

COMMUNITY BEHAVIOR ON SOCIAL MEDIA: THE EXISTENCE OF GEN Z IN FULFILLING ISLAMIC RELIGIOUS FEAR OF MISSING OUT (FOMO) IN PAGUTAN INDAH

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Abstract

This study is motivated by the limited research on Islamic Religious Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) among Generation Z, despite its growing influence on digital religious engagement and identity construction in Indonesian Muslim communities. The study aims to analyze how Gen Z in Pagutan Indah behave on social media in fulfilling Islamic Religious FOMO, identify the psychological, social, and technological factors contributing to its emergence, and examine its influence on religious practices, social interaction patterns, and religious identity. Employing a qualitative design, the research involved 30 participants selected through purposive sampling. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, a focus group discussion, field observations, and digital artifact analysis, and examined using Braun and Clarke's thematic analysis. The findings reveal that social media functions as a central arena for religious participation, where algorithmic exposure, peer norms, and emotional regulation collectively shape Islamic Religious FOMO. Gen Z's engagement is characterized by hybrid religiosity, performative expressions of piety, and comparison-driven religious motivation, while internal spiritual needs, external social pressures, and technological reinforcement interact to intensify FOMO and influence both online behaviors and offline religious practices. These results support key propositions of the Theory of Planned Behavior, Digital Religion theory, the Mediatization of Religion framework, and the psychological model of FOMO, indicating that Islamic Religious FOMO plays a pivotal role in shaping contemporary youth religiosity. The implications highlight the need for enhanced digital literacy, reflective religious education, and community-based interventions, and point to the importance of future research on longitudinal patterns and broader regional contexts.

Keywords: Islamic Religious FOMO; Generation Z; Social Media; Digital Religion; Youth Religiosity

INTRODUCTION

Social media has increasingly emerged as a global arena in which Muslim youth articulate, negotiate, and reconstruct their religious identities. At the international level, the phenomenon of sharing Qur'anic verses on platforms such as Twitter has been shown to function as a form of digital religious expression, extending traditional worship practices into online spaces and creating new spiritual communities (Abokhodair, 2020). This global trend demonstrates that digital platforms have become vital spaces for fulfilling religious needs, cultivating spiritual engagement, and reinforcing Islamic identity—dynamics that are now highly visible among Generation Z worldwide.

At the national level, similar patterns appear among Indonesian Muslim youth, where the intensive use of Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, and TikTok has significantly shaped their religious orientations, social interactions, and interpretive frameworks. In this context, exposure to diverse religious content can encourage tolerance, yet it also poses risks of intolerance when young users encounter extreme or misleading online religious narratives (Shamim, 2024). These developments affirm that social media is not merely a communication tool but a transformative space where religious identity is actively constructed and performed.

From the researchers' standpoint, these changes indicate the urgency of examining how digital platforms influence the spiritual behavior and identity formation of Muslim Gen Z. Current scholarship suggests that young Muslims today are developing more flexible forms of religiosity—often described as “formless spirituality”—shaped through interactions that blend mosque-based activities with digital participation (Ziaulhaq et al., 2023). This fluid spiritual orientation reflects a broader transformation in how religious authority, ritual practice, and Islamic learning are mediated by technology. At the same time, scholars warn that young Muslims who rely heavily on online sources for religious knowledge may experience “hyper-spirituality,” a phenomenon characterized by intense yet fragmented religious enthusiasm prone to misinterpretation due to insufficient guidance (Raf et al., 2024). These theoretical insights reinforce the need to investigate the

psychological, social, and spiritual implications of digital religiosity among youth, particularly in relation to the emerging phenomenon of Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) in religious contexts.

Previous studies reveal the broader societal impacts of digital media on religious practice. Research shows that social media can strengthen religious knowledge and community formation, yet it also facilitates exposure to extreme ideologies, identity polarization, and conflicting interpretations of Islamic teachings (Gunawan et al., 2018). Religious organizations in Indonesia have also embraced digital platforms as strategic channels for institutional dakwah, using YouTube and other online media to disseminate sermons, religious classes, and community programs (Setia, 2021). This institutional shift indicates that digital spaces have become integrated into the formal religious ecosystem, influencing how young Muslims interpret, internalize, and perform their religious commitments. Moreover, social media now functions as an influential arena for Gen Z's identity construction, serving not only as a communication tool but also as an educational platform, a religious community space, and an arena for personal and collective identity expression (Anggreani & Utara, 2025)

In addition to these broader influences, recent national studies highlight complex interactions between social media engagement and the religiosity of young Muslims. While many Gen Z individuals display strong social awareness and digital literacy, their substantive engagement with social issues—particularly religious ones—remains relatively low despite experiencing a heightened sense of religious FOMO (Kamaly et al., 2025). Other studies show that excessive social media use may negatively affect well-being, lower academic performance, and weaken spiritual discipline, although these risks can be mitigated through self-regulation and strengthened religious reflection (Hidayah et al., 2025). Furthermore, digital platforms create dual pressures on young users: enhancing access to religious knowledge while simultaneously promoting performative religiosity, as youth feel the need to present themselves as religiously active online (Ahdiyanti & Waluyati, 2021). These dynamics illustrate the paradoxical role of social media in shaping the religious consciousness of Generation Z.

The rise of digital religious influencers and online Islamic communities further contributes to the emergence of “hybrid religiosity,” in which traditional Islamic values merge with contemporary digital lifestyles (Khoirunnisa & Rafi'i, 2025). This hybrid form

of spirituality encourages youth to reinterpret Islamic principles within modern cultural frameworks, often mediated through aestheticized religious content, inspirational narratives, and virtual peer communities. While such hybrid religiosity may help young Muslims connect more meaningfully with their faith, it may also fragment religious understanding due to inconsistent sources, algorithm-driven exposure, and the absence of critical religious guidance. Additionally, increasing evidence shows that social media use among Islamic education students is positively correlated with religiosity and social interaction but negatively correlated with mental health, underscoring the dual nature of digital religiosity (Fattah & Ulviani, 2025). These findings highlight the need for nuanced analysis of how religious FOMO manifests within the lived experiences of young Muslims in localized Indonesian contexts.

