



Young Generation Within The Framework Of Religious Moderation: Building An Inclusive Religious Identity In The Digital Era

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ABSTRACT

The digital era has transformed the pattern of religious identity formation among young people from physical spaces into more fluid, open, and participatory virtual environments. Social media is no longer merely a means of communication; it has become a new public sphere where the negotiation of meaning, the construction of beliefs, and the formation of socio religious affiliations take place. Through the processes of externalization, objectification, and internalization, young people's religious identities are constructed dynamically and reflectively through symbolic interaction in digital spaces. However, social media algorithms also have the potential to create echo chambers and filter bubbles that reinforce polarization, exclusivism, and online radicalization. In this context, religious moderation serves as a normative and strategic framework for building inclusive, just, balanced, and peace-oriented religious identities. Values such as tawassuth (the middle path), tawazun (balance), i'tidal (justice), tasamuh (tolerance), musawah (equality), shura (deliberation), islah (reform and reconciliation), and national commitment form the foundation for maintaining social cohesion in a plural society. Strengthening religious moderation requires a multidimensional approach through digital literacy, collaboration between religious leaders and moderate influencers, the development of interfaith dialogue forums, and the integration of moderation values into educational curricula. Thus, fostering inclusive religious identities in the digital era demands educational, cultural, and structural synergy to cultivate reflective and tolerant young generations who contribute to social harmony and national unity.

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1. Introduction

The development of information and communication technology over the past two decades has transformed the landscape of social interaction, including religious practices and the formation of religious identity among young people. Digital platforms ranging from social media and streaming services to online forums have become primary spaces for adolescents and young adults to seek knowledge, express themselves, interact, and form their own religious identity communities. This transformation presents both opportunities and challenges: opportunities to expand access to religious knowledge and inter-community dialogue; and challenges in the form of the spread of extremist narratives, polarization, misinformation, and social fragmentation that may undermine social cohesion and tolerance. (Fadli, 2023)

In the context of Indonesia's plural nation characterized by religious diversity, sectarian variations, and different practices the concept of religious moderation has emerged as a policy framework and public discourse emphasizing balance between religious freedom, respect for differences, and the rejection of violence in the name of religion. For young people, religious moderation is not merely a political stance or government policy; it must be internalized as part of the formation of an inclusive, critical, and ethical religious identity. Such identity formation requires digital literacy, critical thinking skills, interfaith empathy, and safe and productive dialogical experiences. (Robi & Kholifah, 2025)

The dynamics of the digital era have also transformed the sources of religious authority. Traditional religious leaders who once served as primary references now share space with online preachers, influencers, chat groups, and algorithms that recommend content. Consequently, the process of religious socialization has become more decentralized positive when promoting pluralism and renewal, but risky when digital spaces facilitate radicalization or disseminate selective information that reinforces stereotypes and hatred. Therefore, strengthening religious moderation among young people must include interventions within the digital ecosystem: media literacy education, the development of inclusive religious content, and platform regulation or collaboration to suppress the spread of harmful content. (Nendissa, 2025)

An inclusive religious identity among young people does not mean weakening religious commitment; rather, it positions faith as an ethical foundation that fosters respect for the rights of others, social engagement, and public responsibility. This approach aligns with the idea that religion can serve as a source of social capital that strengthens social solidarity when oriented toward shared values of humanity, justice, and concern for the common good. (Anwar, 2025)

Academic research and practical experiences indicate that effective programs for internalizing moderation among youth combine value education (in schools and Islamic boarding schools), inter community dialogue initiatives, and creative digital programs that promote inclusive narratives. Such interventions are effective when they involve local actors religious organizations, youth communities, and educational institutions and utilize language and formats that resonate with the digital generation, such as short videos, podcasts, moderate online communities, and creative campaigns that go viral while remaining grounded in accurate and ethical content. (Rohman & Waskito, 2025)

2. Method

Type of Research

This study employs a qualitative approach with an exploratory case study design. The qualitative approach was chosen because the research aims to gain an in-depth understanding of the process of religious identity construction among young people in digital spaces and how the values of religious moderation are internalized in their daily practices. (Naamy & Si, 2019)

The case study design is used to explore the phenomenon of religious moderation within the context of young people who are active on social media, both as consumers and producers of religious content. This design enables the researcher to capture the dynamics of meaning, subjective experiences, and social interactions that shape inclusive religious identities. (Creswell & Creswell, 2018) The approach is grounded in an interpretive paradigm that views social reality as a construction of meaning formed through symbolic interaction and digital experiences.

