

# Religious Moderation to Build Generation Z Tolerance in the Social Media Era

(*Moderasi Agama untuk Membangun Toleransi Generasi Z di Era Media Sosial*)

Nahdah Faizah Harahap<sup>1</sup>, Nurhayati<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>UIN Syekh Ali Hasan Ahmad Addary, Padangsidempuan, Indonesia

<sup>2</sup>Universitas Wirahusada, Medan, Indonesia

Corresponding Author E-mail: [nahdahharahap@gmail.com](mailto:nahdahharahap@gmail.com)

## Article Information

Received : December 10, 2025

Revised : May 15, 2026

Accepted : June 29, 2026

Publish : July 03, 2026

Please cite this article in APA Style as:

Harahap, N. F., & Nurhayati. (2026). Religious moderation to build Generation Z tolerance in the social media era (*Moderasi agama untuk membangun toleransi Generasi Z di era media sosial*). *Journal of Islamic Education and Intellectual Discourse (JIED)*, 2(2), 168–177. <https://doi.org/10.37304/jied.v2i02.23886>

## ABSTRACT

The expansion of social media has reshaped the religious life of Generation Z by influencing how they understand faith, construct identity, and respond to religious diversity. In this digital environment, religious messages spread rapidly and are often mixed with intolerance, hate speech, and radical narratives. Although previous studies have discussed religious moderation broadly, limited attention has been given to its integration with moderate digital literacy, creative religious content, and institutional collaboration in strengthening youth tolerance online. **Purpose:** This study aims to examine religious moderation as a strategic approach to building Generation Z's tolerance in the social media era. **Method:** Using a literature review method, this study analyzes scholarly articles, books, and academic documents related to religious moderation, Generation Z, digital literacy, social media, and tolerance. **Findings:** The findings show that religious moderation can be strengthened through three main strategies: developing critical and moderate digital literacy, producing creative and inclusive religious content, and encouraging collaboration among educational institutions, religious leaders, government agencies, and digital communities. **Novelty:** The novelty of this study lies in its integrative perspective that connects religious moderation with digital literacy and collaborative religious education in digital spaces. **Implication:** This study implies that religious moderation should be institutionalized in educational policy, digital literacy programs, and curriculum development to foster an inclusive, tolerant, and resilient Generation Z.

**Keywords:** Religious Moderation, Generation Z, Tolerance, Social Media, Digital Literacy.

## ABSTRAK

Perkembangan media sosial telah membentuk kembali kehidupan keagamaan Generasi Z dengan memengaruhi cara mereka memahami agama, membangun identitas, dan merespons keberagaman. Dalam lingkungan digital ini, pesan-pesan keagamaan menyebar cepat dan sering bercampur dengan intoleransi, ujaran kebencian, serta narasi radikal. Meskipun penelitian sebelumnya telah banyak membahas moderasi beragama



*secara umum, kajian yang mengintegrasikan moderasi beragama dengan literasi digital moderat, konten keagamaan kreatif, dan kolaborasi antar-lembaga dalam memperkuat toleransi generasi muda di ruang digital masih terbatas. Tujuan: Penelitian ini bertujuan mengkaji moderasi beragama sebagai pendekatan strategis dalam membangun toleransi Generasi Z di era media sosial. Metode: Dengan metode studi literatur, penelitian ini menganalisis artikel ilmiah, buku, dan dokumen akademik terkait moderasi beragama, Generasi Z, literasi digital, media sosial, dan toleransi. Hasil: Hasil kajian menunjukkan bahwa moderasi beragama dapat diperkuat melalui tiga strategi utama, yaitu literasi digital kritis dan moderat, konten keagamaan kreatif dan inklusif, serta kolaborasi antara lembaga pendidikan, tokoh agama, pemerintah, dan komunitas digital. Kebaruan: Kebaruan kajian ini terletak pada perspektif integratif yang menghubungkan moderasi beragama dengan literasi digital dan pendidikan keagamaan kolaboratif di ruang digital. Implikasi: Implikasinya, moderasi beragama perlu dilembagakan dalam kebijakan pendidikan, program literasi digital, dan pengembangan kurikulum untuk membentuk Generasi Z yang inklusif, toleran, dan tangguh.*

