Fostering Religious Moderation in Generation Z: The Impact of Cultural Environment and Social Media

Relit Nur Edi*, Hervin Yoki Pradikta, Khavid Normasyhuri
Universitas Islam Negeri Raden Intan Lampung, Indonesia
*Correspondence: ✉ relitnuredi@radenintan.ac.id

Abstract

The objective of this research is to explore the relationship between the cultural environment, social media, and religious moderation among Generation Z in Lampung Province. This study utilizes a quantitative research methodology supported by SmartPLS 3.0 software. Primary data was collected using a purposive sampling method, focusing on Generation Z in Lampung Province, with a total of 500 respondents. Data collection was conducted via Google Forms, and responses were evaluated using a Likert scale. The findings reveal a path coefficient of 0.409, coupled with a notably high t-statistic value of 6.345 and a p-value of 0.000. These results provide empirical evidence that the cultural environment exerts a positive influence on religious moderation within Generation Z in Lampung Province. Likewise, a path coefficient of 0.350 and a t-statistic value of 5.354, which surpasses the critical threshold of 1.96, along with a p-value of 0.000, indicate that social media positively impacts religious moderation in this cohort as well. In summary, the research underscores the significant roles that both the cultural environment and social media play in shaping religious moderation among Generation Z in Lampung Province. This study adds to the existing literature by examining the interplay between cultural and technological influences on the religious behaviors of young people. By understanding how local and global cultural values disseminate through social media and shape attitudes towards religious moderation, the findings offer valuable insights into the sociology of religion. Practically, these insights are essential for policymakers, educators, and religious institutions in crafting programs that promote diverse religious moderation. Such initiatives are crucial for preventing polarization, fostering tolerance, and enhancing social cohesion in an ever-changing landscape.

INTRODUCTION

In Lampung Province, religion is frequently intertwined with ethnic and political identities, creating challenges for efforts aimed at promoting religious moderation. In many communities, religion is regarded as an essential aspect of group identity, which can restrict the potential for more moderate and inclusive interpretations of religious teachings. For example, in certain ethnic groups, alterations in religious practices may be viewed as a betrayal of cultural heritage, adding pressure on individuals who aspire to embrace a more moderate approach to their faith (Kustati et al., 2023). In Lampung, social interactions are frequently constrained by strict cultural norms, which also affect the practice of religious moderation. In many regions, the interaction between various religious groups is minimal, leading to fewer opportunities for interfaith dialogue and understanding. This social isolation and lack of exposure to diverse perspectives can foster polarization rather than moderation, particularly among younger generations who may have limited chances to engage with and learn from those with different backgrounds (Verkuyten& Kollar, 2021).

The diverse issues of moderation among Generation Z in Lampung Province influenced by social media reflect global challenges in managing the impact of digital technology. Social media is often an arena for the spread of less valid or extreme religious narratives, thus influencing the way

the younger generation views religious moderation. This challenge requires strong digital literacy and active assistance to integrate the values of moderation with technology (Saepudin et al., 2023).

The open and unlimited nature of information on social media provides a broad platform for Generation Z to explore various religious perspectives. This can be a double-edged sword: on the one hand, it allows for a broader and deeper understanding of the diversity of religions and beliefs; on the other hand, social media also facilitates the spread of extremism and misinformation (Muchtar Ghazali & Hasanah, 2020).

Youth in Lampung are often exposed to a variety of sources that may not always promote moderation, triggering the adoption of more radical or intolerant views. Polarization is a significant problem that is exacerbated by social media. Social media algorithms often give rise to content that triggers strong emotional reactions and confirmation bias, which can deepen religious divisions. In Lampung, where religious and ethnic diversity co-exist, social media can muddy understanding and interactions between groups by promoting exclusive or inflammatory narratives (Nyanasuryanadi et al., 2023). Challenges in verifying information on social media also affect religious moderation. Generation Z, while technologically proficient, often struggles with the media literacy skills necessary to navigate a sea of often false or misleading information. This creates an environment where truth can easily be distorted or ignored, complicating the process of forming a balanced and informed religious view (Patria & Zulkarnaen, 2023).

The cultural environment has a fundamental role in shaping attitudes and behavior, including religious practices among Generation Z. This influence significantly influences how religious moderation is strengthened or weakened in different social contexts. For Generation Z, who grew up in an era of globalization and high digital connectivity, their local cultural environment remains an important factor in determining how religious values and practices are developed and adapted. Cultural norms supporting pluralism and tolerance play a role in promoting religious moderation. In societies that value diversity, young individuals are often exposed to different perspectives and lifestyles from an early age (Muhlisin et al., 2023). This experience enriches their understanding of the complexity of society and the importance of maintaining harmony between religious and ethnic groups. Generation Z who grew up in this environment tend to adopt a more flexible and inclusive approach to their religious practices, rejecting extreme or exclusive views that might fuel tension or conflict (Suradi et al., 2020).

The role of community leaders and religious leaders in the local cultural environment cannot be ignored. Leaders who advocate for a more moderate approach to religion and who actively promote interfaith dialogue and understanding can have a profound impact on the youth in their communities. In many cases, these figures become role models that influence Generation Z's attitudes and behavior towards religion and diversity, providing concrete examples of how religious moderation can be applied in everyday life (Sunarti & Sari, 2021). However, on the other hand, there is a contradiction where the cultural environment has no influence on religious moderation in Generation Z because the general characteristics of Generation Z which include independence in thinking and skepticism towards traditional authority also play a role in shaping their attitudes towards religion. They tend to question and critically evaluate religious doctrines and practices that were accepted uncritically by previous generations (Harahap et al., 2023). This attitude strengthens their independence from local cultural influences that are more conservative or do not support moderation in religion. Increased education and global awareness also play an important role. Educated Generation Z is more likely to be exposed to ideas about pluralism, tolerance, and peaceful coexistence between different religious groups. Formal and non-formal education has encouraged them to adopt a more open and moderate attitude, which again, does not always stem from their local cultural values (Arifinsyah et al., 2020).