Data Collection Techniques

The study analyzes discourses found in various literature sources and utilizes information from multiple references, including both primary and secondary sources. The data were collected through a documentation method, which involved reading, reviewing, examining, and recording literature relevant to the research topic under discussion. (Murdiyanto, 2020)

Data Analysis Technique

Data analysis was conducted using the interactive analysis model of Miles and Huberman, which includes: data reduction (the process of selecting and simplifying raw data), data display (organizing data in matrices or thematic narratives), and conclusion drawing/verification. (Creswell & Creswell, 2018) The analysis was carried out thematically to identify patterns in the construction of inclusive religious identity, forms of internalization of religious moderation values, and the challenges faced by young people within the digital ecosystem.

3. Finding and Discussion

Digital Space as an Arena for the Construction of Religious Identity

The digital era has shifted the pattern of religious identity formation among young people from physical spaces (mosques, schools, and families) to more fluid and open virtual environments. Social media is no longer merely a communication tool; rather, it has become a new public sphere where individuals negotiate meanings, beliefs, and social affiliations. (Ariyani, 2025) In this context, young people's religious identities are shaped through symbolic interaction, visual representation, and continuously evolving online discourse. Within digital settings, externalization occurs when individuals express their beliefs through posts, comments, or participation in online discussions. Objectification emerges when certain religious narratives become dominant or are regarded as collective truths within digital communities. Meanwhile, internalization takes place when young people adopt these values and interpretations as part of their personal identities. (Nurhaliza & Kholifah, 2025)

This construction of identity is dynamic and reflexive. Young people do not passively receive religious teachings; instead, they reinterpret, redistribute, and even produce religious content themselves. This aligns with social construction theory, which

emphasizes that social reality is built through processes of externalization, objectification, and internalization. (Armiah dkk., 2023) Digital media accelerate these processes by providing spaces for expression without geographical boundaries.

However, digital space also creates the phenomenon of echo chambers, where individuals tend to interact only with groups that share similar views. This condition may reinforce exclusivism and polarization if not accompanied by adequate digital literacy. (Amseke, 2022) Therefore, strengthening religious moderation must focus on developing critical awareness in consuming and producing religious content.

Religious Moderation

Religious moderation in the context of young people is not merely a “middle” position, but an ethical paradigm that balances commitment to religious teachings with respect for diversity. Moderation rejects extremism, whether in the form of radicalism or liberalism that disregards fundamental religious values. (RI, 2021)

In Arabic, moderation is known as *wasath* or *wasathiyah*, which conveys the meanings of middle, just, balanced, and the best choice. The term *wasath* or *wasathiyah* has been absorbed into the Indonesian language as *wasit*, meaning mediator, intermediary, reconciler in a dispute, or referee in a match. In Arabic, the word *wasath* has various meanings and interpretations. (Salsabila dkk., 2022) First, *wasath* (with a sukun on the letter sin) functions as an adverb (*dharf*) meaning “between.” Second, *wasath* (with a fathah on the letter sin) is a noun meaning “middle.” Third, as an adjective, *wasath* means chosen, best, or distinguished. Fourth, it means most balanced or just. Fifth, it refers to something positioned between good and bad. Sixth, it signifies something free from blame when situated between two extremes that are both reprehensible.

In general, religious moderation is understood as a tolerant attitude of a religious group toward differing beliefs, while restraining from excessive liberalism. In Indonesia, particularly among Muslims, the concept of religious moderation is defined based on the framework and policies issued by the Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia. The Ministry describes individuals who practice religious moderation as those who demonstrate religious tolerance, uphold national commitment, and respect local culture.