Several previous studies directly address the phenomenon of FOMO and its relationship with online religious identity. Ginting et al., (2023) found that problematic social media use significantly correlates with Islamic identity articulation among Muslim millennials engaged in the hijrah movement, whereas FOMO itself contributed only minimally. Meanwhile, Fadhila et al., (2024) reported that religious FOMO among university students leads to social media addiction, declining mental health, academic disturbances, and spiritual pressures—prompting some students to adopt coping strategies such as limiting screen time and strengthening religious discipline. Additional research shows that digital religiosity can both enhance and complicate religious practice. Rahmawati et al., (2025) found that media platforms foster religious knowledge and community building but also impose expectations of online religiosity, contributing to identity conflicts. Putri et al., (2024), demonstrated that FOMO mediates the relationship between low self-regulation and social media addiction among Islamic boarding school students, indicating the psychological mechanisms that contribute to religious digital engagement. Husna, (2023) further found that FOMO alone does not predict Islamic identity expression unless combined with problematic social media use, suggesting that the interplay of psychological and behavioral factors must be understood holistically.

Despite these contributions, existing studies have not examined Islamic religious FOMO among Generation Z within specific local community contexts such as Pagutan Indah. This presents a significant research gap because religious behavior, peer influence, digital literacy, and exposure to Islamic teachings vary across communities. Preliminary observations conducted on October 10, 2025, reveal that Gen Z youth in Pagutan Indah

actively use WhatsApp, Instagram, TikTok, and Facebook to consume Islamic content, follow dakwah accounts, and share mosque-related activities. Their online interactions include liking, commenting, and resharing posts, accompanied by peer pressure that encourages maintaining a religious digital persona. Some individuals display signs of religious FOMO, such as anxiety about missing dakwah content, comparing personal worship practices with peers, and sharing religious posts without participating directly in related offline activities. These patterns indicate that social media functions as a crucial arena for religious identity expression, even when the depth of religious internalization remains uncertain.

To analyze these dynamics, this study is grounded in four major theoretical frameworks. The Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) (Ajzen, 1991) explains how attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control shape Gen Z's digital religious participation, including their responses to religious FOMO. Digital Religion theory (Campbell, 2012) provides a lens for understanding how religious practices are reshaped through digital mediation, while the Mediatization of Religion framework (Hjarvard, 2011) describes how media influence religious authority, ritual forms, and spiritual interpretations. The psychological concept of Fear of Missing Out (Przybylski et al., 2013) offers insight into the emotional drivers that compel youth to stay continuously connected to religious content online. Together, these theories create a comprehensive analytical foundation to explore the motivations, expressions, and consequences of Islamic religious FOMO among Generation Z in Pagutan Indah.

Building on these conceptual foundations, the novelty of this study lies in integrating digital religion perspectives with a local community analysis of religious FOMO. This research fills a gap in existing literature by examining how Islamic religious FOMO is shaped not only by individual psychological tendencies but also by communal norms, peer networks, and local religious cultures. Additionally, by focusing on the interplay between online and offline religious environments, this study offers new insights into how digital religiosity influences identity formation, spiritual motivation, and social belonging among Indonesian Gen Z in semi-urban settings. This approach contributes a localized, socioculturally grounded understanding of digital Islamic behavior that is often overlooked in macro-level studies.

Based on the issues discussed above, this study focuses on three central research objectives. First, it aims to analyze how Generation Z in Pagutan Indah behaves on social media in relation to fulfilling Islamic religious FOMO. Second, it seeks to identify the psychological, social, and cultural factors that contribute to the emergence of religious FOMO among these youths. Third, it examines how Islamic religious FOMO influences their religious practices, patterns of social interaction, and the formation of their religious identities. Through these aims, the study seeks to deepen theoretical, empirical, and contextual understanding of digital religiosity among young Muslims and contribute to broader scholarly discourse on youth, religion, and social media in the digital age.

METHOD

Research Type

This study employed a qualitative approach with a case study design to explore Islamic religious FOMO among Generation Z in Pagutan Indah. A qualitative case study is appropriate for capturing in-depth experiences, meanings, and social dynamics embedded within a specific community context (Creswell & Poth, 2018). This approach is also aligned with Indonesian qualitative research perspectives that emphasize contextual interpretation and naturalistic inquiry (Sugiyono, 2019).

Research Design

The research design integrated two main data-collection strategies—in-depth interviews and focus group discussions (FGDs)—to generate rich, triangulated insights into the phenomenon. Qualitative designs that combine individual and group-based methods enable a comprehensive understanding of personal motivations and collective dynamics (Miles et al., 2020). This triangulated design is consistent with Indonesian methodological frameworks advocating multi-technique data collection to strengthen validity (Moleong, 2021).

Accordingly, the study conducted 18 in-depth interviews and two FGDs consisting of six participants each, resulting in a total of 30 unique participants. This design allowed the researcher to examine both individual emotional responses to religious FOMO and group-level processes such as peer influence, social norms, and collective meaning-making.

Participants and Sampling Techniques

The study was conducted over an eight-week period, from 15 October to 8 December 2025, in Pagutan Indah, Mataram, West Nusa Tenggara, Indonesia, allowing the researcher to observe and interpret participants' digital religious experiences within their everyday environments. A total of 30 Generation Z participants (ages 15–24) residing in Pagutan Indah were selected through purposive sampling, supplemented by snowball sampling to reach content creators and individuals with strong FOMO-related experiences. Purposive sampling ensured variation in gender, religiosity, media usage intensity, and involvement in religious activities, aligning with qualitative sampling principles (Etikan & Bala, 2020). Purposive selection used to secure depth and relevance in participant insights (Salim, 2020).

Eighteen interview participants included highly active social media users experiencing religious FOMO (6), active users with low FOMO or effective coping strategies (4), members of local religious organizations (3), local religious content creators or administrators (2), parents of Gen Z members (2), and one local religious educator. Meanwhile, two FGDs were conducted separately with high school students (6 participants) and young adults (6 participants), enabling the exploration of peer dynamics and emerging digital religious norms. Inclusion criteria required participants to be Pagutan Indah residents, active social media users, and willing to provide informed consent, while those outside the age range or not active on social media were excluded.

Instruments and Data Collection

Data were collected using semi-structured interview guides and FGD protocols designed to explore platform usage patterns, lived experiences of religious FOMO, perceived sources of pressure, impacts on worship habits and identity, and coping strategies. Semi-structured instruments allow flexibility while maintaining thematic consistency across participants. Qualitative instrumentation also emphasizes guiding questions that remain open-ended to capture natural responses (Afrizal, 2020).

Interviews focused on personal narratives of religious FOMO, whereas FGDs highlighted collective interpretations of online religious trends, peer expectations, and the formation of social norms. Additional data included samples of anonymized religious posts (10–20 items), participatory observations in local religious activities, and field notes documenting community responses to digital religious content.

Data Analysis

All data—interview transcripts, FGD discussions, observation notes, and online content—were analyzed using thematic analysis. This analytical approach systematically identifies patterns of meaning across qualitative datasets and is widely used for exploring psychological and sociocultural phenomena (Braun & Clarke, 2019). Coding, categorization, and theme construction as essential cycles in qualitative interpretation (Bungin, 2020).