The influence of peer groups, which are often cross-cultural and global, also influences attitudes of religious moderation among Generation Z. Interactions in heterogeneous networks provide opportunities for a wider exchange of ideas and experiences, which supports understanding and tolerance between beliefs. This indicates that peer influence may be more dominant in shaping

religious attitudes than direct local cultural influence (Zeng et al., 2021). Social media has played a crucial role in shaping and influencing religious moderation, especially among Generation Z. In the current digital era, social media is not only a platform for socializing, but also as a medium that facilitates the exchange of ideas, understanding and interpretation of various matters. aspects of life, including religion. Generation Z, known as digital natives, is highly influenced by the information and interactions that occur on social media, which in turn influences their religious attitudes and practices (Wardi et al., 2023).

Social media allows broad and fast access to a wider variety of sources of information about religion. Generation Z can discover religious interpretations and approaches from a variety of different viewpoints and traditions, not limited to local communities or teachings taught at home This opens up opportunities for them to compare, consider, and perhaps adopt a more moderate and inclusive attitude towards diversity of religions and beliefs (Kirana & Garadian, 2020). Social media also serves as a platform for advocacy and campaigns supporting religious moderation. Many religious groups and organizations use social media to spread messages about the importance of peaceful coexistence and acceptance of religious diversity. These campaigns often reach broad audiences, including Generation Z, who may not be reached through traditional communication methods (Pajarianto et al., 2023).

Social media allows individuals, especially young people, to build and strengthen their personal identities, including religious identities. Generation Z often uses social media to explore and express their beliefs. In this process, they may be exposed to a variety of views that help them form a more moderate and reflective approach to religion, which differs from orthodox or extreme approaches (Latifa et al., 2022). However, on the other hand, there is a contradiction in that social media has no influence on religious moderation in Generation Z because social media is often a space for disseminating information that is fast but not always accurate or in-depth. The phenomenon of "echo chambers," in which users tend to interact with information that reinforces existing views and beliefs, can limit exposure to dissenting or moderate views (Sutrisno et al., 2023).

Generation Z who are active on social media are exposed to content that reinforces extreme or polarizing views rather than that which supports moderation and interfaith understanding. The dynamics of interaction on social media often strengthen in-group identity and increase distance from out-groups, including in religious contexts (Tutgun-Ünal, 2021). This means that interactions in religiously homogeneous online groups or communities may reduce the likelihood of moderate religious experiences, as such interactions tend to reinforce existing beliefs and norms without challenge or questioning. While social media provides a platform for advocacy and campaigns in favor of tolerance and moderation, often these messages compete with large amounts of misinformation or extremist propaganda that also exploit the speed and reach of social media for their dissemination (Miftah, 2023).

In this case, Generation Z has difficulty sorting out credible and constructive information from the vast and often misleading information noise. The tendency to use social media as a tool for social validation may impact the way Generation Z individuals process religious information. Reliance on validation from peer groups or the number of likes and shares may lead individuals to prioritize popularity over personal reflection in religious understanding and practice, which may differ from moderate values (Zaid et al., 2022). The urgency to conduct research on strengthening religious moderation among Generation Z in Lampung Province with the role of the cultural environment and social media is very important considering the current urgent situation. Lampung Province, with its unique diversity, faces unique challenges in maintaining social harmony and tolerance amidst ethnic and religious diversity. Generation Z, highly connected to and influenced by social media, is in a critical position to shape the future of social and religious interactions (Zamzami et al., 2023).

Increasing polarization and identity-based conflict throughout the world, including in Indonesia, reinforces the need for youth-focused interventions. In Lampung Province, where there

is a history of ethnic and social conflict, this situation is even more urgent. Generation Z, who interact regularly via social media, is often exposed to narratives that can reinforce bias and intolerance (Neumaier, 2020).

The research gap lies in several aspects that have not been widely explored in the existing literature. Relevant theories, such as the Theory of Social Construction of Reality developed by Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann, and the Mediation Theory by Lev Vygotsky, have not been used together to understand the dynamics of religious moderation, especially in the context of the interaction between social media and the cultural environment (Manshur & Husni, 2020).

Most existing studies do not focus on generation Z, even though this generation has different characteristics and ways of interacting with social media compared to other generations, which makes it relevant for further study. Many studies are general in nature and have not taken into account specific local contexts, such as Lampung Province, which has unique cultural and social characteristics that may influence religious moderation (Mahsusi, 2023).

Many studies do not use a quantitative approach with in-depth primary data, while this study uses statistical methods, especially the Smart PLS version 3.0 application, which allows for more robust and accurate analysis of the relationships between the variables studied. These gaps point to the importance of further research that combines these theories, focuses on generation Z, and uses more appropriate methodological approaches to understand this phenomenon in a more specific local context (Royyan et al., 2023)

The novelty of this research is that it is different from previous research and offers new insights that how specific local contexts influence religious dynamics. By focusing the study on Lampung, this research makes it possible to understand the unique influences of its unique cultural environment, including the way local communities respond to and integrate global influences and new technologies into religious practices (Wibisono & Darmalaksana, 2022).

The focus on Generation Z is another important aspect of this study. This generation, who grew up in the digital era, has a different way of interacting with technology and social media than previous generations. They also tend to have different views on religion and spirituality, often influenced by their broad access to various sources of information and global views. Previous research has not specifically or deeply explored how Generation Z interprets and practices religious moderation in their local cultural context (Syarif & Hannan, 2021).

Thus, this research fills this gap by examining how traditional cultural values and the influence of social media interact to shape moderate religious practices among youth in Lampung. Its quantitative methodology, involving primary data collection, gives strength to this research. Using online and offline surveys designed to collect information about religious attitudes, perceptions, and practices, this research produces data that can be measured and statistically analyzed to find patterns and correlations (Masri & Warsodirejo, 2023).

