generation Z spends more than 7 hours a day online. This

high dependency on the internet exacerbates the issue, as religious information they encounter is often unfiltered, leading to heightened social and religious tensions. This phenomenon poses a risk to the religious pluralism that has long existed in Indonesia. Kosasih (2019) underscores that the spread of extreme religious views online threatens the social fabric of Indonesia, a country known for its religious and ethnic diversity.

This study focuses on students at Universitas Cendekia Abditama, adopting a phenomenological approach to understand how these students engage with religious information online. The research aims to explore how their digital interactions shape their views on religious tolerance and diversity. However, it is important to note that the study must be cautious in evaluating their digital interactions, as such evaluations could unintentionally reinforce intolerant perspectives. Therefore, the approach taken will focus on understanding the impact of digital engagement without exacerbating the very issues it seeks to address.

As digital technologies continue to advance, several scholars have documented how information technology has reshaped the way people engage with religion. Campbell & Evolvi (2020) and Aguilar et al. (2017) present how digital technology has not only changed religious practices but also redefined how people interact with their faith. These studies show that the integration of technology into daily life has blurred traditional boundaries, altering how individuals engage with religious teachings. The internet facilitates new religious expressions and challenges established norms. In this context, social media and digital culture significantly influence how society perceives and discusses religion, including religious moderation.

This research proposes to analyze internet memes, which are humorous or satirical images, videos, or texts shared widely on social media, to explore how religion is perceived and discussed in the public digital sphere. Analyzing memes provides a novel way to understand public discourse and popular beliefs about religion in the digital age. Thus, this study aims to explore the intersection of technology, media, and religious moderation in contemporary society, especially among Generation Z, who are the most digital-savvy generation.

Generation Z, defined as individuals born between 1995 and 2010 (Rizki, 2022), is recognized for its heavy reliance on digital technology. Also known as the "iGeneration" or "net generation," Generation Z has grown up immersed in

technology, with the internet being a central part of their daily lives. From an early age, they have been exposed to digital devices and social media, which indirectly shape their cognitive patterns and dispositions toward various issues, including religion (Kholis, 2021). Research by Lenhart (2015) and (Anderson & Jiang, 2018) reveals how the internet plays a multifaceted role in the lives of Generation Z, not only as a platform for social interaction but also as a primary source of information, shaping their worldview. This research will further explore how Generation Z's internet usage influences their views on religious moderation, particularly in the context of religious diversity in Indonesia.

The existing literature emphasizes that while the internet provides convenience in accessing religious knowledge, it also serves as a conduit for non-moderate religious teachings that could exacerbate radicalization and intolerance. Research by Abdurrohman & Fitriana (2023) demonstrates that digital technology offers both advantages and risks in shaping religious moderation. It facilitates greater understanding of religion, but also spreads teachings that deviate from the principles of moderation, such as extremism, terrorism, and intolerance.

The rise of radicalism, intolerance, and terrorism has prompted stakeholders to consider strategies for containment. Religious moderation emerges as a key determinant in fostering societal tolerance and peaceful coexistence, both locally and globally. The ethos of religious moderation is viewed as essential for achieving balance, safeguarding civilization, and promoting peace (Makruf et al., 2021). Kertamukti et al. (2022) argue that religious moderation is crucial in cultivating a balanced religious worldview, fostering peace, and promoting interfaith tolerance within society.

Azis Et Al (2021) in their study mentioned the role of Pancasila educational values in addressing radicalism through the four indicators of religious moderation. The first precept, Belief in One God, promotes tolerance by encouraging respect for religious pluralism, which counters extremist views. The second precept, Just and Civilized Humanity, directly supports anti-radicalism by fostering awareness of the importance of upholding human dignity and societal welfare, essential in combating radical ideologies. The third precept, The Unity of Indonesia, reinforces national commitment to unity, which is vital in preventing divisions caused by radical movements. Lastly, the fourth and fifth precepts, Democracy and Social Justice, provide a framework for adaptive responses to diversity, ensuring that social justice and democratic values are upheld, thus

discouraging radical actions. The study concludes that Pancasila's values serve as a foundational countermeasure to radicalism, shaping a mindset that emphasizes moderation, tolerance, and unity within Indonesian society.