Analysis followed a recursive process consisting of familiarization, coding, category development, theme construction, and cross-case interpretation. Data triangulation was performed to enhance credibility by comparing themes emerging from interviews, FGDs, observations, and digital artifacts. Reflexive memoing and peer debriefing were incorporated to maintain analytical rigor and reduce interpretive bias throughout the research process.

RESULTS

1. Forms of Community Behavior of Generation Z in Pagutan Indah in Using Social Media to Fulfill Islamic Religious FOMO

Table 1. Demographic and Digital Platform Profile of Participants

Category	Description
Total Participants	30 individuals
Age Range	18–24 years old (Generation Z)
Occupational Backgrounds	University students, private employees, freelancers, café workers, fresh graduates
Residential Area	Pagutan Indah
Most Frequently Used Digital Platforms	TikTok, Instagram, YouTube Shorts, WhatsApp, Telegram

Table 1 shows the participant group consisted of 30 Generation Z individuals aged 18–24, residing in Pagutan Indah and representing diverse occupational backgrounds, including university students, private employees, freelancers, café workers, and fresh graduates. Their digital engagement was centered on popular social media platforms, with TikTok, Instagram, YouTube Shorts, WhatsApp, and Telegram emerging as the most

frequently used. This demographic and media profile reflects the technologically immersed lifestyle typical of urban Indonesian youth.

a. Religious Content Consumption Patterns on Social Media

1) High Intensity of Accessing Short Islamic Lectures and Viral Religious Content

Most participants described consuming large amounts of short-form Islamic videos—including brief lectures, reminders, and viral clips from contemporary preachers—primarily through TikTok, Instagram Reels, and YouTube Shorts. Over time, this practice became ritualized and embedded in their daily routines.

One participant stated, “Every night before sleeping, I scroll through TikTok, and most of the videos that appear are Islamic reminders. If I don’t watch them, it feels like I’m missing something important” (P04, female, 20, university student, personal communication, October 17, 2025). This expression reflects that the sense of “missing something” operates on emotional as well as informational levels, indicating internalized expectations to stay updated with current religious discourse.

Field observations in cafés and public spaces also showed young people routinely browsing religious content in casual settings, blurring distinctions between leisure, spirituality, and digital habit (Observation, November 13, 2025).

2) Following Popular Muslim Preachers and Islamic Influencers

Participants expressed strong tendencies to follow Islamic influencers and popular preachers whose content is visually appealing and widely circulated. Virality and follower count often influenced perceptions of authority.

As one participant noted, “I follow many ustaz on Instagram. If a video goes viral, I watch it immediately so I’m not left behind when my friends discuss it” (P11, male, 22, barista, personal communication, October 22, 2025). This indicates a shift where algorithm-driven popularity becomes a proxy for religious credibility.

3) Religious Scrolling During Specific Times of Day

Participants typically engaged in “religious scrolling” during the evening, after school or work, or during emotionally fatigued moments. This suggests that digital rhythms and emotional cycles increasingly shape religious engagement, rather than structured learning patterns.

4) Saving, Sharing, and Reposting Trending Islamic Content

Participants frequently saved and reposted Islamic quotes, verses, or short lectures as both personal reminders and social expressions of religiosity. As one explained, “If I see a good Islamic quote, I save it and share it to my story. Sometimes it’s because my friends shared it first” (P19, female, 19, university student, personal communication, November 2, 2025). This aligns with documentation showing consistent patterns of circulating similarly themed content among peer groups (Documentation, November 7, 2025).

These patterns illustrate that religious content consumption among Generation Z is characterized by rapid, repetitive, and socially reinforced exposure. The emotional drive of “not wanting to be left behind” emerges as a core element of Islamic Religious FOMO.

b. Digital Expression of Religious Identity

This theme captures how participants express and negotiate their religious identities through digital platforms. Social media enables carefully curated religious self-presentation, blending personal devotion with social performance.

1) Posting Worship Activities and Religious Quotes

Participants frequently posted Qur'anic verses, prayer photos, or notes from Islamic lectures. As one participant stated, “I always upload my notes after a kajian. It reminds me, and also maybe inspires my followers” (P07, female, 21, university student, personal communication, October 19, 2025). This reflects how digital acts of piety serve both self-discipline and communal signaling.

2) Participation in Online Worship Challenges

Online worship challenges (e.g., one-day-one-juz, 30-day dhikr) were highly popular. Social visibility strongly motivated participation. One participant noted, “I joined the one-juz challenge because all my friends were doing it. It felt weird not to join” (P15, male, 20, university student, personal communication, October 27, 2025). This suggests that religious commitment is increasingly mediated by group dynamics and digital accountability.

3) Performativity and Hijrah Aesthetic Trends

Participants adopted “hijrah aesthetics” such as modest fashion posts, curated reminders, and transformation highlights. These elements represent both personal spiritual transitions and recognizable digital markers of religiosity.

4) Engagement in Online Religious Discussions

Participants were also active in discussing religious content online. One noted, “Sometimes I comment to ask if a lecture is authentic or not. The comment section is where we learn together” (P22, female, 23, private employee, personal communication, November 9, 2025). Documentation corroborated this with numerous examples of collective inquiry and feedback (Documentation, November 10, 2025).

Digital platforms foster hybrid religious identities that are simultaneously expressive, participatory, and performative. Online religious expression is shaped by peer expectations, communal affirmation, and platform affordances.

c. Behavioral Patterns Influenced by Digital Social Pressure

This theme shows how digital visibility creates powerful social pressures that influence offline religious practices.

1) Attending Islamic Events Because Friends Post About Them

Many participants attended kajian events because their friends posted about them. One participant remarked, “If my friends go to a kajian and post the photos, I feel like I should go next time so I don’t feel left out” (P01, female, 19, university student, personal communication, October 15, 2025). This reveals how religious participation becomes intertwined with maintaining social alignment.

2) Feeling “Incomplete” When Missing Viral Religious Lectures

Participants commonly felt “incomplete” when not keeping up with the latest viral religious lecture, indicating that staying updated has become a form of digital religious belonging.