A quantitative approach in this context allows research to draw conclusions about broader trends among Generation Z in Lampung and provides solid empirical evidence for existing theories. Additionally, the use of a combination of online and offline data collection tools ensures that a representative sample of the target population can be reached, including those with limited internet access. This is critical in areas like Lampung where digital accessibility can vary significantly. This approach also increases the reliability and validity of findings, as it allows researchers to tap into multiple perspectives within the target population (Daheri et al., 2023).

Therefore, understanding how social media and the local cultural environment interact to shape Generation Z's religious attitudes is important to respond to this challenge proactively. Lampung Province has a diverse ethnic and religious composition, which includes Lampung, Javanese, Balinese communities, and several other ethnic groups as well as main religions such as Islam, Christianity, Hinduism, and Buddhism. The dynamics of interactions between these groups are complex and often sensitive. Research that examines how Generation Z understands and practices religious moderation in a multicultural context will be very helpful in creating strategies that support social harmony (Daheri et al., 2023).

Current global conditions, where misinformation and propaganda are easily spread through digital media, require intelligent and knowledge-based responses. Lampung, with its unique features, provides a unique opportunity to study these dynamics at the micro scale. The results of this research can make an important contribution to global understanding of how to effectively overcome the problems of polarization and extremism in the digital era (Lessy & Rohman, 2022). The aim of this research is to see the relationship between the cultural environment and social media on religious moderation in Generation Z in Lampung Province. This research differentiates itself from previous studies and offers new insights through its specific geographic focus. Lampung, as a province that has a heterogeneous ethnic and cultural composition, is an ideal setting for studying how intercultural interactions influence religious attitudes and practices (Anwar, 2023)**.**

Theoretically, this research develops an understanding regarding Generation Z's perspective on accepting and practicing Islamic teachings in a modern context which is highly influenced by social media and cultural diversity. In this study, purposive sampling criteria were designed to ensure that participants were relevant to the research objectives. The respondents were Generation Z aged 19 to 26, which is an age group with high exposure to social media and local cultural dynamics. Specifically, they were college students in Lampung Province, representing a population that is active in religious discussions and cross-cultural interactions. Participants were selected from various religious backgrounds to explore variations in the meaning of religious moderation in a multicultural environment. This criterion was designed to reveal how the younger generation combines local traditions and modernity through social media.

From a theoretical perspective, this research offers new insights into the interaction between sharia and cultural identity in the formation of moderate religious attitudes among the younger generation. It helps identify and analyze how local cultural norms and the global influence of social media shape the understanding and practice of sharia. Thus, this research challenges and enriches existing theories that often isolate religious influences from their social and cultural contexts. From a practical perspective, the findings of this research have broad implications for policy development, religious education, and community initiatives. Policymakers can use insights from this study to design programs that support healthy religious moderation, encourage intercommunity dialogue, and prevent extremism. Interventions designed to increase interreligious understanding and tolerance can be developed by considering the specific influences of social media and local cultural dynamics. Furthermore, in an educational context, these findings can be used to formulate a curriculum that is more relevant to the lives of generation Z, integrating moderate Islamic values with their social and technological tendencies.

Religious education programs in schools and in communities can be adapted to incorporate elements of social media as a tool for teaching Islamic values, promoting constructive discussion and raising critical awareness of the information they receive. Finally, the results of this research also support Islamic institutions and local communities in designing and implementing initiatives that increase social and religious involvement among youth. Through community-based activities and social media, religious moderation can be strengthened, helping Generation Z in Lampung to develop a balanced and inclusive religious understanding. This will also help in the formation of a strong yet flexible religious identity capable of adapting to the challenges of the times.

The cultural environment plays an important role in shaping the context and practice of religious moderation in a society. This environment consists of prevailing values, norms, traditions, and social practices, all of which together influence the religious outlook and behavior of individuals and communities. As a fundamental element in the social structure, the cultural environment often becomes the basis for developing and maintaining attitudes of tolerance and understanding across religions (Mailin, 2023).

This is especially visible in areas that have historically been a meeting point of various civilizations and cultures, where societies have developed mechanisms of adaptation and coexistence that support religious moderation. Local traditions and customs that recognize and celebrate plurality often play an important role in encouraging attitudes of religious moderation, as

festivals and ceremonies involving interfaith participation can strengthen understanding and respect for the beliefs of others (Zakariyah et al., 2022). Ridha's research proves that the internalization process of traditional *Bugissikaunge* is a fundamental factor in predicting repressive behavior and intolerant views (Ridha, 2023). This approach really respects religious and social moderation, and respects the social and cultural norms of society while still respecting religious values. Burga and Dampolii's research shows evidence that supports the use of the multicultural Islamic boarding school education model (Burga & Damopolii, 2022). This model combines local cultural values, such as *sipakatau* 'mutual respect', *sipakainge'* 'reminding each other', *sipakalebbi* 'glorifying each other;, and *sipammase-mase* 'loving each other', with the aim of promoting religious moderation.

Faizah's article shows that the transmission of the principles of moderation has been maintained across generations through the development of indigenous knowledge and religious beliefs (Faizah et al., 2022). This can be seen from practices such as *barikankubro, mudunke* boat, gathering, and connecting. So far, the integration of religious moderation has not encountered any obstacles because it is integrated with customs. Research conducted by Bachrong & Ansar, (2021) emphasized that the *Aluk Tondolo* community and the *Tongkonan* traditional house are symbols of religious moderation, peace and brotherhood. In it there are several indigenous knowledge systems. The study developed formulates a hypothesis: H1: The cultural environment has an influence on religious moderation

In the ever-growing digital era, social media has emerged as an important factor influencing the dynamics of religious moderation. These platforms, with their ability to bring together people from diverse backgrounds and geographical locations, have played an inevitable role in formulating and influencing religious discourse. Social media, as an easily accessible means of mass communication, enables rapid and widespread exchange of information and ideas, which can significantly influence a community's religious perceptions and behavior (Setia & Haq, 2023).