In the book on religious moderation by the Ministry of Religious Affairs, it is explained that the goal of religious moderation is to mediate and encourage the transition from extreme and exaggerated religious practices to a balanced middle ground. This concept is rooted in the core principles of religious doctrines, particularly focused on the humanization of humanity (Azis & Anam, 2021). A survey by PPIM UIN Jakarta reveals that the majority of university students demonstrate a high level of religious tolerance. However, approximately 24.89% of the students exhibit low levels of religious tolerance, with 5.27% showing very low tolerance. This means that 30.16% of Indonesian university students have low or very low religious tolerance. On the other hand, 69.83% of students display a high level of religious tolerance, with 20% exhibiting exceptionally high tolerance toward practitioners of other faiths (PPIM, 2021).

Habibah et al., (2022) emphasize that the manifestation of religious moderation is crucial for promoting tolerance, particularly among Generation Z. This finding contributes to fostering religious tolerance within their immediate environment. This is supported by the acquisition of knowledge about tolerance, which in turn leads to attitudes and practices grounded in an enhanced awareness of tolerance within their social spheres. Research by Pute et al. (2023) highlights the pivotal role of Generation Z in advancing religious moderation through digital literacy. They contribute by forming digital literacy communities, disseminating content conducive to religious moderation, implementing online mentoring initiatives, and organizing online competitions. According to Salsabila et al. (2022), Generation Z, known for their technological expertise, is poised to play a leading role in safeguarding Indonesia's diversity and acting as a social control apparatus to counter provocations that threaten national unity, particularly on social media platforms. Choirin & Syafi'i (2024) stress that Generation Z is crucial for national progress, given their intelligence, creativity, and analytical skills in technology. These qualities greatly contribute to their educational and professional development, as well as their role in social transformation.

The research gap identified here is the lack of in-depth studies exploring how Generation Z in Indonesia navigates the digital space in terms of religious moderation. While previous studies have addressed internet addiction and digital

behavior, they have not sufficiently explored how these behaviors specifically influence religious tolerance and understanding of moderation. This gap is significant because understanding how young people form their religious beliefs through digital media is essential for addressing potential risks and fostering a more inclusive religious discourse.

The purpose of this study is to fill this gap by examining the relationship between internet usage and religious moderation in Generation Z students at Universitas Cendekia Abditama. The study will explore how students engage with digital content and how these interactions shape their perspectives on religious diversity and moderation. Furthermore, the study seeks to understand the role of digital literacy in fostering a more discerning approach to online religious information. Given the growing concern about the spread of radical ideologies online, this research aims to offer insights that could help develop strategies to promote religious moderation and tolerance in the digital age.

In conclusion, this study seeks to make a significant contribution to the field by addressing a critical gap in understanding how digital media influences religious moderation among Indonesian youth. By exploring the lived experiences of Generation Z students and their online religious engagement, this research aims to provide valuable insights into how religious moderation can be fostered in an era of digital information. The findings will contribute to discussions on digital literacy and the role of technology in shaping religious attitudes, providing recommendations for fostering a more inclusive and tolerant religious culture in Indonesia.

## **RESEARCH METHOD**

The present research employs a qualitative methodology, specifically adopting a phenomenological approach. This methodological choice is motivated by the scarcity of extant research on religious moderation within the demographic of Generation Z, particularly employing the phenomenological paradigm. The method's principal strength lies in its capacity to explicate the essential nature of phenomena, thereby furnishing a comprehensive portrayal that accurately reflects the reality at hand (Moerer-Urdahl & Creswell, 2004). Phenomenology, as a philosophical framework, directs attention toward how individuals experience and make meaning of specific phenomena, positing that these experiences are not solely a product of isolated events but are fundamentally shaped by the inherent

phenomena that constitute their lifeworld (Villa et al., 2018). The researcher endeavors to provide a vivid and comprehensive delineation of the research object by elucidating the phenomena experienced by the informants (Helaluddin, 2019).

These delineated phenomena are grounded in authentic and factual circumstances, aspiring to convey a naturalistic impression congruent with the definitional tenets of phenomenology (Mujib, 2015). The study's subjects consist of students enrolled at Universitas Cendekia Abditama in Tangerang, Banten, Indonesia, who actively leverage the internet, particularly social media, as a pivotal conduit for acquiring religious knowledge pertinent to their daily existence. The research unfolds over an approximate two-month duration, involving structured in-depth interviews and direct observational analyses of their internet usage patterns, as well as their behaviors and practices related to religious engagement.