3) Comparing Oneself to Peers' Religious Activity

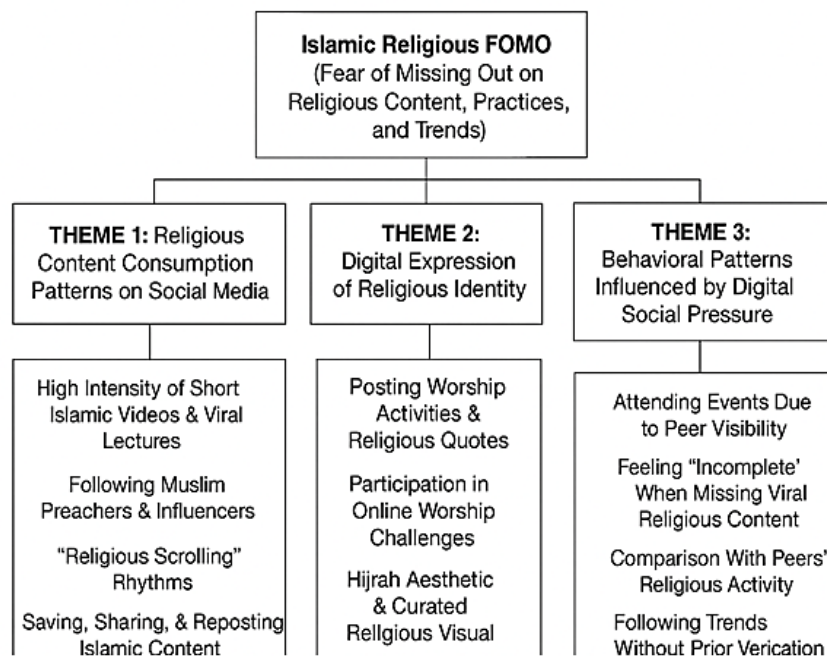
Online exposure to peers' religious content triggered comparison, self-doubt, and competitive religiosity, as individuals evaluated their own consistency based on others' digital displays.

4) Following Trends Without Prior Evaluation

Some participants admitted joining religious trends without verifying information. As one stated, "Sometimes I follow what's trending. Later I check whether the ustaz is credible or not" (P28, male, 24, private employee, personal communication, November 20, 2025). Documentation also showed frequent sharing of unverified content (Documentation, November 21, 2025).

Digital social pressure heavily influences offline religious behavior, encouraging conformity, comparison, and urgency. These behaviors intensify Islamic Religious FOMO by making religious participation a measurable and visible social practice.

Across the three themes, Islamic Religious FOMO among Generation Z in Pagutan Indah emerges as an integrated socio-digital system. Their religious engagement reflects a dynamic interplay between personal spirituality and social visibility, shaped by algorithmic exposure, performative digital identity, and peer-driven pressure. Digital platforms continuously influence what is seen, shared, and valued, reinforcing patterns of religious belonging mediated through visibility and connectivity.



**Figure 1. Thematic Map of Islamic Religious FOMO
Among Generation Z in Pagutan Indah**

The figure 1 of thematic map illustrating the three major themes and subthemes shaping Islamic Religious FOMO among Generation Z in Pagutan Indah. The map depicts how religious content consumption patterns, digital expressions of religious identity, and behavioral responses to digital social pressure interact to reinforce the overarching phenomenon of Islamic Religious FOMO.

2. Factors Contributing to the Emergence of Islamic Religious FOMO Among Generation Z in Pagutan Indah

a. Internal Factors (Psychological and Personal)

Internal factors reflect the emotional, cognitive, and self-referential motivations that drive young people to remain consistently engaged with Islamic content online. These findings illuminate how FOMO is rooted not only in social comparison but also in deeper issues of identity formation, existential uncertainty, and spiritual self-regulation.

1) Need for Spiritual Connectedness Amid Rapid Digital Information Flow

Many participants articulated the need to maintain spiritual stability within the overwhelming pace of digital life. One participant shared, “Sometimes life feels fast and chaotic, so watching ceramah online makes me feel closer to God” (P06, female, 22, university student, personal communication, October 18, 2025).

Field observations confirmed that youths frequently accessed brief Islamic videos during transitional moments—such as study breaks—indicating that digital Islamic reminders serve as micro-spiritual anchors (Observation, November 3, 2025). These practices demonstrate that Islamic content consumption often operates as an adaptive emotional coping mechanism, providing accessible spiritual reassurance amid cognitive overload.

2) Religious Social Anxiety: Fear of Being Perceived as Less Religious

Participants also reported experiencing anxiety when comparing their visible religious engagement to that of their peers. One expressed, “If others post Qur’an reading every day and I don’t, I feel like I’m the least religious among my friends” (P14, male, 20, university student, personal communication, October 28, 2025).

Documentation of recurring posts—such as prayer streaks and Qur’an-reading clips—revealed how digital visibility produces informal benchmarks of piety within peer networks (Documentation, October 29, 2025). This anxiety reflects an internalized expectation that spiritual devotion must be publicly demonstrated, reinforcing the psychological pressures that intensify Islamic Religious FOMO.

3) Desire to Enhance Self-Image as a Pious Individual

Several participants admitted using Islamic content as part of a curated self-image strategy. “Uploading Islamic quotes makes me feel like I’m showing the better version of myself,” one participant explained (P09, female, 21, private employee, personal communication, November 4, 2025).

Observation data recorded youths reposting trending reminders within minutes of circulation (Observation, October 30, 2025). These practices indicate that digital self-presentation is inseparable from religious identity performance, creating internal motivations to maintain consistent visibility in religious discourse.

4) Need for a Stable Religious Identity Amid Transition to Adulthood

For many young adults navigating life transitions, Islamic content provides direction, reassurance, and structure. As one participant noted, “I’m still figuring out my path. Islamic content gives me direction” (P18, female, 19, fresh graduate, personal communication, November 1, 2025).

Documentation of profile highlights such as “hijrah journey,” “self-reminder,” and “kajian notes” demonstrates how digital religiosity becomes a symbolic and practical tool for identity formation (Documentation, November 2, 2025). The internal need for stability intensifies engagement and contributes to persistent FOMO.

Internal factors reveal that Islamic Religious FOMO arises from emotional needs for connection, validation, and guidance; cognitive pressures associated with peer comparison; and aspirational desires to maintain a positive religious identity. These internal dynamics establish fertile psychological conditions that external and technological forces subsequently amplify.

b. External Factors (Social Environment and Digital Culture)

External factors include the influence of peers, community expectations, youth culture, and collective digital behaviors. These social environments foster norms that elevate religious visibility and encourage competitive participation in religious activities, both online and offline.

1) Peer Pressure from Friends Displaying Increasing Online Religiosity

Many participants felt pressured by peers who consistently showcased their participation in religious activities online. For example: “When my friends show they joined a new kajian, I feel like I should join too” (P02, female, 18, university student, personal communication, October 16, 2025).

Observation during a youth kajian revealed that several attendees took photos primarily for posting (Observation, November 10, 2025). Such patterns indicate that religious participation is shaped by the desire to maintain social alignment and avoid exclusion within peer groups.