**Kata Kunci:** Moderasi Beragama, Generasi Z, Toleransi, Media Sosial, Literasi Digital

## Introduction

The development of social media has transformed the way Generation Z understands religion, constructs identity, and interacts with religious diversity. This generation lives in an open, fast, and participatory digital ecosystem in which religious information is produced and circulated every day. In this context, social media functions not only as a communication tool but also as a space where religious attitudes and public identities are shaped. (Azizah et al., 2024) emphasize that social media has a significant potential to disseminate the values of religious moderation, peace, and social harmony within a plural society. However, this potential is accompanied by the spread of hoaxes, hate speech, and religious information that is not always accurate or balanced. Therefore, the relationship between religious moderation and Generation Z's digital life is an urgent topic for scholarly discussion.

Social media has two contrasting roles in the religious life of Generation Z. On the one hand, it can serve as a creative, inclusive, and accessible medium for religious education. On the other hand, it can also become a space for the reproduction of intolerant narratives, sectarian prejudice, and radical discourse. (Azizah et al., 2024) note that one of the main challenges in using social media for religious moderation is ensuring the validity of religious information and preventing the spread of hoaxes and hate speech. This situation shows that Generation Z requires digital literacy that is not merely technical but also critical, ethical, and moderate. Through moderate digital literacy, young people are expected to evaluate religious information wisely and avoid narratives that provoke hostility. Thus, digital competence must be linked to the development of tolerant and responsible religious attitudes.

The challenge of religious moderation in the digital era becomes more complex because social media algorithms may create closed information spaces. (Hidayah & Nur, 2024) explain that filter bubbles and echo chambers can limit users to information that confirms their existing beliefs. Such a condition may strengthen one-sided religious understanding, reduce opportunities for dialogue, and intensify polarization in digital public spaces. For Generation Z, this situation can form

exclusive religious perspectives if it is not balanced by critical literacy and exposure to diversity. Religious differences may then be perceived as threats rather than social realities that should be respected. Therefore, religious moderation is needed as a framework that expands perspectives, encourages dialogue, and supports tolerance in digital interaction.

Religious moderation in digital spaces should not be understood merely as a moral appeal, but as a strategy of education and social communication. (Mandala et al., 2024) highlight the importance of digital-based religious moderation as an effort to filter radicalism and extremism content in the era of disruption. They also argue that the spread of intolerant content on social media may threaten social harmony and interreligious relations. Consequently, peaceful, inclusive, and creative religious content must be strengthened so that moderate narratives can compete with provocative narratives. Such content may be presented through short videos, infographics, podcasts, digital campaigns, and interfaith forums that match the communication style of Generation Z. In this way, social media can be directed as a space for healthy religious learning rather than a space for reproducing hostility.

Based on these issues, this study focuses on how religious moderation can build Generation Z's tolerance through moderate digital literacy, creative and inclusive religious content, and institutional collaboration. The gap addressed in this article lies in the limited integration of religious moderation with digital literacy and collaborative religious education in the context of social media. Previous studies have discussed the potential of social media, the challenges of algorithmic polarization, and digital-based moderation, but a more integrated framework is still needed. This study aims to analyze religious moderation as a preventive and transformative approach to counter intolerance and digital radicalism among Generation Z. The novelty of this article is its emphasis on an integrative strategy that connects individual literacy, content production, and cross-institutional collaboration. Therefore, this article contributes to the development of educational policy, curriculum design, and digital literacy programs that support tolerance in plural societies.

## Methods

This study used a qualitative library research design with a descriptive-analytical approach. The method was selected because the article focuses on conceptual analysis, theoretical synthesis, and interpretation of scholarly findings related to religious moderation, Generation Z tolerance, digital literacy, creative religious content, and the challenges of intolerance and radicalism in social media. The data sources consisted of scientific journal articles, academic books, policy-related publications, and relevant scholarly documents published primarily within the last five years. The literature was selected based on thematic relevance, recency, credibility of publication, and direct connection with the research focus. The main criteria included discussions of religious moderation in digital spaces, Generation Z, social media, tolerance, digital literacy, hate speech, and online radicalism. Through this approach, the study did not aim to measure a phenomenon statistically, but to build a conceptual understanding of how religious moderation can be developed as a strategy for strengthening tolerance among Generation Z.