## **RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

Said Aqil Al Munawar, as referenced by Rusli et al. (2022), posits that the application of religious tolerance constitutes a pivotal factor in engendering tranquility and well-being among human societies. Numerous research findings have revealed that the phenomenon of excessive internet utilization among Generation Z has notable implications for the exposure to intolerance and the undermining of pluralism. This is discernible, firstly, through Uncontrolled Information: Despite affording open access to information, the internet simultaneously facilitates unbridled exposure to extremist or intolerant viewpoints (Conway, 2017). Generation Z may inadvertently encounter content propagating religious intolerance or disparaging pluralism. Secondly, Social Media and Filter Bubble: Generation Z exhibits a proclivity to be ensnared within the confines of a filter bubble on social media platforms, predominantly exposing them to content consonant with their pre-existing perspectives (Spohr, 2017; Zimmer et al., 2019).

This inclination refers to how people tend to engage primarily with information that supports their pre-existing beliefs, especially in the digital age. As they consume content that aligns with their views, they are less exposed to alternative perspectives. This creates echo chambers, where their convictions are continuously reinforced without challenge. Consequently, individuals become isolated from differing viewpoints, which hampers their ability to appreciate and understand the complexities of diversity. This limited exposure reduces their

capacity for empathy and tolerance, ultimately undermining the social fabric that relies on mutual respect and understanding among diverse groups.

Thirdly, the Impact of Online Group Dynamics: Generation Z actively participates in online communities, where, while many communities exhibit positive attributes, certain forums serve as congregations for extremist ideologies (O'Hara & Stevens, 2015). This dynamic significantly shapes their perspectives on religion and pluralism. Fourthly, Internet Utilization as a Vehicle for Propaganda: Extremist entities adeptly exploit the internet as a platform for disseminating propaganda and advancing their ideologies. Through this means, they propagate intolerant messages, exerting influence on the younger generation and fostering narrow and extreme perspectives on religion (Rozika, 2017).

Fifthly, Educational Deficiency and Digital Literacy: Generation Z may exhibit a deficit in critical skills necessary for discerning information on the internet. This susceptibility to accepting information without r In light of the foregoing considerations, this study seeks to meticulously investigate the protracted utilization of the internet and prolonged access to digital information, examining their influence on the perspectives, attitudes, and behaviors pertaining to religious moderation among Generation Z.

Universitas Cendekia Abditama is a private institution of higher learning located in Tangerang, which is committed to the integration of universal Islamic values into the tri-dharma of higher education. The institution has distilled these universal Islamic values into three foundational principles, collectively known as the trilogy of Universitas Cendekia Abditama. This trilogy comprises a commitment to an Islamic orientation, discipline, and the cultivation of akhlaqul karimah, or noble character. These principles are systematically expounded through a dedicated local course named "al Izzah al Islamiyah," which is mandated with a credit allocation of 2 hours for all enrolled students. Universitas Cendekia Abditama boasts an enrollment exceeding 2000 students, characterized by a rich tapestry of ethnic backgrounds and diverse socio-economic statuses. Predominantly, these individuals affiliate with the Islamic faith. Remarkably, the Islamic way of life at Universitas Cendekia Abditama (UCA) manifests itself in a state of flourishing coexistence, underscoring the successful integration of a varied student body within the Islamic ethos on campus.

Atiqi Chollisni, assuming the role of Deputy of Rector on Collaboration and Student Affairs, while concurrently serving as a lecturer for Al Izzah Al Islamiyah, articulates the integral significance of this academic subject. Emphasizing the scholarly pursuit, the course is meticulously designed to foster a



comprehensive comprehension of the Maqasid Sharia—representing the ultimate objectives of Islamic jurisprudence. Beyond the theoretical exegesis, the instructional framework prioritizes the practical instantiation of Islamic knowledge. Moreover, it intricately interweaves the imperatives of discipline and the inculcation of noble character traits, denoted as Akhlaqul Karimah. This scholarly and pedagogical synthesis is geared towards equipping students with a nuanced and experiential understanding of Sharia principles, spanning both theoretical elucidations and their pragmatic application in individual conduct and societal engagements.