2) New Social Norms: “A Good Young Muslim Must Be Active and Visible Online”

Participants identified emerging norms equating digital visibility with religious devotion. “People say that if you’re a good Muslim youth, you must go to kajian and show it online,” one participant noted (P23, male, 24, café worker, personal communication, November 13, 2025).

WhatsApp documentation supported this finding, showing posters encouraging youth to “be active in kajian and inspire others online” (Documentation, November 14, 2025). These norms intensify expectations around public religious performance.

3. Influence of Digital Religious Communities (WhatsApp Groups and Online Majelis)

Digital religious communities create continuous reminders and subtle pressure to remain involved. One participant shared, “My WhatsApp kajian group keeps posting schedules. If I skip, I feel guilty” (P10, female, 20, university student, personal communication, October 25, 2025).

Documentation revealed daily motivational quotes and attendance photos circulated among members (Documentation, October 26, 2025). These digital reminders establish shared commitments that reinforce ongoing participation and heighten FOMO-induced guilt.

a. Symbolic Competition Among Peers

Participants described subtle competition to engage with religious content before others. “Sometimes it feels like a competition—who watches the newest viral ustaz first” (P20, male, 22, freelancer, personal communication, November 6, 2025).

Observations in public spaces showed youths comparing which religious videos they consumed earlier that day (Observation, November 5, 2025). This competitive dynamic contributes to a heightened urgency around religious content consumption.

External influences create social ecosystems in which religiosity becomes visible, normative, and competitive. Peer expectations, group dynamics, and digital community practices amplify internal insecurities, reinforcing the momentum of Islamic Religious FOMO.

b. Technological Factors and Platform Mechanisms

Technological mechanisms embedded in social media platforms play a crucial role in shaping patterns of visibility, accessibility, and emotional engagement with Islamic content. These dynamics often function invisibly, making religious material feel both constant and unavoidable.

1) Algorithms Intensifying Exposure to Islamic Content

Participants frequently observed that algorithmic targeting flooded their feeds with Islamic videos once they interacted with similar content. “If I like one Islamic video, suddenly all my feed becomes Islamic,” one participant explained (P05, female, 21, university student, personal communication, October 17, 2025).

Documentation through screen recordings confirmed aggressive algorithmic reinforcement (Documentation, October 18, 2025), creating the impression that religious content is ubiquitous and must be followed to stay spiritually updated.

2) Trending, Likes, and Share Systems Encouraging Engagement

Metrics such as views and likes strengthen the perception that certain content holds heightened religious significance. As one noted, “If a ceramah already has millions of views, I feel like I must watch it too” (P11, male, 22, fresh graduate, personal communication, October 22, 2025).

Observation showed youths actively discussing top-ranked videos highlighted by platform algorithms (Observation, November 12, 2025), demonstrating how virality becomes a social cue shaping religious priorities.

3) Fast and Instant Access to Islamic Content

Short-form videos provide immediate, easily consumable religious reminders. Documentation revealed browsing sessions often lasted under two minutes (Documentation, November 7, 2025), illustrating how platforms facilitate micro-devotional behaviors that seamlessly integrate into everyday routines.

4) Branding and Aesthetic Dakwah by Muslim Influencers

Influencers’ aesthetic strategies significantly enhance the emotional appeal of dakwah content. One participant stated, “I like ustaz who explain things clearly and have aesthetic videos. It feels more inspiring” (P27, female, 23, private employee,

personal communication, November 18, 2025). Documentation identified cinematic filters, typography, and consistent color palettes that amplified digital engagement (Documentation, November 19, 2025).

Technological mechanisms produce an environment where Islamic content is algorithmically intensified, aesthetically curated, and constantly reinforced. These platform-driven dynamics magnify perceived urgency and contribute directly to Islamic Religious FOMO.

Synthesizing internal, external, and technological dynamics reveals a mutually reinforcing system driving Islamic Religious FOMO among Generation Z in Pagutan Indah. Internal emotional needs and identity-seeking behaviors interact with peer expectations and community norms, while digital platforms amplify both through algorithmic personalization and visual attractiveness. The resulting cycle compels youth to remain continuously updated, visibly engaged, and socially responsive to Islamic content—transforming religious participation into a persistent, socially mediated, and digitally intensified experience.

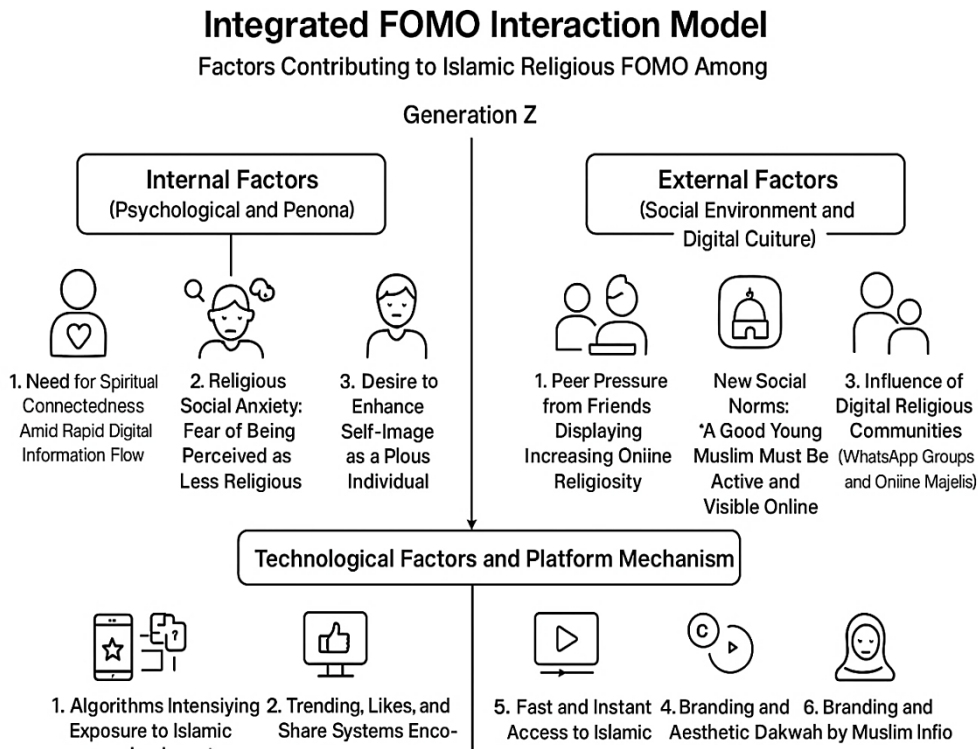


Figure 2. Integrated FOMO Interaction Model of Factors Contributing to the Emergence of Islamic Religious FOMO Among Generation Z in Pagutan Indah

The figure 2 illustrates how Islamic Religious FOMO among Generation Z in Pagutan Indah emerges from the interplay of internal, external, and technological factors. Internal factors, such as the need for spiritual connectedness, religious social anxiety, desire to enhance self-image, and the search for a stable religious identity, interact with external influences like peer pressure, social norms regarding online religiosity, digital religious communities, and symbolic competition. These dynamics are further amplified by technological mechanisms, including algorithm-driven content exposure, trending and engagement metrics, fast access to short-form videos, and influencer-driven aesthetic dakwah. Collectively, the model demonstrates a cyclical process in which psychological needs, social expectations, and platform mechanisms reinforce each other, compelling continuous engagement, visibility, and social comparison in religious practices online.