Apart from that, social media can be used as a tool for more inclusive religious education. Education conducted through these platforms is often interactive and engaging, including a variety of visual and multimedia tools that can reinforce the message of moderation. Digital education campaigns and teaching and learning initiatives that use social media are effective in reaching the younger generation, who are active users of these platforms. This initiative has great potential in shaping more open and moderate religious views (Yuliawati & Asri, 2024).

Research conducted by Arenggoasih & Pertiwi, (2023) revealed that educational institutions use the social media platform Instagram to promote religious moderation and improve the development of Salatiga City. Social media management includes not only the depiction of religious moderation but also its incorporation into everyday life as a commonplace practice. Research conducted by Ramadhan et al., (2023) reveals that the digital world provides different positive impacts for each individual. Religious moderation provides a solution to many problems. Generation Z plays an important role and has many opportunities in managing the digital realm efficiently.

Research conducted by Edy Sutrisno, (2023) provides evidence that women have a significant role in the digital realm, especially in fighting extremism. Millennial women are routinely involved in promoting justice, tolerance and peace on social media. Their proactive engagement seeks to reduce incidents that dehumanize women by distributing instructional materials across online groups. Indonesians often engage with social media sites every day. Research conducted by Febriani& Ritonga, (2022) revealed that the millennial generation's understanding of religious moderation can be absorbed through social media platforms, such as videos, articles and persuasive strategies used by content providers. The study developed formulated a hypothesis: H2: Social media has an influence on religious moderation

METHODS

This research uses a quantitative approach and utilizes associative analysis to examine factors that influence the direct relationship between the independent variable and the dependent variable,

thereby influencing the type or direction of the relationship between these variables. Associative analysis is one of the analysis techniques in quantitative approach that specifically aims to measure the relationship between two or more variables (Sugiyono, 2017).

The findings of statistical analysis will determine the statistical significance of the relationships between the variables under study and provide insight into the characteristics of those relationships. There are two different categories of factors that are relevant in this context: Independent variables, namely the cultural environment and social media, and dependent variables, namely religious moderation. This research was conducted between March and July 2024. This research was conducted in Lampung Province. Primary data refers to information obtained directly from people who have actively taken part in research. Using a purposive sampling approach by considering certain criteria, namely purposive sampling, specifically: Respondents are individuals who have lived in Lampung Province for at least one year. They belong to Generation Z and are in the age range of 19 to 26 years. Specifically, they are students in Lampung Province. They come from diverse religious backgrounds in the province.

Additionally, they are actively involved in using various social media platforms, including Instagram, Tiktok, YouTube, and Facebook. Bougie and Now (2019) and Roscoe (1975) states that the optimal sample size for research is in the range of 30 to 500 samples. Therefore, by using sampling strategy and theory, this research included a sample of 500 individuals from the Generation Z population in Lampung Province, which is representative of the entire population. For data collection purposes Google Forms was used, while to assess the indications a Likert Scale was used.

Table 1. Sample Characteristics

No.	Social and Demographic Characteristics		Number of Respondents	Percentage (%)
1.	Gender	Man	224	44.80 %
		Woman	276	55.20 %
2.	Age	19-20 years old	146	29.20 %
		21-22 years old	152	30.40 %
		23-24 years old	175	35.00 %
		25-26 Years	27	5.40 %
3.	Ethnicity	Lampung	116	23.20 %
		Javanese	104	20.80 %
		Sundanese	98	19.60 %
		Padang	65	13.00 %
		Palembang	76	15.20 %
		and others	41	8.20 %
4.	Frequently Used Social Media	Instagram	204	40.80 %
		TikTok	195	39.00 %
		YouTube	78	15.60 %
		Facebook	12	2.40 %
		And others	11	2.20 %

Table 1 provides an overview of the characteristics of respondents. It can be seen that the data shows the distribution of the number of 500 respondents related to research on relationships cultural environment and social media on religious moderation in Generation Z in Lampung Province. Based on the data collected, it is known that the majority of respondents were women with a percentage of 55.20%, while men contributed 44.80% of the total respondents of 500 people.

This distribution indicates that in the context of this study, women are more involved, which reflects their active social and religious involvement on social media, or it could indicate that

women in Generation Z in Lampung are more open or responsive to issues related to moderation. religious. Demographically, the dominant age group among respondents was those aged 23-24 years, which comprised 35% of the total sample.

This age group is generally considered to be the end of the period of adolescent development towards early adulthood, which is often characterized by identity exploration, including religious exploration. This phase also marks the transition from formal education to the world of work or further study, which can influence their perspective on religion and the social practices they undertake. In terms of ethnicity, respondents showed diversity which reflects the ethnic composition of Lampung Province.

Lampung ethnic groups are the majority with a percentage of 23.20%, followed by Javanese 20.80%, Sundanese 19.60%, Palembang 15.20%, Padang 13.00%, and others 8.20%. This ethnic diversity is important in research because it can influence how different cultural environments and upbringings influence their religious views and practices, especially in moderate contexts that may be influenced by diverse cultural values. The use of social media, especially Instagram which is used by 40.80% of respondents as the main platform, indicates the role of social media in the daily lives of Generation Z. Their involvement in Instagram, a platform that emphasizes visuals and fast interactions, may influence the way they receive and interpret religious information.

Social media can act as a moderation agent by providing a variety of perspectives that can challenge or strengthen existing beliefs. The characteristics of respondents in this study show significant diversity in terms of gender, age, ethnicity, and social media use. This diversity provides a rich context for understanding how the cultural environment and interactions on social media have the potential to influence religious moderation in Generation Z in Lampung Province. This demographic depth and media preferences support further analysis of how religious values are interpreted and practiced in the dynamic digital era.