The pedagogical framework for teaching Al Izzah Islamiyah at Cendekia Abditama University focuses on the *mau'idzatul hasanah* approach, which is a didactic model that combines dialogical and interactive discourse. In his research, Choirin (2021) explains that this strategy closely resembles the da'wah methodology of the Prophet Muhammad, which is widely acknowledged for its effectiveness in bringing about behavioral change among followers. Choirin (2021) identifies several prominent features of the *mau'idzatul hasanah* approach to da'wah: a) Empathetic and Inspirational Discourse: This attribute entails employing compassionate and encouraging language with the intention of motivating and elevating the audience. b) Politeness and Humility: This aspect emphasizes the significance of displaying respect and humility, deliberately refraining from any appearance of arrogance or condescending. b) Mitigating Excessive Sarcasm: This functionality discourages the utilization of an excessive amount of sarcasm, as it has the potential to diminish the recipient's sense of self-worth and hinder the efficacy of communication. Implementing the *mau'idzatul hasanah* approach not only promotes a comprehensive comprehension of Islamic principles but also cultivates a courteous and intellectually invigorating educational atmosphere. This method fosters a more profound and hands-on learning.

### **The Internet Usage Among Students of Universitas Cendikia Abditama (UCA)**

The prevalence of internet usage within the student body at Universitas Cendikia Abditama (UCA) is markedly high, as discerned through meticulous observations by the researcher. A substantial majority of students demonstrate a proclivity for utilizing the internet for more than 7 hours daily, with only a marginal segment dedicating fewer hours to this activity. Notably, there exists a subset of students who engage with the internet for durations exceeding 10 hours per day. The total usage of internet by the students of UCA confirms the research

of (Annur, 2022). The predominant purpose motivating students to engage with the internet is the fulfillment of academic obligations, encompassing the completion of coursework and the augmentation of knowledge relevant to the subjects imparted within the academic curriculum.

In addition to its academic utility, a noteworthy cohort of students leverages the internet for recreational endeavors, including the consumption of audio-visual content such as films, music, and podcasts disseminated by globally recognized channels in the virtual realm. This multifaceted pattern of internet utilization underscores its dominant functionality in facilitating academic pursuits and providing a platform for recreational engagement within the diverse landscape of student activities at UCA.

Within the student body of Universitas Cendikia Abditama (UCA), an acknowledgment prevails regarding the utilization of diverse internet channels as conduits for procuring Islamic information. This is primarily observed on popular social media platforms such as TikTok, YouTube, Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp, Telegram, and other analogous platforms. A nuanced examination reveals a discernible predilection among the Generation Z cohort for the TikTok platform, particularly in the pursuit of religious knowledge. The rationale expressed by students for this preference is rooted in TikTok's distinctive ability to present succinct yet captivating video content. Notably, this content is tailored to meet the exigencies of the Gen Z demographic, addressing issues intimately interwoven with their lifestyle.

This observation unveils an intricate dynamic wherein students find TikTok's content delivery both aesthetically appealing and substantively pertinent to their informational needs. Furthermore, the student discourse emphasizes the efficacy of TikTok's algorithmic machinery. This operational algorithm, characterized by its astute functionality, ensures that individuals engaging with specific thematic content consistently receive material akin to their previous queries or interactions. This sophisticated algorithmic orchestration emerges as a key determinant fostering heightened student engagement with TikTok, as it adeptly tailors content to align with users' preferences and prior patterns of engagement.

Beyond their engagement on TikTok, students at UCA exhibit a proclivity for extracting more nuanced and in-depth information from YouTube, appreciating its capacity for prolonged content delivery. UCA students sometimes use YouTube as a means of obtaining Islamic knowledge from well-known speakers who they find relatable to their generation. Ustadz Hanan Attaki, Ust.

Bobby, Habib Jafar Assegaf, and Ustadzah Halimah Alaydrus are highly regarded by them for acquiring da'wah insights. This finding supports Prasetya & Nasrulloh (2023)' study that the religious moderation values promoted by Habib Ja'afar have a noteworthy influence on the millennial generation. The religious knowledge of the community is strengthened by the easy accessibility, the relevancy of the lessons, and the practical assistance provided. Moreover, they actively acquire Islamic insights through WhatsApp broadcasts and dynamically circulated WhatsApp groups. The sought-after Islamic knowledge by UCA students revolves around intricacies tied to their social milieu and age-specific concerns. This includes, but is not limited to, explorations of the social lives of young individuals, the jurisprudence of worship, fiqh, various dimensions of Sharia law, and motivational content that offers profound insights into the existential journey of Generation Z. This discerning audience actively seeks or values content that not only caters to their spiritual inquiries but also resonates with the multifaceted dynamics inherent in their social and spiritual landscapes.