An inclusive religious identity means maintaining strong theological conviction while acknowledging the rights and beliefs of others. From a sociological perspective, this attitude strengthens social capital, which functions to maintain cohesion in plural societies. Young people who internalize the values of moderation tend to develop strong social empathy and openness to interfaith dialogue. (Nurlaili, Fitriana, Millah, Cut Ulfa, Nasution, 2024)

The function of religious moderation can be realized when individuals implement their knowledge with an understanding that human beings both individually and collectively have different goals and aspirations, all of which are part of the natural order (*sunnatullah*) of life. (Izza, 2026) In this way, religious moderation accommodates local culture as an inseparable aspect of life while simultaneously serving as an object of religious outreach (*da'wah*). Another objective of religious moderation is to restore religious practice to its essential mission: promoting peace, safety, and the preservation of human dignity. (Almadani dkk., 2025) Religious moderation offers a solution to the complexities of human life and the multiple interpretations of religious texts that may trigger conflict and excessive fanaticism. By implementing religious moderation, it is hoped that religion-based conflicts can be minimized and human dignity safeguarded.

Religious moderation thus becomes a worldview that prevents radicalism and extremism that may threaten the unity and integrity of the Indonesian nation.¹

The core values of religious moderation include:

1. *Tawassuth* (The Middle Path/Moderation). *Tawassuth* refers to taking a middle path, avoiding extremism on both the right (radicalism) and the left (unrestricted liberalism). This attitude places religious teachings proportionally neither excessive in interpreting texts nor neglectful of fundamental religious principles. In a social context, *tawassuth* promotes balance between religious commitment and respect for pluralistic realities.
2. *Tawazun* (Balance). *Tawazun* refers to the ability to maintain balance between rights and obligations, between individual and social interests, and between worldly and spiritual life. In national life, this value encourages harmony between religious identity and national commitment. (Amseke, 2022)
3. *I'tidal* (Justice/Proportionality). *I'tidal* means acting justly and placing things in their proper context. It requires objectivity in evaluating differences, refraining from hasty judgment, and avoiding discrimination against other groups. In a pluralistic society, *i'tidal* serves as a foundation for respecting citizens' rights regardless of religious background.
4. *Tasamuh* (Tolerance) *Tasamuh* signifies an attitude of respecting and appreciating differences in beliefs, perspectives, and religious practices. Tolerance does not mean equating all religious teachings, but recognizing the right of each individual to practice their faith peacefully. This value is essential in fostering social harmony within diverse societies. (Maulana dkk., 2026)
5. *Musawah* (Equality). *Musawah* emphasizes the principle of equality and respect for human dignity. All individuals are regarded as equal in social life, without discrimination based on religion, ethnicity, or other backgrounds.
6. *Shura* (Dialogue and Deliberation). The value of *shura* encourages resolving differences through dialogue, consultation, and collective deliberation. In the context of religious moderation, *shura* becomes an important approach for building interfaith communication and resolving conflicts peacefully.
7. *Islah* (Reform and Peacebuilding). *Islah* refers to efforts to improve conditions and promote reconciliation. Religious moderation encourages active engagement by religious communities in resolving conflicts, preventing violence, and fostering social cooperation.
8. **National Commitment.** Religious moderation also includes awareness that religious life cannot be separated from the broader national and social context. Commitment to the constitution, Pancasila, and national unity forms an integral part of moderate religious practice. (Juwaini, 2023)

Challenges of Digital Radicalization and Polarization

Although digital spaces provide significant opportunities for the growth of inclusivity and cross-identity dialogue, they simultaneously create conditions conducive to online radicalization. Social media operates through algorithmic systems designed to maintain user engagement by displaying content aligned with users' interests, search history, and previous interaction patterns. (F. Taufiq & Alkholid, 2021) While this mechanism is commercially effective, socially it can generate echo chambers and filter

¹ (Nurlaili, Fitriana, Millah, Cut Ulfa, Nasution, 2024) 22

bubbles, in which users are continuously exposed to viewpoints consistent with their own preferences. As a result, exposure to alternative perspectives becomes limited, while exclusive, intolerant, and even extremist narratives may be repeatedly amplified. (Maisari, 2025)

In religious contexts, such algorithms have the potential to accelerate the dissemination of content that simplifies religious teachings into rigid identity slogans. Emotional, provocative, and binary religious narratives are more likely to go viral than reflective and dialogical discourse. This condition may lead to social fragmentation, as digital communities become divided into homogeneous groups that reinforce their respective prejudices. In the long term, such fragmentation risks weakening national solidarity and social cohesion, particularly in plural societies that require dialogue and cooperation across differences.