Table 2. Operational Variables

No.	Variable	Indicator	Scale
1.	Cultural Environment (X1)	Cultural Diversity Religious Education and Literacy Religious Leaders and Community Figures Social and Economic Inequality History of Religious or Ethnic Conflict	Ordinal
2.	Social Media (X2)	Religious Content on Social Media Religious Influencers on Social Media Viral and Online Campaigns Religious Hoaxes and Disinformation Interaction Between Religions on Social Media	Ordinal
3.	Religious Moderation (Y)	Tolerance of Religious Differences Dialogue and Interaction Between Religions Religious Freedom and Human Rights Avoidance of Religious Fanaticism	Ordinal

Data analysis in this research was carried out using the SmartPLS 3.0 statistical program. Statistical findings are obtained by running external and internal model tests on the processed data. Validity assessment in the context of convergent validity measuring instruments includes latent variable factor loading analysis. Validity is ensured if the resulting data produces a loading factor that exceeds the criterion of 0.70. Reliability evaluation was carried out by assessing the Cronbach's Alpha coefficient and Composite reliability statistics, using a minimum acceptable threshold of 0.70 for data validity (Hengki Latan, 2019).

Both methods require a data validity level that exceeds 0.70. When assessing the quality of internal model fit, researchers often analyze the R-Square statistic. Models with larger R-Square values are considered superior in their ability to account for fluctuations in the dependent variable, thus showing better performance. The value of the coefficient of determination, R^2, must be

greater than 0.2. This level of explanation is truly basic. The model's explanatory power is rather low, as indicated by R-squared values above 0.25 (Hamid, 2019).

An R^2 value of more than 0.50 is considered sufficient to consider some scenarios. The R-squared value is above 0.75. The level of explanation offered is often considered significant and impactful within a particular analytical framework. Researchers often use p-values and t-statistics in the hypothesis testing process. A p-value is considered statistically significant if it is below the threshold of 0.05. Test findings were considered statistically significant if the p-value was below 0.05. A t-statistic value of 1.96 is considered statistically significant at the 0.05 level for a two-sided test (Hendriyadi, 2019).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION
Results
Research Model Test Results

The proposed study model delineates the correlation between the cultural environment (Cultural Environment, X1) and social media (Social Media, X2) concerning religious moderation (Religious Moderation, Y) among Generation Z in Lampung Province. This idea was established to investigate how external variables, including the cultural milieu and social media, might affect religious moderation, regarded as the primary variable in the research. The cultural environment comprises characteristics such as local values, customs, and social conventions, expressed by five indicators (CE1-CE5). Social media encompasses the impact of digital platforms used by Generation Z, denoted by five indicators (SM1-SM5). Religious moderation is assessed using four primary indicators (RM1-RM4) that represent qualities such as tolerance, harmony, and acceptance of diversity.
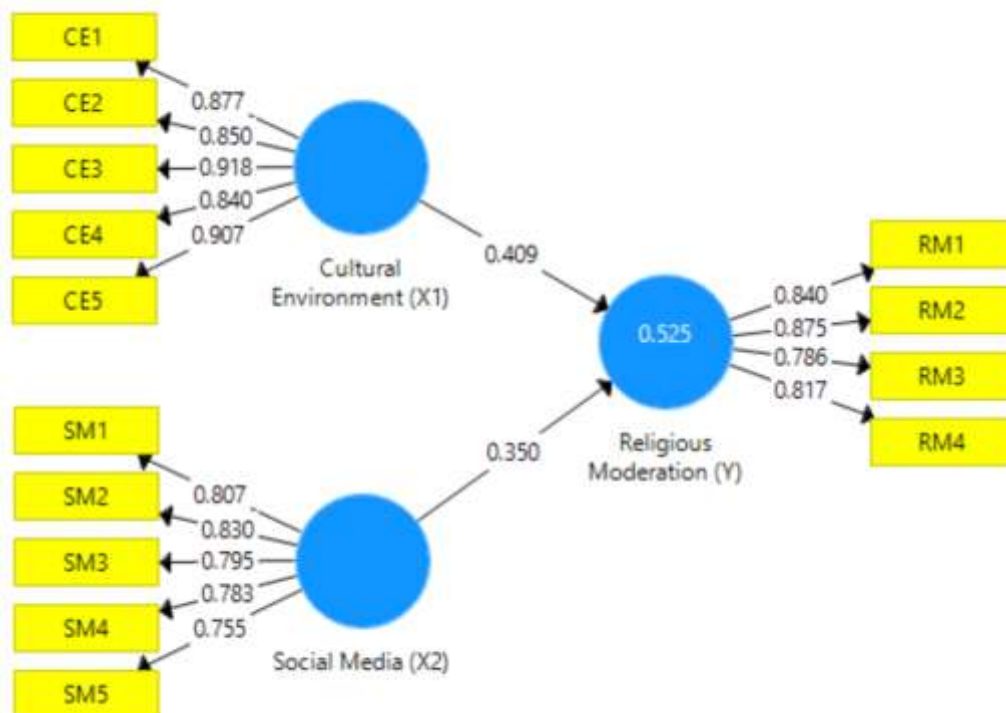

Figure 1. Test Results from the Measurement Model

The results of the model validity assessment indicate that all indicators possess loading factor values over the minimal threshold of 0.7, signifying that each indicator effectively measures its respective concept with validity. Indicators CE4 (0.918) and CE5 (0.907) demonstrate a significant contribution to the representation of the cultural environment. Similarly, indices SM2 (0.807) and SM3 (0.830) significantly contribute to elucidating the impact of social media. Religious

moderation has a robust indicator, with loading factor values between 0.817 and 0.875, indicating that this construct may be effectively assessed using the designated indicators.

Table 3. Results of Validity Test Implementation

Variable	Indicator	Loading Value	Information
	CE.1	0.877	Valid
	CE.2	0.850	Valid
Cultural Environment (X1)	CE.3	0.918	Valid
	CE.4	0.840	Valid
	CE.5	0.907	Valid
	SM.1	0.807	Valid
	SM.2	0.830	Valid
Social Media (X2)	SM.3	0.795	Valid
	SM.4	0.783	Valid
	SM.5	0.755	Valid
	RM.1	0.840	Valid
	RM.2	0.875	Valid
Religious Moderation (Y)	RM.3	0.786	Valid
	RM.4	0.817	Valid

In research exploring the relationship between cultural environment (X1), social media (X2), and religious moderation (Y) in Generation Z in Lampung Province, validity testing is a crucial step to ensure the reliability and relevance of the measuring instruments used. This validity test is carried out to verify that each indicator in the questionnaire or measurement instrument indeed measures the intended variable correctly. Table 4 shows the results of the validity test with values all above 0.70 for each indicator on the variables cultural environment (X1), social media (X2), and religious moderation (Y).