Amidst the prevailing concerns articulated by various stakeholders, where excessive internet access within the Generation Z cohort is apprehensively associated with potential exposure to radicalism and religious terrorism, given their heightened vulnerability to infiltrating misleading ideologies. This concern is compounded by the potential susceptibility of these young individuals to deviant ideological incursions. Conversely, an empirical investigation conducted among UCA students has yielded findings that deviate from this prevailing narrative. The results of an in-depth study reveal that students, constituting a demographic characterized by pronounced internet usage, manifest perspectives marked by moderation, an aversion to violence, a profound commitment to tolerance, and a steadfast allegiance to national values. This discerning observation underscores a noteworthy counter-narrative within the UCA student body, challenging prevalent assumptions regarding the assumed correlation between excessive internet exposure and ideological susceptibility.

Through extensive observation and interviews, we have shown that the level of religious moderation among UCAs' students contradicts several study findings, including those from previous studies done by (O'Hara & Stevens, 2015; Conway, 2017; Spohr, 2017; Zimmer et al., 2019). Their studies revealed that internet usage has a significant impact on users' perspectives regarding the deviation of religious matters. The level of religious moderation among UCA students remains high despite their heavy consumption of digital material, indicating that internet usage does not significantly influence UCA's students. The

deviation from the previous research due to the students have a good level of religious (Islamic) literacy which is obtained in the al-Izzah al Islamamiyah course which apart from the course provides a touch of religious morals. strong and carried out by lecturers who are very competent in providing examples in the classroom and public spaces.

In class, for example, according to Aprianif, one of the al Izzah al Islamiyah lecturers said that he and many lecturers act as good role models, for example, they are very used to respecting differences of opinion in the classroom between students and lecturers. This claim is additionally supported by Muklis, a lecturer of Al Izzah Islamiyah at the institution. Muklis notes that the pupils often imitate the attitudes, mannerisms, and overall dispositions of the Al Izzah staff. He explains that the instructional approach of embodying da'wah through example behavior has a significant and long-lasting influence on student views. Their religious beliefs are influenced by their instructors, resulting in moderation outlook in religious belief and activities. The implementation of the *mau'idzatul hasanah* approach not only enables a nuanced comprehension of Islamic principles but also cultivates a respectful and intellectually interesting educational atmosphere. This method fosters a more profound and hands-on learning experience for students by promoting their active involvement and critical thinking. It helps students connect theoretical knowledge with practical application in their own behavior as well as in their relationships within society.

The finding of this study in line with the research conducted by Witro (2024) that in order to cultivate a moderate generation, it is imperative to enhance Islamic education by formally embracing religious moderation as a guiding principle. This perspective is supported by the finding of Musyahid & Kolis (2023) studies, that the religious moderation could be strengthened by promoting advanced cognitive skills, fostering a balanced personality, preventing extremism, applying moderation values to practical situations, involving teachers and schools, and implementing effective strategies. It is in line with the thought of Sheikh Ali Hasan Ahmad Ad-Dary cited in Nasution (2022) that developing a culture of literacy as a form of education is the important role to create a moderate person in religion practices.

In addition to the aforementioned determinants, several contributory factors elucidate the efficacious cultivation of religious moderation within the milieu of Universitas Cendikia Abditama (UCA). Notably, the adeptness in Digital Literacy among UCA students stands out as a salient factor. This proficiency equips the younger demographic with the acumen to judiciously

evaluate and comprehend information disseminated through digital channels. Secondly, the inculcation of Critical Skills serves as a catalyst, compelling UCA students to hone their capacities for critical and analytical thinking in scrutinizing information encountered within the digital sphere. This imperative entails the nuanced ability to discriminate between objective data and perspectives characterized by extremity or bias.

Furthermore, the role of Parental Supervision and Influential Figures, including academic mentors, assumes paramount significance. The stewardship provided by parents, educators, and other influential figures is instrumental in guiding and overseeing the online engagements of the younger cohort. This oversight is indispensable in ensuring the consumption of content aligned with healthier informational paradigms. The encouragement of Positive Online Engagement represents a pivotal stratagem, motivating the younger generation to participate in constructive and educational online endeavors. This may encompass involvement in moderate religious educational platforms, cross-religious dialogues, or projects designed to foster interfaith tolerance.