3. The Influence of Islamic Religious FOMO on Religious Practices, Social Interaction Patterns, and the Religious Identity of Generation Z in Pagutan Indah

a. Influence on Religious Practices

Across participants, Islamic Religious FOMO served as a catalyst for intensified engagement with both digital and offline religious activities. Motivations ranged from sincere spiritual aspiration to conformity driven by digital visibility and peer expectations.

1) Increased Interest in Religious Learning through Online and Offline Kajian

Digital exposure often served as an initial trigger for in-person religious participation. For example, one university student remarked that she first began attending offline kajian after encountering an ustaz on TikTok (P12, female, 19, university student, personal communication, October 30, 2025). Field observations at one Masjid in Pagutan Indah further revealed youths who attended weekly kajian while simultaneously recording short clips for their Instagram Stories (Observation, November 4, 2025), demonstrating how spiritual engagement and online visibility were frequently intertwined.

2) Changes in Worship Routines (Qur'an Reading, Digital Charity, Kajian Attendance)

Online displays of worship often motivated participants to adopt more consistent religious routines. As one café worker explained, she became motivated to read the Qur'an daily when her friends posted their reading streaks on social media (P04, female, 20, café worker, personal communication, October 19, 2025). Supporting documentation—such as screenshots of reading streaks, digital charity receipts, and kajian attendance badges (Documentation, October 20, 2025)—revealed how digital traces functioned as behavioral cues.

3) Greater Religious Activity Driven More by Trend Pressure than Deep Intention

Several participants described engaging in worship predominantly due to trend pressure. A private employee noted that he sometimes performed dhuha prayer not because he planned to, but because others were posting about it (P17, male, 21, private employee, personal communication, November 2, 2025). Field notes further documented youths who conducted their dhuha prayers and then immediately took photos afterward (Observation, November 6, 2025), highlighting the merging of ritual practice and digital self-presentation.

4) Dependence on Short-Form Content, Reducing Engagement with Classical Islamic Sources

Short-form digital content was frequently preferred over classical Islamic sources. A freelance designer acknowledged that she rarely read traditional books because short videos felt faster and easier (P08, female, 20, freelance designer, personal communication, November 5, 2025). Documentation of “Saved Posts” folders filled with one-minute Islamic reminders (Documentation, November 6, 2025) underscored a shift toward rapid, bite-sized religious consumption.

Islamic Religious FOMO broadened religious engagement yet heightened trend-driven conformity. While digital media increased access to religious knowledge, it simultaneously encouraged performativity and reduced scriptural depth, resulting in hybrid worship practices shaped by both devotion and social pressure.

b. Influence on Social Interaction Patterns

Islamic Religious FOMO reshaped peer dynamics, fostered social comparison, and contributed to new forms of religious segmentation among youth in Pagutan Indah.

1) Social Comparison Based on Online Displays of Religiosity

Participants frequently compared themselves to peers' displays of worship. One fresh graduate noted that she felt compelled to compare herself when others posted about their worship online (P16, female, 23, fresh graduate, personal communication, October 27, 2025). Observations at a local café also captured discussions among youths about who completed religious challenges first (Observation, November 5, 2025), indicating how online visibility became a marker of perceived religiosity.

2) Changes in Friendship Dynamics: Online Kajian Participants as Role Models

Peers who attended kajian regularly often became informal role models. As expressed by a university student, friends who consistently joined kajian naturally became figures she looked up to (P07, female, 22, university student, personal communication, November 3, 2025). Documentation showed repeated resharing of these individuals' Instagram Stories (Documentation, November 4, 2025), signaling emergent hierarchies of religious influence.

3) Increased Religious Discussions, Sometimes Leading to Debate

Digital FOMO increased religious debates within peer groups. A café worker described how their group chat sometimes turned into a debate space because everyone brought different Instagram ustaz (P24, male, 18, café worker, personal communication, November 15, 2025). WhatsApp chat logs confirmed that conflicting teachings from viral preachers often sparked disagreements (Documentation, November 16, 2025).

4) Social Segmentation into "Kajian Youth," "TikTok Hijrah Youth," and Less Active Groups

Participants observed the emergence of distinct clusters based on digital-religious participation. A freelance worker explained that their social environment had differentiated into groups such as active kajian participants, TikTok hijrah youth, and those who did not consume religious content (P19, female, 20, freelancer,

personal communication, November 8, 2025). Observations during a youth majelis showed that physical seating patterns mirrored these digital identities (Observation, November 12, 2025).

Islamic Religious FOMO reconfigured social relations by reinforcing patterns of comparison, influence, and segmentation. Digital religiosity served as a form of social currency that shaped belonging, legitimacy, and emerging hierarchies among youth.

c. Influence on Religious Identity (Spiritual and Digital)

Islamic Religious FOMO influenced how participants perceived, expressed, and negotiated their religious identity, both online and offline.

1) Strengthened and More Expressive Religious Identity in Digital Spaces

Sharing Islamic content helped some participants express and strengthen their religious identity. A private employee reflected that posting Islamic reminders made her feel more connected to her religious identity (P03, female, 25, private employee, personal communication, October 18, 2025). Documentation revealed frequent sharing of Qur'anic verses, lecture notes, and modest fashion posts (Documentation, October 19, 2025).

2) Emergence of Dual Religious Identity: Pious Online, Developing Offline

Many acknowledged gaps between their online and offline religious selves. A university student admitted that although she appeared religious online, she was still learning and imperfect in real life (P13, female, 22, university student, personal communication, November 7, 2025). Observations confirmed these discrepancies (Observation, November 8, 2025), illustrating the construction of aspirational digital religiosity.

3) Religious Existence Defined by Both Worship and Digital Performance

Digital validation became emotionally meaningful for several participants. A freelancer shared that he felt encouraged when his Islamic Instagram Story received many views (P26, male, 24, freelancer, personal communication, November 20, 2025). Documentation highlighted the prominence of view counts in their shared screenshots (Documentation, November 21, 2025).