Young people are in a psychosocial developmental phase characterized by identity exploration and the need for social recognition. During this stage, they tend to seek clear and firm identity frameworks. Simplistic religious narratives that divide the world into categories of “right wrong” or “us them” may appear appealing because they offer a sense of belonging, group solidarity, and clarity of position. Without adequate critical thinking skills and digital literacy, young people may accept such narratives textually and literally, without considering the historical, social, and methodological contexts of religious teachings. (Arifin & Aulia, 2023)

When religious understanding is reduced to narrow and exclusive textual interpretations, religion risks losing its universal ethical and social dimensions. Instead of serving as a source of peace and collective well-being, religion may be used to legitimize rejection of differences and reinforce rigid identity boundaries. Therefore, strengthening religious moderation cannot rely solely on normative approaches but must be integrated with media literacy and critical education strategies. (Baihaki & Burhanudin, 2025)

These strategies include enhancing young people’s ability to verify information sources, understand the context of digital content production, and analyze the ideological motives behind certain narratives. In addition, moderate, inclusive, and communicative alternative content should be developed in formats aligned with the characteristics of the digital generation, such as short videos, podcasts, infographics, and creative social media campaigns. (Putri, 2023) In this way, digital space becomes not merely an arena for competing narratives, but also an educational environment that fosters reflective, open, and socially harmonious religious identities.

Strategies for Building Inclusive Religious Identity

Based on thematic analysis, several key strategies can be identified for building inclusive religious identity in the digital era:

Strengthening Digital Religious Literacy

Digital literacy is not merely understood as the technical ability to use technological devices or access social media, but encompasses a set of cognitive, ethical, and critical competencies in understanding, evaluating, and producing information in digital spaces. In the context of religion, digital literacy enables young people to verify sources, assess the credibility of online religious authorities, and distinguish between information grounded in scholarly references and content that is provocative or manipulative. (Nurcahya dkk., 2025)

This competency is crucial because digital spaces are filled with diverse forms of information that are not always academically or theologically curated. Religious content can be produced by anyone, without strict mechanisms of authoritative selection. Without digital literacy, young people are vulnerable to accepting information instantly and emotionally, particularly when it is packaged in persuasive narratives or endorsed by popular figures. Religious misinformation often exploits identity sentiments, sensitive issues, and hyperbolic language to attract attention and provoke rapid reactions without critical reflection. (Dahlan, 2021)

Furthermore, digital literacy enables young people to understand that religious teachings cannot be separated from their historical, social, and methodological contexts. Every religious text has its background of revelation (*asbab al-nuzul*), socio-cultural context, and diverse interpretative frameworks within scholarly traditions. Without contextual understanding, religious texts risk being interpreted literally and partially, leading to exclusive attitudes. (Effendi dkk., 2022) With strong digital literacy skills, young people can compare various interpretative sources, recognize differences among schools of thought or scholarly opinions, and acknowledge that interpretative diversity is part of the intellectual dynamism of religion itself.

Beyond its cognitive dimension, digital literacy also carries an ethical dimension. Young people are encouraged to take responsibility in sharing information, refrain from disseminating unverified content, and consider the social impact of their online posts. This attitude is essential for cultivating a healthy digital culture that supports religious moderation. Thus, digital literacy functions as both a preventive instrument against online radicalization and a foundational element in the formation of inclusive, reflective, and humanistic religious identities. (Armiah dkk., 2023)

Collaboration with Moderate Religious Leaders and Influencers

Religious leaders and influencers who possess credibility and a communicative approach play a strategic role as agents of moderation in digital spaces. Credibility in this context refers not only to scholarly competence or formal religious authority, but also to moral integrity, consistency of attitude, and a track record reflecting inclusive and non-violent values. In the digital era, religious authority is no longer singular and hierarchical; rather, it has become more fluid and distributed. Young people tend to follow figures they perceive as authentic, relevant to their lived experiences, and capable of explaining religious teachings in accessible language. (Effendi dkk., 2022)

A communicative approach is essential for the effectiveness of moderate religious outreach (*da'wah*) on social media. Digital spaces are characterized by speed, visual orientation, and interactivity. Therefore, religious leaders or influencers who can creatively package religious messages through short videos, podcasts, infographics, or live-stream discussions are more likely to reach young audiences than conventional one-way sermon approaches. Dialogical, empathetic, and non-judgmental language is generally more accepted than rigid and confrontational narratives. (Victorya & Aziiz, 2025)