Lastly, an emphasis on Empathy and Appreciation for Diversity emerges as an imperative facet of the equation. The pedagogical endeavor to instill a profound understanding of the significance of empathy towards others and the cultivation of appreciation for religious diversity and beliefs is foundational. Rijal et al. (2023) in their study suggest that positive local values could be stimulated to people in enhancing religious moderation in Indonesia. Through the imbuing of these values, the younger cohort is better positioned to embody moderation in their religious praxis. In summation, a comprehensive approach that integrates educational imperatives, mentorship, skill refinement, and the cultivation of affirmative attitudes towards diversity empowers the younger generation to navigate the intricate landscape of digital information without succumbing to the pitfalls of extremism or religious intolerance.

## **CONCLUSION**

In conclusion, this study thoroughly explores the dynamics at Universitas Cendikia Abditama (UCA) concerning religious moderation, digital information consumption, and related factors. UCA's core principles of Islamic orientation, discipline, and akhlaqul karimah highlight its dedication to embedding universal Islamic values in higher education. Central to this commitment, the al-Izzah al Islamiyah course not only imparts theoretical knowledge but also practical applications, nurturing a nuanced understanding of Sharia principles and

fostering noble character traits. The widespread and intensive internet use among UCA students, exceeding 7 hours daily for most, underscores the pivotal role of digital platforms in both academic pursuits and recreational activities. Contrary to concerns about internet overuse leading to radicalization in Generation Z, UCA students, characterized by their substantial internet engagement, demonstrate perspectives centered on moderation, tolerance, and allegiance to national values. The diverse use of internet platforms, including TikTok as a prominent source of religious knowledge, showcases students' adaptability to various digital media. The interaction of digital literacy, critical thinking skills, parental guidance, and positive online engagement emerges as critical factors shaping the high level of religious moderation observed among UCA students.

Furthermore, the study highlights the pivotal role of the al-Izzah al Islamiyah course in shaping students' religious literacy and fostering an inclusive environment that respects diverse viewpoints. Emphasizing empathy and appreciation for diversity, the course employs a holistic approach encompassing education, mentorship, skill development, and positive attitudes. This approach enhances students' ability to navigate the digital landscape responsibly, mitigating risks of extremism or religious intolerance. Ultimately, the research underscores Universitas Cendikia Abditama's success in integrating Islamic values with modern education. It presents a narrative where extensive internet use aligns harmoniously with a steadfast commitment among students to moderation, tolerance, and national values. These insights contribute significantly to discussions on how religious education, digital literacy, and the cultivation of a balanced worldview intersect within the Generation Z demographic.

## REFERENCES

- Abdalla, U. A. (2023, July 6). *Tentang "Moderasi Beragama."* <https://www.kompas.id/baca/opini/2023/07/05/tentang-moderasi-beragama>
- Abdurrohman, F., & Fitriana, A. A. (2023). The Role of Digital Literacy in Strengthening Student Religious Moderation. *2nd AICOIES 2023 UIN Sumatera Utara Medan*, 2, 239=247. <https://doi.org/10.18326/aicoies.v2i1.573>
- Aguilar, G. K., Campbell, H. A., Stanley, M., & Taylor, E. (2017). Communicating mixed messages about religion through internet memes. *Information, Communication & Society*, 20(10), 1498–1520. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1369118X.2016.1229004>
- Anderson, M., & Jiang, J. (2018). *Teens, Social Media and Technology 2018*. <https://www.pewresearch.org/internet/2018/05/31/teens-social-media-technology-2018/>
- Annur, C. M. (2022, June 29). *Survei: Pecandu Internet Terbanyak dari Kalangan Gen Z*. <https://databoks.katadata.co.id/datapublish/2022/06/29/survei-pecandu-internet-terbanyak-dari-kalangan-gen-z>
- Azis, A., & Anam, A. K. (2021). *Moderasi Beragama Berlandaskan Nilai-nilai Islam* (1st ed.). Direktorat Jenderal Pendidikan Islam Kementerian Agama RI.
- Azis, D., Saihu, M., Hsb, A., & Islamy, A. (2021). Pancasila Educational Values in Indicators Religious Moderation in Indonesia. *FITRAH: Jurnal Kajian Ilmu-ilmu Keislaman*, 7(2), 229-244. [doi:https://doi.org/10.24952/fitrah.v7i2.4475](https://doi.org/10.24952/fitrah.v7i2.4475)
- Campbell, H. A., & Evolvi, G. (2020). Contextualizing current digital religion research on emerging technologies. *Human Behavior and Emerging Technologies*, 2(1), 5–17. <https://doi.org/10.1002/hbe2.149>
- Choirin, M. (2021). Pendekatan Dakwah Rasulullah Saw Di Era Mekkah dan Relevansinya Di Era Modern. *Misykat al-Anwar Jurnal Kajian Islam dan Masyarakat*, 4(2), 97. <https://doi.org/10.24853/ma.4.2.97-114>
- Choirin, M., Dwijayanto, A., Yumna, L., Muaz, Y. A. (2024). Nurturing Moderate Islam: Strategic Da'wah Communication in the Digital Era for Generation Z. *International Journal Ihya' 'Ulum al-Din*, 26(1), 108-118. <https://doi.org/10.21580/ihya.26.1.20008>