This high value indicates that each question item in the survey effectively measures the concept it is supposed to, providing strong confirmation of the construct validity of the research instrument used. The high validity value of the cultural environment indicator (X1) shows that the questions designed to explore the influence of the cultural environment on religious moderation have succeeded in capturing the essence of this complex influence. This is important considering the cultural diversity that exists in Lampung Province, which includes various ethnicities and sub-cultures.

Thus, it can be interpreted that the measuring instrument is able to accurately reflect how cultural values are translated into daily religious practices, and how this moderates religious views. Likewise, the high validity of the social media indicator (X2) shows that the questions- Questions related to the use and influence of social media in a religious context succeeded in measuring the impact of social media on respondents' religious lives. Social media, as a means of interaction and information, has an important role in shaping and moderating religious views, especially among young people.

High validity in this aspect confirms that the research instrument has been able to identify and measure precisely how interactions in social media influence religiosity. Meanwhile, the high validity value of the religious moderation variable (Y) indicates that the indicators used to measure how moderate the respondent's religious practices are are valid and able to capture the nuances of religious moderation among Generation Z. This is a critical aspect of the research, considering The main objective is to identify and understand the factors that influence the level of moderation in religion.

Table 4. Results of Reliability Test Implementation

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability
Cultural Environment (X1)	0.927	0.944
Social Media (X2)	0.854	0.895
Religious Moderation (Y)	0.849	0.899

Reliability testing is an important component that aims to verify that the measurement equipment used can provide consistent results when applied to the same subject or item under comparable circumstances. This procedure ensures that measurements can be replicated with consistent results, thereby increasing confidence in the analysis and findings obtained from the data. Ensuring variable stability is critical in social and commercial research as it has a significant impact on the overall validity of the study results. In research that focuses on religious moderation in Generation Z in Lampung Province, reliability tests are used to determine the internal consistency of the measurement instruments used.

Reliability refers to the ability of an instrument to provide consistent results under the same conditions on repeated measurements. In the context of the research conducted, the high reliability test results as presented in Table 5 illustrate the very good quality of the instruments used. For the cultural environment variable (X1), the Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.927 and Composite Reliability of 0.944 are very impressive and indicate very high internal consistency in the measurement instrument. This value indicates that the items in the cultural environment variable have high homogeneity, meaning that all items work effectively to measure the same aspects of the cultural environment that influence religious moderation.

For the social media variable (X2), the Cronbach's Alpha coefficient is 0.854 and Composite Reliability is 0.895, indicating that the instrument also has good reliability. These values confirm that the items used to measure the influence of social media on religious moderation are quite consistent and capable of producing reliable measurements in the context of this research. This high level of reliability is important because social media is a very dynamic field and its influence on religious attitudes and behavior can vary greatly. For the religious moderation variable (Y), the Cronbach's Alpha value is 0.849 and Composite Reliability is 0.899, indicating a high level of reliability.

This is important because religious moderation is a complex variable that includes various dimensions of religious behavior and attitudes. The high reliability of this measurement shows that the instrument is able to accurately describe the level of religious moderation among Generation Z in Lampung. Overall, this reliability analysis confirms that the research instruments used have been well designed and can be relied upon to assess the influence of the cultural environment and social media on religious moderation. Thus, this research provides a solid basis for further interpretation of how these two external factors influence the religious orientation of Generation Z in Lampung Province. With reliable instruments, the results of this research can provide significant insights and practical recommendations for stakeholders.

Table 5. Structural Model Test Results

Hypothesis	Original Sample	T – Statistics	P - Value
Cultural Environment (X1) -> Religious Moderation (Y)	0.409	6,345	0,000
Social Media (X2) -> Religious Moderation (Y)	0.350	5,354	0,000

Interpretation of the structural model test results in the context of research assessing the relationship between the cultural environment and social media with religious moderation in Generation Z in Lampung Province has produced very significant findings, as indicated by the

structural model test results listed in Table 6. Structural model analysis using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) has revealed a very strong relationship between cultural environment and religious moderation. The path coefficient is 0.409 with a very high t-statistic value of 6.345, and a p-value of 0.000, indicating that the cultural environment has a significant positive influence on religious moderation.

This confirms that cultural environmental variables are not only statistically important but also have high practical relevance in influencing religious attitudes and behavior among Generation Z. Furthermore, social media variables also show a significant influence on religious moderation. With a path coefficient of 0.350 and a t-statistic value reaching 5.354, far exceeding the critical threshold of 1.96, and a p-value of 0.000, it shows that social media, like the cultural environment, plays an important role in shaping and moderating religious attitudes among Generation Z. These findings indicate that interaction on social media is not just communication, but also has the potential to influence religious perspectives and practices.

The influence of these two variables on religious moderation illustrates how Generation Z in Lampung combines traditional and modern influences in forming their religious views. The cultural environment, which includes the values, norms, and social practices held in an individual's surroundings, along with social media, which is a platform for various information flows and social interactions, together contribute to the way Generation Z interprets and implements their religious teachings.

These findings are important for a deeper understanding of religious dynamics among today's youth, especially in areas that have cultural and religious diversity such as Lampung. These results suggest that interventions or programs designed to improve religious understanding and practice must consider the role of the cultural environment and social media as interrelated factors that influence religious attitudes and behavior.

Table 6. Test Results from R-Square Values on Endogenous Variables

Variable	R Square	Adjusted R Square
Religious Moderation (Y)	0.525	0.523

The use of the R-square value in statistical analysis is often used as an important indicator to assess how much variation in the dependent variable can be explained by the independent variables in a model. In the context of this research, the R-square value of 0.525 or 52.5% recorded in Table 6 indicates that the cultural environment (X1) and social media (X2) collectively explain 52.5% of the variability in religious moderation (Y) among Generation Z in Lampung province. This is an important finding because it indicates that these two variables play a significant role in shaping religious attitudes and behavior among youth.