4) Strengthening of Values for Some, but Mild Religious Burnout for Others

Not all participants responded positively. One university student reported that she sometimes felt exhausted trying to keep up with religious trends (P22, female, 21, university student, personal communication, November 11, 2025). Observations noted withdrawal from religious challenges after sustained participation (Observation, November 13, 2025), suggesting mild religious burnout.

Islamic Religious FOMO produced complex identity negotiations—empowering for some, challenging for others. While digital spaces provided avenues for expressive religiosity, they also generated aspirational identities reliant on performance and validation, reflecting the tension between authentic spiritual growth and socially mediated expectations.

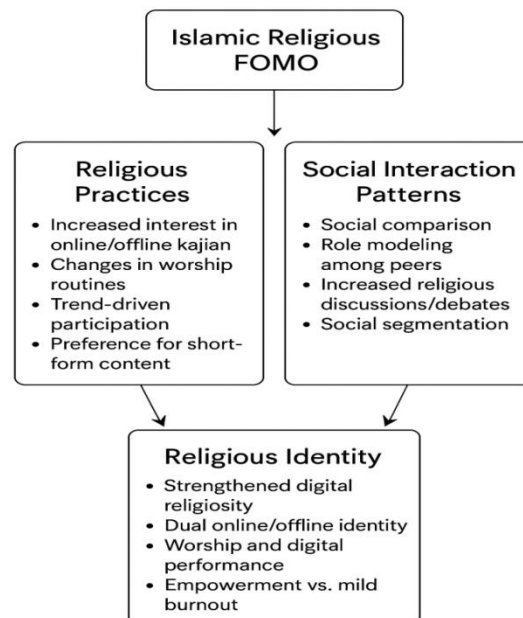


Figure 2. Integrated Model of Islamic Religious FOMO Influence on Religious Practices, Social Interaction, and Religious Identity

The figure 2 illustrates how Islamic Religious FOMO shapes the daily religious life of Generation Z in Pagutan Indah. Positioned at the top, Islamic Religious FOMO acts as the central driver influencing three interconnected domains: Religious Practices, Social Interaction Patterns, and Religious Identity. The model highlights that FOMO encourages both online and offline religious engagement, reshapes peer dynamics through social comparison and role modeling, and fosters a dual digital and offline religious identity.

Arrows indicate the directional flow of influence, showing how intensified practices and social interactions feed into the development and negotiation of religious identity, reflecting the interplay between authentic devotion and socially mediated digital performance.

DISCUSSION

1. Analysis of the Results

a. Forms of Community Behavior in Using Social Media to Fulfill Islamic Religious FOMO

The findings demonstrate that the social media practices of Generation Z in Pagutan Indah are characterized by the rapid consumption of short-form Islamic content, continuous engagement with viral religious materials, and an increasing reliance on digital influencers as sources of spiritual guidance. This pattern aligns with Abokhodair, (2020), assertion that global Muslim youth construct and extend religious expression within algorithmically mediated online spaces, where participation is shaped by speed, visibility, and emotional resonance. In this study, religious engagement—such as viewing Islamic Reels, reposting Qur’anic reminders, and participating in trend-based devotional challenges—reflects a digitally conditioned form of piety that merges spiritual intention with social performance.

Moreover, the tendency to follow popular preachers and respond to religious trends mirrors Shamim, (2024) observation that Indonesian Muslim youth navigate a digital landscape marked by exposure to diverse narratives, which can simultaneously reinforce spiritual connectedness and generate pressures to maintain visible religiosity. Collectively, these behaviors illustrate that Islamic Religious FOMO is rooted not merely in content consumption but in a socially situated desire to remain aligned with the religious rhythms constructed, circulated, and validated within digital environments.

b. Factors Contributing to the Emergence of Islamic Religious FOMO

The emergence of Islamic Religious FOMO among participants is shaped by a complex interaction of psychological motivations, social expectations, and technological affordances. Internally, many respondents described seeking emotional reassurance and spiritual grounding through Islamic content, a tendency that resonates with Gunawan et

al. (2018), who emphasize how digital religious materials provide cognitive stability and symbolic comfort in rapidly shifting socio-digital environments.

Simultaneously, young individuals reported experiencing self-evaluative pressure when comparing their religious visibility with peers, reflecting what Anggreani & Utara, (2025) identify as the rising influence of social media in constructing identity through public performance. Externally, participants noted that peer groups implicitly established expectations regarding consistent engagement with Islamic postings and online study circles, revealing how communal norms shape and reinforce religious comparison. Beyond social dynamics, technological mechanisms—particularly algorithmic reinforcement—intensified this phenomenon by repeatedly exposing users to similar Islamic content once initial interest was shown, supporting Abokhodair, (2020) claim that platforms act as algorithmic agents that structure religious participation. These intersecting factors demonstrate that Islamic Religious FOMO is sustained by an ecosystem in which psychological needs, community pressures, and platform design mutually reinforce one another.

c. Influence of Islamic Religious FOMO on Religious Practices, Social Interaction, and Religious Identity

Islamic Religious FOMO significantly influences participants' religious behavior, interpersonal dynamics, and identity construction. Many respondents reported heightened participation in online lectures, youth study groups, and religious activities, suggesting a shift in spiritual motivation driven by digital exposure—a pattern consistent with Raf et al., (2024) argument that online religious engagement fosters intensified but sometimes fragmented forms of hyper-spirituality. While increased participation suggests positive behavioral outcomes, the trend-driven nature of certain practices—such as performing worship to match peers' posts—indicates the emergence of a performative dimension to religiosity. This corresponds with (Ziaulhaq et al., 2023), who highlight that contemporary Muslim youth often negotiate religious authority and authenticity through interactions with digital influencers rather than traditional institutions, leading to shifting reference points for religious legitimacy.

Socially, FOMO reshaped peer interactions, producing new patterns of comparison, contestation, and group fragmentation based on differing preferences for online preachers and platforms. At the identity level, participants curated their digital

presence to reflect ongoing “hijrah journeys,” religious self-improvement narratives, and aesthetic expressions of piety, culminating in a hybrid identity mediated equally by personal belief and algorithmic visibility. The cumulative effect is the formation of a digitally embedded religiosity in which Islamic identity is actively produced, negotiated, and performed through social media.

2. Comparative Literature

The findings of this study both reinforce and extend existing scholarship on digital religiosity and the mechanisms through which religious FOMO manifests among Muslim youth. In line with Kamaly et al., (2025), the results indicate that despite high levels of online religious engagement, substantive offline participation in religious or social activities remains limited. This suggests that digital engagement often functions as symbolic performance rather than as a catalyst for transformative religious practice.