Moreover, the presence of moderate figures in digital spaces serves as a counterbalance to the proliferation of provocative or exclusive content. Social media algorithms often amplify content that triggers strong emotions such as anger or fear. (Muzayyanah & Saifudin, 2025) In such circumstances, credible religious leaders and influencers can provide alternative narratives emphasizing compassion, justice, solidarity, and social responsibility. They not only convey religious teachings normatively

but also offer concrete examples of how these values are practiced within plural societies. (Daheri, 2022)

The role of moderation agents also includes educational and corrective functions. When religious misinformation or misunderstandings arise, figures with authority and influence can provide clarification grounded in textual evidence and rational argumentation. Prompt and well-reasoned responses to intolerant content are crucial to preventing the spread of misinformation. Thus, religious leaders and influencers function not merely as message disseminators, but also as curators of public religious discourse in digital spaces. (Daheri, 2022)

Furthermore, collaboration among religious leaders, young influencers, academics, and digital communities can strengthen the ecosystem of religious moderation. Influencers who are closely connected to Generation Z culture, for instance, can serve as bridges between profound theological messages and more popular, contextual communication styles. When scholarly credibility intersects with communicative creativity, messages of religious moderation are more likely to be accepted and internalized by young people. (Susanto dkk., 2022)

Therefore, the presence of credible and communicative religious leaders and influencers in digital spaces is not merely complementary but strategically essential for building inclusive religious identities. They serve as role models, information filters, and catalysts for cross-identity dialogue that strengthens social cohesion amid the dynamics of digital society.

Development of Virtual Dialogue Spaces

Online interfaith discussion forums can serve as strategic platforms for fostering empathy and mutual understanding within plural societies. In the digital era, spaces for interpersonal encounters are no longer limited to physical interaction but also take place virtually through platforms such as webinars, social media discussion groups, community forums, and interactive application-based chat rooms. These spaces provide opportunities for young people from diverse religious backgrounds to share experiences, perspectives, and religious practices directly. (Effendi dkk., 2022)

Empathy develops when individuals not only acknowledge the existence of others but also understand their perspectives, lived experiences, and the values they uphold. Interfaith discussions conducted in a dialogical and egalitarian manner enable participants to recognize that differences in belief do not necessarily constitute threats. On the contrary, differences can become sources of mutual learning. Through open conversations, stereotypes and prejudices formed due to limited direct interaction can be corrected in rational and humanistic ways. (Armiah dkk., 2023)

In addition to fostering empathy, online interfaith forums strengthen intercultural communication skills. Young people learn to articulate their beliefs without disparaging others while simultaneously practicing active listening. (Syarif, 2021) This process is essential because many religion-based conflicts arise not merely from theological differences but from misunderstandings and ineffective communication. Well-facilitated discussions with clear ethical guidelines, neutral moderators, and a value-based approach grounded in shared humanity can create safe spaces for exchanging viewpoints. (Anwar, 2025)

Furthermore, online interfaith discussion forums contribute to the formation of reflective religious identities. When young people engage in dialogue with followers of other religions, they are encouraged to understand their own teachings more deeply and

contextually. (Ariyani, 2025) This process does not weaken religious commitment; rather, it enriches perspectives and cultivates awareness that universal values such as justice, compassion, and peace constitute common ground among religions. Thus, interfaith dialogue contributes to the development of inclusive identities without compromising the integrity of belief.

In the digital era, the effectiveness of interfaith forums is further enhanced by accessibility and broad reach. Participants from different regions and even countries can connect within a single discussion space. Diverse formats such as thematic discussions, collaborative social projects, or joint campaigns on humanitarian issues can strengthen interfaith solidarity. (M. Taufiq, 2025) When young people actively engage in tangible cooperation based on shared values, empathy extends beyond discourse and is translated into concrete social action.