- Choirin, M., & Syafi'i, A. H. (2024). Inovasi Dakwah untuk Penguatan Kesadaran Keagamaan: Studi Pada Komunitas Muslim Kelas Menengah. *Al-I'lam; Jurnal Komunikasi dan Penyiaran Islam*, 7(2), 28–41.
- Conway, M. (2017). Determining the Role of the Internet in Violent Extremism and Terrorism: Six Suggestions for Progressing Research. *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, 40(1), 77–98. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1057610X.2016.1157408>
- Habibah, S. M., Setyowati, R. R. N., & Fatmawati, F. (2022). Moderasi Beragama dalam Upaya Internalisasi Nilai Toleransi pada Generasi Z. *Pancasila: Jurnal Keindonesiaan*, 2(1), 126–135. <https://doi.org/10.52738/pjk.v2i1.70>
- Helaluddin. (2019). *Mengenal lebih Dekat dengan Pendekatan Fenomenologi: Sebuah Penelitian Kualitatif* [Preprint]. Open Science Framework. <https://doi.org/10.31219/osf.io/stgfb>
- Inayatillah, I. (2021). Moderasi Beragama di Kalangan Milenial Peluang, Tantangan, Kompleksitas dan Tawaran Solusi. *Tazkir : Jurnal Penelitian Ilmu-ilmu Sosial dan Keislaman*, 7(1), 123–142. <https://doi.org/10.24952/tazkir.v7i1.4235>
- Kertamukti, R., Nasrul, M. J., Budiayasa, M., & Imtinan, M. T. (2022). Instagram Religious Moderation Dialogue Space for Generation Z. *Nyimak Journal of Communication*, 6(2), 229–250.
- Kholis, N. (2021). Dakwah Virtual, Generasi Z dan Moderasi Beragama. *IQTIDA : Journal of Da'wah and Communication*, 1(02), 155–168. <https://doi.org/10.28918/iqtida.v1i02.4525>
- Kosasih, E. (2019). Literasi Media Sosial dalam Pemasarakatan Sikap Moderasi Beragama. *Jurnal Bimas Islam*, 12(2), 263–296. <https://doi.org/10.37302/jbi.v12i2.118>
- Lenhart, A. (2015). *Teens, Social Media & Technology Overview 2015*. <https://www.pewresearch.org/internet/2015/04/09/teens-social-media-technology-2015/>
- Lubis, A. (2020). Effectiveness Of Village Fund Management On Increasing Community Welfare With Management Religiosity Behavior As Moderating Variables. *FITRAH: Jurnal Kajian Ilmu-ilmu Keislaman*, 6(1), 47-64. doi:<https://doi.org/10.24952/fitrah.v6i1.2489>
- Lundby, K., & Evolvi, G. (2021). Theoretical frameworks for approaching religion and new media. In H. A. Campbell & R. Tsuria, *Digital Religion* (2nd ed., pp. 233–249). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429295683-23>