The explanatory rate of 52.5% is quite substantial in the context of social sciences, where variables are often very complex and influenced by many factors. These results show that the model built has good predictive power and is relevant for explaining the phenomenon of religious moderation. However, it is also important to remember that there is still 47.5% of the variation not explained by this model. This shows that there are other factors, outside the cultural environment and the influence of social media, which also influence religious moderation in this generation.
 The existence of this 47.5% unexplained variability offers an opportunity for other researchers to explore additional factors that may be influential. Further research that includes these variables could provide a broader and deeper understanding of the dynamics of religious moderation among Generation Z. These findings have important practical implications, especially in designing interventions or policies aimed at influencing religious attitudes among youth. Given the significance of the cultural environment and social media, programs that aim to support positive religious values should consider integrating approaches that utilize both aspects.

Discussion

Cultural Environment and Religious Moderation in Generation Z in Lampung Province

The statistical results show that the path coefficient is 0.409 with a very high t-statistic value of 6.345, and a p-value of 0.000, indicating that the cultural environment has a significant positive influence on religious moderation. This provides empirical evidence that the cultural environment has an influence on religious moderation in Generation Z in Lampung Province. This is because the cultural diversity in Lampung, which is a mosaic of various ethnicities and cultures, offers a rich setting for inter-religious and inter-ethnic interactions that influence religious moderation. This cultural diversification helps shape the framework of Generation Z's worldview, allowing them to view religion not only from a narrow doctrinal perspective, but also as part of a broader cultural identity.

Daily interactions between different groups help promote understanding and tolerance, reduce prejudice, and instill a more inclusive and moderate religious practice. Religious education and literacy also play a crucial role. In the Lampung context, where various educational institutions offer diverse curricula regarding religious education, a deep understanding of religious teachings can influence how youth interpret these teachings in their social context. Effective religious education equips them with the critical skills to discriminate between extreme and moderate religious interpretations, emphasizing the importance of context and adaptation in religious practice.

The role of religious leaders and community figures is no less important. An authoritative and respected leader can have a big influence in directing religious attitudes in his community. In Lampung, where the relationship between religious leaders and the community is very close, the messages and attitudes they display are often adopted by young people as a guide in their religious practice. These figures often act as mediators in conflict issues and are examples of moderation practices. Meanwhile, social and economic inequality often creates conditions in which religion can be used as a tool for group identification or as a means for social mobilization.

In regions with a history of significant inequality, religion can become an arena for the expression of discontent or, conversely, a means for healing and reconciliation. In both cases, moderated religious worldviews can be enhanced or suppressed depending on the socioeconomic context. Finally, a history of religious or ethnic conflict also has a big influence. Regions with a history of conflict often have younger generations who are more alert and have the potential to fight for a more moderate approach to religion, as a reaction to their experiences of conflict. In Lampung, where there is a history of conflict, the need for a more moderate and inclusive approach to religion is prioritized to prevent the healing of old wounds.

Through this research, it is clear that the cultural environment in Lampung plays a significant role in shaping religious moderation among Generation Z, with each factor contributing to complex and interrelated dynamics. These results inform that interventions or policies designed to encourage religious moderation must consider these complex cultural factors for maximum effectiveness.

The findings of this study are supported by the Social Construction of Reality Theory, developed by Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann in 1966, which explores how individuals and groups in society create and understand the reality they experience. Berger and Luckmann proposed that social reality is constructed through everyday interactions between individuals. This thinking is rooted in phenomenology, especially the influence of Edmund Husserl and Alfred Schutz, who emphasized the importance of subjective experience in the formation of knowledge. The Social Construction of Reality Theory expands our understanding of how knowledge is formed and maintained in society (Nisiotis et al., 2020).

It challenges the view that knowledge is merely a reflection of objective reality and suggests that knowledge is a dynamic social phenomenon that is continuously reproduced through social interaction. As such, this theory provides a useful framework for examining how social and cultural ideas develop, are maintained, and change. The relationship between cultural environment and religious moderation in the context of Generation Z in Lampung shows that religious reality is not only understood through doctrines or teachings that are passively accepted, but also through

dynamic social interactions that continue to shape and reshape such understanding. Berger and Luckmann's Social Construction of Reality Theory offers an insightful perspective on how the social environment facilitates this ongoing dialogue, which in turn influences moderation in religious practices and views (Mystakidis et al., 2021).

This finding has a direction that is in line with the hypothesis developed by the researcher Ridha, (2023), proves that the internalization process of traditional *Bugissikaunge* is a fundamental factor in predicting repressive behavior and intolerant views. This approach really respects religious and social moderation, and respects the social and cultural norms of society while still respecting religious values. Study of Burga & Damopolii, (2022) shows evidence that supports the use of the multicultural Islamic boarding school education model. This model combines local cultural values, such as *sipakatau* 'mutual respect', *sipakainge'* 'reminding each other', *sipakalebbi* 'glorifying each other', and *sipammase-mase* 'loving each other', with the aim of promoting religious moderation.

Faizah et al., (2022) shows that the transmission of the principles of moderation has been maintained across generations through the development of indigenous knowledge and religious beliefs. This can be seen from practices such as *barikankubro, mudunke* boat, gathering, and connecting. So far, the integration of religious moderation has not encountered any obstacles because it is integrated with customs. Research conducted by Bachrong& Ansar, (2021) emphasized that the *AlukTondolo* community and the *Tongkonan* traditional house are symbols of religious moderation, peace and brotherhood.