Integration of Moderation into the Educational Curriculum

Formal education plays a strategic role in shaping the value orientation, mindset, and character of the younger generation. Therefore, integrating the values of religious moderation into the education system is not merely an addition to instructional material, but an integral part of the character-building process. Schools and universities function as primary spaces of socialization after the family, where students learn not only academic knowledge but also social norms, attitudes toward differences, and ways of interacting within plural societies. (Armiah dkk., 2023)

Incorporating the values of religious moderation into formal education means instilling principles of balance, tolerance, non-violence, and respect for diversity as part of both the curriculum and school culture. This implementation can be carried out through several approaches. First, integration into religious education subjects by emphasizing contextual understanding of teachings, the historical diversity of schools of thought, and the importance of interfaith dialogue. This approach helps students understand that interpretative diversity is part of the intellectual dynamism of religion, rather than a threat to faith. (Hidayat dkk., 2021)

Second, religious moderation can be internalized through civic education and character education. Values such as justice, respect for human rights, and national commitment can be linked to religious teachings that promote peace and social responsibility. In this way, religion is not understood exclusively, but as a source of public ethics that strengthens national integration. (Latifa & Fahri, 2022)

Third, education in religious moderation should not be limited to cognitive aspects, but must also address affective and practical dimensions. Co-curricular and extracurricular activities such as interfaith dialogue, joint social service activities, thematic discussions, and collaborative humanitarian projects can serve as concrete media for value internalization. Direct interaction with students from diverse backgrounds fosters empathy and reduces prejudice. (Juwaini, 2023)

Moreover, in the digital era, formal education must integrate digital literacy within the framework of religious moderation. Students need to be equipped with the skills to assess the credibility of information sources, understand the dynamics of social media algorithms, and avoid disseminating intolerant content. Through this approach, schools function not only as spaces for knowledge transmission, but also as safeguards against online radicalization and social polarization. (Latifa & Fahri, 2022)

The role of teachers and lecturers is crucial in this process. They are not merely conveyors of knowledge, but also role models in demonstrating moderate and inclusive

attitudes. Educational environments that promote dialogical practices, respect differing opinions, and encourage critical thinking naturally strengthen the internalization of moderation values. An academic culture open to discussion and rational argumentation helps young people develop reflective rather than dogmatic religious identities. (Bahrudin, 2017)

Thus, integrating the values of religious moderation into formal education constitutes a long-term investment in building a generation that is not only intellectually competent, but also socially and spiritually mature. Education becomes the primary foundation for forming inclusive religious identities capable of coexisting harmoniously in multicultural societies and confronting the challenges of the digital era with critical and wise attitudes. (Febriani dkk., 2025) These strategies demonstrate that inclusive religious identity is not formed instantaneously, but through sustained educational, dialogical, and participatory processes. societies and strengthening the nation's future amid the dynamics of digital globalization.

Discussion

The findings of this study indicate that the digital era has become both a strategic and problematic space in shaping the religious identity of young people. The transformation from physical spaces to digital environments has not only altered the medium of interaction but has also influenced how individuals understand, interpret, and express religious teachings. From the perspective of social construction, the religious identity of young people is no longer static; rather, it is constructed through dynamic processes involving externalization, objectification, and internalization within the digital ecosystem. (M. Taufiq, 2025)

These findings are consistent with the view that digital media functions as an arena for meaning production, where individuals are not merely consumers of information but also producers of religious content. This creates opportunities for the development of more open and inclusive religious understanding. However, on the other hand, the algorithmic nature of social media generates a tendency toward information homogenization through phenomena such as echo chambers and filter bubbles, which may reinforce exclusivism and limit spaces for dialogue. (Saumantri & Afrian, 2024)

In this context, religious moderation becomes highly relevant as a normative framework to guide the construction of young people's religious identity. Moderation is not merely understood as a "middle position," but as an ethical paradigm that balances theological commitment with respect for diversity. Values such as *tawassuth*, *tawazun*, *i'tidal*, and *tasamuh* serve as fundamental principles in fostering inclusive and contextual religious attitudes.

From a social construction perspective, this process unfolds through the stages of externalization, objectification, and internalization. (Rohman & Waskito, 2025) Young people express their beliefs through digital content (externalization), certain narratives then become dominant within digital communities (objectification), and eventually these narratives are adopted as part of personal identity (internalization). Thus, religious identity in the digital era is dynamic, reflective, and continuously negotiated.

However, the openness of digital spaces does not always lead to inclusivity. Social media algorithms tend to reinforce user preferences through mechanisms such as echo chambers and filter bubbles, resulting in individuals being more frequently exposed to views that align with their existing beliefs. (Robi & Kholifah, 2025) This condition may

narrow perspectives and strengthen religious exclusivism. Therefore, digital space becomes an ambivalent arena: on one hand, it opens opportunities for dialogue; on the other, it has the potential to intensify polarization.