- Makruf, J., Thaha, I., Muttaqin, Z., Faiz, F. F., & Febriyana, F. (2021). *Membincang Moderasi Beragama: Sebuah Intisari Serial Webinar* (1st ed.). PPIM UIN Jakarta.
- Moerer-Urdahl, T., & Creswell, J. W. (2004). Using Transcendental Phenomenology to Explore the “Ripple Effect” in a Leadership Mentoring Program. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 3(2), 19–35. <https://doi.org/10.1177/160940690400300202>
- Mujib, A. (2015). PENDEKATAN FENOMENOLOGI DALAM STUDI ISLAM. *Jurnal Pendidikan Islam*, 6.
- Musyahid, M., & Kolis, N. (2023). Religious Moderation Implementation in Islamic Education: A Systematic Review. *FITRAH: Jurnal Kajian Ilmu-Ilmu Keislaman*, 9(2), 265–284. <https://doi.org/10.24952/fitrah.v9i2.9547>
- Nasution, F. (2022). Modernization of Islamic Education in North Sumatra: Thoughts and Contributions of Sheikh Ali Hasan Ahmad Ad-Dary. *FITRAH: Jurnal Kajian Ilmu-Ilmu Keislaman*, 8(1), 77–94. <https://doi.org/10.24952/fitrah.v8i1.5129>
- O’Hara, K., & Stevens, D. (2015). Echo Chambers and Online Radicalism: Assessing the Internet’s Complicity in Violent Extremism. *Policy & Internet*, 7(4), 401–422. <https://doi.org/10.1002/poi3.88>
- PPIM. (2021). *Rilis Temuan Survei, PPIM Paparkan Potret Toleransi Beragama di Universitas*. <https://ppim.uinjkt.ac.id/2021/03/01/rilis-temuan-survei-ppim-paparkan-potret-toleransi-beragama-di-universitas/>
- Prasetya, P., & Nasrulloh, N. (2023). Religious Moderation Values in the Millennial Generation based on the Qur’an in Youtube Close The Door Habib Husein Ja’far al-Hadar. *FITRAH: Jurnal Kajian Ilmu-Ilmu Keislaman*, 9(2), 285–302. <https://doi.org/10.24952/fitrah.v9i2.9995>
- Pute, J. P., Gaol, N. T. L., & Naenggolan, H. T. (2023). Kontribusi Generasi Z dalam Membangun Moderasi Beragama melalui Literasi Digital. *Dharmasmrti: Jurnal Ilmu Agama dan Kebudayaan*, 23(1), 29–38. <https://doi.org/10.32795/ds.v23i1.4073>
- Rijal, F., Sandra, A., Hanum, R., & Idris, T. (2023). Strengthening Local Wisdom Value in Developing Religious Moderation. *FITRAH: Jurnal Kajian Ilmu-Ilmu Keislaman*, 9(1), 135–146. <https://doi.org/10.24952/fitrah.v9i1.7857>

- Rizki, M. M. (2022). Penguatan Nilai-Nilai Moderasi Beragama Bagi Generasi Z di Desa Sokaraja Lor. *Jumat Keagamaan: Jurnal Pengabdian Masyarakat*, 3(1), 9–15. [https://doi.org/10.32764/abdimas\\_agama.v3i1.2477](https://doi.org/10.32764/abdimas_agama.v3i1.2477)
- Rozika, W. (2017). Propaganda dan Penyebaran Ideologi Terorisme Melalui Media Internet (Studi Kasus Pelaku Cyber Terorisme oleh Bahrhun Naim). *Jurnal Ilmu Kepolisian*, 089(1), 122–134.
- Rusli, R., Ainah, N., Arief, M. I., & Husin, G. M. I. (2022). Religious Moderation of Generation Z: Attitude of Students' Religious Tolerance in Strengthening the Character of the Nation. *El-Buhuth: Borneo Journal of Islamic Studies*, 1–10. <https://doi.org/10.21093/el-buhuth.v5i01.4934>
- Salsabila, H., Yuliasuty, D. S., & Zahra, N. H. S. (2022). Peran Generasi Z dalam Moderasi Beragama di Era Digital. *Al-Adyan: Journal of Religious Studies*, 3(2), 118–128.
- Spohr, D. (2017). Fake news and ideological polarization: Filter bubbles and selective exposure on social media. *Business Information Review*, 34(3), 150–160. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0266382117722446>
- Villa, G., Manara, D. F., Brancato, T., Rocco, G., Stievano, A., Vellone, E., & Alvaro, R. (2018). Life with a urostomy: A phenomenological study. *Applied Nursing Research*, 39, 46–52. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.apnr.2017.10.005>
- Witro, D. (2024). Religious Moderation of Formal and Informal: Its Implementation and Relevance in Countering Radicalism in Indonesia. *FITRAH: Jurnal Kajian Ilmu-Ilmu Keislaman*, 10(1), 1–26. <https://doi.org/Doi:10.24952/fitrah.v10i1.11078>
- Zimmer, F., Scheibe, K., Stock, M., & Stock, W. G. (2019). Fake News in Social Media: Bad Algorithms or Biased Users? *Journal of Information Science Theory and Practice*, 7(2), 40–53. <https://doi.org/10.1633/JISTAP.2019.7.2.4>