This pattern is mirrored in the present study, where participants frequently interacted with viral Islamic content and shared religious posts without necessarily translating these actions into deeper offline commitment. Moreover, the emotional and psychological effects previously identified by Hidayah et al., (2025)—including anxiety, diminished well-being, and reduced concentration—are evident as several participants described experiencing stress and guilt when unable to keep up with rapidly circulating religious trends within their peer groups.

Notably, however, the findings diverge from Husna, (2023), who argued that FOMO alone does not significantly shape Islamic identity expression unless compounded by problematic levels of social media use. In contrast, participants in Pagutan Indah exhibited clear signs of religious FOMO even with moderate social media activity, suggesting that the local sociocultural environment—marked by dense peer networks, strong communal expectations, and high religious visibility—may heighten FOMO experiences independently of problematic usage patterns.

Furthermore, while Fadhila et al., (2024) emphasized primarily negative effects of religious FOMO on academic focus and psychological stability, the present study reveals a more nuanced and ambivalent spectrum of outcomes. For some participants, religious FOMO served as motivational reinforcement, encouraging increased participation in religious activities; for others, it generated pressure, comparison, and emotional fatigue. These convergences and divergences underscore the importance of contextualized,

community-based analyses, demonstrating how local cultural dynamics can mediate and reshape the psychological and behavioral patterns previously documented at broader national or institutional levels.

3. Implications

The findings of this study offer significant theoretical and practical implications for analyzing the interplay between youth religiosity, digital culture, and Islamic Religious FOMO in contemporary Muslim communities. Theoretically, the results advance the literature on digital religion by demonstrating how hybrid religiosity—the merging of traditional practices with platform-driven expressions—takes shape within semi-urban Indonesian contexts. This pattern not only aligns with but also extends the insights of (Khoirunnisa & Rafi'i, 2025), showing that hybrid modes of piety are not merely global phenomena but are deeply rooted in localized social ecologies.

Furthermore, by revealing how algorithmic reinforcement, peer-driven subjective norms, and emotional regulation interact to produce Islamic Religious FOMO, the study enriches the psychological framework of FOMO proposed by Przybylski et al. (2013). These findings also substantiate and operationalize key components of the Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1991), in which attitudes toward digital piety, perceived peer expectations, and perceived control over online engagement collectively shape Gen Z's religious behaviors. In addition, the patterns observed here affirm central propositions of Digital Religion theory (Campbell, 2012) and the Mediatization of Religion framework (Hjarvard, 2011), particularly the ways in which media platforms recalibrate authority, redefine ritual participation, and restructure the cognitive and emotional landscapes through which young Muslims engage with religious life.

Practically, the study underscores the need for targeted community interventions that cultivate critical digital literacy, spiritual discernment, and emotional resilience among youth. The prominence of trend-driven religious practices and social comparison suggests that educators, religious leaders, and families must promote reflective and intentional forms of religious engagement rather than allowing algorithmic popularity and digital visibility to dictate spiritual expression.

The findings further indicate that peer groups are increasingly shaped by divergent digital influences, highlighting the need for youth programs that foster dialogue on

navigating digital religious diversity and mitigating potential misunderstandings or fragmentation. More broadly, the results call for the development of youth-centered religious education that explicitly recognizes the pervasive role of digital platforms in shaping motivation, identity, belonging, and perceptions of religious legitimacy. Integrating theoretical insights from TPB, Digital Religion, Mediatization, and FOMO psychology theories, such educational frameworks should equip young Muslims to engage meaningfully with online religious content while maintaining spiritual depth, emotional balance, and communal cohesion.

4. Limitations

Several limitations of this study must be acknowledged. First, the research was conducted within a specific localized community—Pagutan Indah—whose social dynamics, religious culture, and patterns of digital engagement may differ from other urban or rural contexts in Indonesia. This limits the generalizability of the findings and suggests the need for comparative studies across diverse settings. Second, although the study employed individual interviews, FGD sessions, and digital artifact analysis, self-reported data may be subject to social desirability bias, particularly when discussing religious behavior and personal motivations. Third, the study focused primarily on platforms widely used by Gen Z, such as Instagram, TikTok, WhatsApp, and Facebook; emerging platforms or niche online communities may reveal additional dimensions of religious FOMO not captured here. Finally, the cross-sectional nature of the study restricts the ability to observe changes in digital religiosity and FOMO over time, indicating the value of future longitudinal research to track shifts in behavior and identity formation.

CONCLUSION

This study examined the digital behaviours of Generation Z in Pagutan Indah and the ways in which Islamic Religious FOMO shapes their religious practices, social interactions, and identity formation. The findings confirm that Islamic Religious FOMO plays a substantive role in motivating young individuals to remain continuously connected to online religious content, thereby addressing the core objectives of the research. Participants showed a strong inclination to consume, share, and respond to Islamic content across platforms such as WhatsApp, Instagram, TikTok, and Facebook, often driven by peer norms and expectations of digital religiosity. The results also indicate that Islamic

Religious FOMO generates ambivalent outcomes: for some youth, it enhances motivation to engage in religious activities and reinforces their sense of belonging; for others, it produces anxiety, pressure, and more superficial or performative expressions of piety. These patterns reflect the interaction of internal psychological factors, social comparison dynamics, and localized cultural influences that collectively shape digital religious behaviour within semi-urban communities.

This study offers three key contributions to scholarship on youth religiosity and digital culture. Theoretically, it integrates the Theory of Planned Behavior, Digital Religion theory, the Mediatization of Religion framework, and the psychological model of FOMO into a unified analytical lens, providing a holistic explanation of how digital structures, social norms, and emotional drivers shape Islamic Religious FOMO among Generation Z. Empirically, it extends existing research by demonstrating that FOMO manifests in distinctive ways within localized semi-urban contexts such as Pagutan Indah, where dense peer networks and strong communal expectations amplify its effects even among moderate users. Conceptually, the findings refine the notion of hybrid religiosity by showing how traditional Islamic values are intertwined with algorithm-driven practices to produce new patterns of religious expression and identity among Indonesian Muslim youth.

Future research should adopt longitudinal designs to examine the stability and long-term impact of Islamic Religious FOMO across different stages of youth development. Broader geographical sampling—encompassing rural, urban, and *pesantren* settings—is needed to enhance the generalizability of the findings and to reveal contextual variations in digital religiosity. In addition, intervention-based studies are required to assess the effectiveness of digital literacy programmes, emotional regulation training, and community-based religious education initiatives in mitigating harmful effects of FOMO while fostering more reflective, autonomous, and meaningful forms of religious engagement.

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