Furthermore, the analysis shows that the internalization of religious moderation values cannot be carried out partially but requires a multidimensional approach. Digital literacy emerges as a fundamental foundation in addressing the challenges of online radicalization. Young people with strong digital literacy skills tend to be more critical in filtering information, understanding the context of religious teachings, and resisting simplistic and provocative religious narratives. In this sense, digital literacy functions not only as a technical skill but also as an epistemological instrument in constructing a comprehensive understanding of religion.

In addition, the role of religious leaders and moderate influencers in digital spaces is proven to be significant in shaping the religious preferences and orientations of young people. Religious authority that is dialogical and communicative is more readily accepted by the digital generation compared to rigid and hierarchical approaches. This reflects a shift in authority patterns from traditional forms to those based on credibility, relevance, and emotional proximity. On the other hand, the development of interfaith dialogue spaces, both online and offline, contributes to building social empathy and reducing prejudice. (Putri, 2023) Dialogues conducted in an equal and open manner allow young people to understand that differences are not threats but social realities that must be managed constructively. This process strengthens a reflective religious identity one that is rooted not only in belief but also in social and humanitarian awareness.

One important finding of this study is that digital space is not neutral. It is shaped by algorithmic logic that tends to prioritize attention-grabbing content, including content that is provocative, emotional, and controversial. In the religious context, this accelerates the spread of black-and-white and exclusive narratives. Young people, who are in a phase of identity exploration, are particularly vulnerable to such narratives. Their need for social recognition and a sense of belonging makes them more susceptible to ideologies that offer clear and definitive identities. Without critical literacy skills, they are at risk of adopting religious understandings in a textual and partial manner. (Suntara dkk., 2024)

Formal education also plays a strategic role in internalizing the values of religious moderation. Integrating moderation values into curricula, teaching methods, and academic culture can shape students who are tolerant, critical, and open to differences. In this context, education functions not only as a means of knowledge transfer but also as a space for value transformation. (Susanto dkk., 2022)

This study also identifies a gap between the ideal concept of religious moderation and its practical implementation, particularly in digital spaces. Challenges remain in the dominance of religious content that is populist, emotional, and less reflective. Therefore, more systematic interventions are required, including strengthening digital policies, fostering cross-sector collaboration, and developing moderate and contextual religious content.

Overall, this discussion emphasizes that building an inclusive religious identity in the digital era is a complex and ongoing process. Religious moderation serves as a bridge between normative religious values and the realities of a plural society. The success of this process depends on the synergy between digital literacy, the role of social actors, dialogical spaces, and educational systems that support the formation of a reflective, tolerant, and socially harmonious younger generation.

4. Conclusion

The digital era has brought about a fundamental transformation in the process of religious identity formation among young people. Digital spaces have become new arenas for the construction of meaning, negotiation of values, and the expression of religiosity that is open, dynamic, and participatory. In this context, religious identity is no longer formed solely through traditional institutions, but through complex interactions among tradition, personal experience, digital communities, and global flows of information.

Within this framework, religious moderation serves as both a normative and strategic foundation for building inclusive religious identities. Moderation does not imply weakening theological commitment; rather, it positions religious belief within a framework of balance, respect for differences, and social responsibility. An inclusive religious identity is characterized by openness to dialogue, the ability to appreciate interpretative diversity, and commitment to humanitarian and national values.

Strengthening religious moderation among young people requires a multidimensional approach. Digital literacy becomes a crucial instrument in equipping them to filter information and understand religious teachings comprehensively. The presence of credible and communicative religious leaders and influencers in digital spaces can function as agents of moderation who promote alternative narratives that are peaceful and inclusive. Online interfaith discussion forums foster empathy and mutual understanding, while formal education serves as a systemic foundation for instilling moderation values as part of character formation.

Thus, the development of inclusive religious identity in the digital era is not an automatic process, but requires sustained educational, cultural, and structural interventions. Synergy among families, educational institutions, religious leaders, digital communities, and public policies is essential in creating a healthy religious ecosystem. Young people who possess moderate and inclusive religious identities constitute vital social capital for maintaining cohesion in plural

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