Social Media and Religious Moderation in Generation Z in Lampung Province

The statistical results show that the path coefficient is 0.350 and the t-statistic value reaches 5.354, far exceeding the critical threshold of 1.96, and the p-value is 0.000, indicating that social media plays an important role in shaping and moderating religious attitudes among Generation Z. This provides empirical evidence that social media has an influence on religious moderation among Generation Z in Lampung Province. This is because religious content on social media is often the main source of religious information for many people, including Generation Z. This content ranges from text, videos, to podcasts that discuss various religious topics. In the Lampung context, where religious and cultural diversity is very rich, content that is inclusive and that emphasizes moderation has become very popular.

Content that promotes tolerance and interfaith understanding helps shape more open and moderate views among young people, while radical content crystallizes extreme views. Religious influencers on social media also play an important role. They are often seen as authority figures and sources of spiritual inspiration. Influencers who encourage dialogue, cross-cultural understanding, and tolerance can influence youth to adopt a more moderate approach to their religious practices.

In Lampung Province, the presence of influencers from various religious backgrounds interacting and collaborating in online campaigns or discussions reinforces messages of moderation and coexistence. Viral phenomena and online campaigns are often effective tools for spreading ideas and values. Campaigns designed to promote interfaith awareness and understanding or to counter extremism have proven effective in reaching a wide audience, including Generation Z in Lampung.

These initiatives often encourage greater engagement and discussion on social media, which in turn promotes more moderate and inclusive attitudes. Religious hoaxes and disinformation are a real challenge in the digital era. Generation Z, who tend to consume most of their information from social media, can be particularly affected by misinformation that is intentionally spread to incite or provoke. In Lampung, counter-narrative efforts and digital education have become important to teach media criticism and analysis to identify and reject misleading or harmful content.

Interaction between religions on social media in Lampung creates new spaces for dialogue and exchange of ideas. The platform allows youth from diverse backgrounds to interact, learn, and often challenge their prejudices and assumptions. Research results show that such interactions often contribute to greater understanding and more moderate attitudes toward religious diversity. Social

media has been proven to play a crucial role in influencing religious moderation among Generation Z in Lampung, with various mechanisms that support and challenge moderation.This research provides new insights into how digital technologies interact with religious and cultural factors, offering opportunities for interventions aimed at promoting social and religious harmony.

The findings of this research are strengthened by the theory of mediation, which was developed by Russian psychologist Lev Vygotsky in the 1920s and 1930s, which is one of the key concepts which proposes that the process of learning and cognitive development occurs through social interactions mediated by tools and symbols. The relationship between social media and religious moderation in the context of Generation Z in Lampung Province, analyzed through the lens of Mediation Theory developed by Lev Vygotsky, offers critical insight into the role of social media as a mediation tool that influences and shapes the religious views of the younger generation (Zarzycka et al., 2020).

This theory, which emphasizes the role of social interactions and tools in learning processes and cognitive development, is particularly relevant for examining how social media facilitates the formation and negotiation of religious identities. Social media functions as a mediation tool that introduces Generation Z in Lampung to various different religious perspectives and interpretations. This creates opportunities for young people to explore broader and often more moderate religious views, influencing the way they understand and apply religious teachings in everyday life (Szcześniak et al., 2020).

This finding has a direction that is in line with the hypothesis developed by the researcher Arenggoasih & Pertiwi, (2023) revealed that educational institutions use the social media platform Instagram to promote religious moderation and improve the development of Salatiga City. Social media management includes not only the depiction of religious moderation but also its incorporation into everyday life as a commonplace practice. Research conducted by Ramadhan et al., (2023) reveals that the digital world provides different positive impacts for each individual. Religious moderation provides a solution to many problems. Generation Z plays an important role and has many opportunities in managing the digital realm efficiently.

Research conducted by Edy Sutrisno, (2023) provides evidence that women have a significant role in the digital realm, especially in fighting extremism. Millennial women are routinely involved in promoting justice, tolerance and peace on social media. Their proactive engagement seeks to reduce incidents that dehumanize women by distributing instructional materials across online groups. Indonesians often engage with social media sites every day. Research conducted by Febriani & Ritonga, (2022) revealed that the millennial generation's understanding of religious moderation can be absorbed through social media platforms, such as videos, articles and persuasive strategies used by content providers.

CONCLUSION

The results show that the path coefficient is 0.409 with a very high t-statistic value of 6.345, and a p-value of 0.000, This provides empirical evidence that the cultural environment has an influence on religious moderation in Generation Z in Lampung Province. The cultural diversity in Lampung, which is a mosaic of various ethnicities and cultures, creates a rich space for interaction between religions and ethnicities. These interactions help shape Generation Z's more inclusive views of religion, reduce prejudice, and foster more moderate religious practices. On the other hand, The results show that the path coefficient is 0.350 and the t-statistic value reaches 5.354, far exceeding the critical threshold of 1.96, and the p-value is 0.000, This provides empirical evidence that social media has an influence on religious moderation among Generation Z in Lampung Province. Social media also plays an important role in shaping religious moderation. Religious content that often circulates on social media, such as texts, videos, and podcasts, is the main source of religious information for many people, including Generation Z. Content that encourages tolerance and understanding between religions dominates, while more radical content can shape

extreme views, indicating a direct relationship between the influence of social media and attitudes of religious moderation.

The implications of the findings of this study are very important, both scientifically and practically. Scientifically, this study contributes to the study of sharia science by exploring the influence of external factors such as the cultural environment and social media on the understanding and practice of religion, which is relevant in the context of sharia which emphasizes a balance between norms and adaptation to everyday life. In practice, the results of this study provide direction for the development of education and da'wah, especially in compiling da'wah materials that are relevant to the local social and cultural realities faced by generation Z, as well as the use of social media as a tool to promote religious moderation according to sharia principles. However, this study also has limitations, such as the limited geographical coverage in Lampung Province, which does not fully reflect the diversity of experiences and perceptions throughout Indonesia. Therefore, further research is recommended to use a mixed method approach and expand the geographical coverage to enrich the understanding of diverse moderation. In addition, longitudinal research that combines changes in religious attitudes and behavior over time will also provide deeper insight into the dynamics of the influence of the cultural environment and social media on religious moderation.

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