Data collection was conducted by searching, reading, recording, and classifying relevant literature according to the main themes of the study. The collected data were analyzed using content analysis by identifying key ideas, comparing findings across sources, and constructing conceptual relationships among religious moderation, moderate digital literacy, inclusive religious content, and institutional collaboration. The analysis followed several stages, namely data reduction, thematic presentation, interpretation, and conclusion drawing. Data reduction was carried out by selecting sources that directly supported the focus of the study, while thematic presentation was organized around the strategies of digital literacy, creative content, and collaboration. Interpretation was conducted by connecting previous findings with the needs of Generation Z in facing intolerance and radical narratives in social media. This method allows the article to formulate a comprehensive and replicable conceptual framework for understanding religious moderation as a preventive and transformative approach in the digital era.

## Results

### 1. Religious Moderation and Moderate Digital Literacy

The literature shows that religious moderation has a strategic position in building Generation Z's tolerance in the social media era. Generation Z is not only a passive user of digital media but also a producer, distributor, and interpreter of religious information. For this reason, tolerance cannot be strengthened only through normative religious lectures; it must be developed through digital approaches that are relevant to the habits of young people. (Pute et al., 2023) show that religious moderation can be revitalized through digital literacy by building interfaith communities, spreading constructive content, opening online discussions on tolerance, and holding digital activities related to moderation. This finding confirms that social media can become an educational space if it is managed through inclusive and participatory approaches. Therefore, religious moderation strategies in the digital era must position Generation Z as active agents of tolerance rather than mere recipients of religious messages.

The first important finding is that moderate digital literacy is the foundation for preventing Generation Z from being influenced by intolerant and radical narratives. Digital literacy should not be understood only as the ability to operate technology but also as the ability to select, criticize, and verify religious information. (Agusta, 2024) shows that digital spaces often become sources of religious learning for students, but they also contain risks such as hoaxes and hate speech that may weaken religious moderation. The study also indicates that students with good religious digital literacy tend to demonstrate strong moderation attitudes, including tolerance, non-violence, national commitment, and cultural accommodation. This means that religious digital literacy contributes to the formation of critical and balanced religious attitudes. Therefore, educational institutions should strengthen religious digital literacy as part of religious moderation education.

### 2. Creative and Inclusive Religious Content

The second finding is the importance of producing religious content that is creative, peaceful, and inclusive. Religious messages presented through visuals, short videos, podcasts, infographics,

and inspirational narratives are more likely to reach Generation Z because they match the communication patterns of digital natives. (Mustakimah & Rosyad, 2023) show that the Instagram account @Mubadalah.ID presents peaceful and soothing religious narratives that can expand public understanding of religious moderation. Their study concludes that religious moderation messages on social media can increase knowledge and encourage followers to become more tolerant and moderate. This finding confirms that digital content is not merely entertainment but may serve as a medium of value education and religious attitude transformation. Therefore, creative and inclusive religious content is an important instrument for presenting a friendly face of religion in digital spaces.

In confronting digital radicalism, counter-narrative strategies must also be developed continuously. (Daud & Bafadhal, 2023) explain that strengthening religious moderation on social media can be carried out through digital campaigns, collaboration with influencers, moderation da'wah through podcasts, and the development of smartphone-based moderation applications. This strategy is important because radical content often appears with emotional, provocative, and attention-grabbing communication patterns. If moderate narratives are not presented attractively, digital spaces may be dominated by exclusive and intolerant religious messages. Therefore, counter-narratives of religious moderation must appear actively and consistently on platforms frequently used by Generation Z. In this sense, social media becomes not only a site of risk but also a field for digital religious education.

### 3. Institutional Collaboration and Tolerance Resilience

The third finding is that religious moderation can function as a cognitive filter for Generation Z when they face religious issues in social media. (Tinggi et al., 2024) found that religious moderation plays a role in shaping Generation Z's tolerance attitudes, especially when they are exposed to issues of radicalism, moderate religious figures, foreign culture, and interreligious tolerance in digital spaces. This finding shows that moderate attitudes can strengthen young people's ability to respond to complex religious content more rationally, proportionally, and inclusively. The most important implication is that religious moderation is not only a moral value but also a way of thinking that helps young people evaluate digital information. Therefore, strengthening religious moderation should be directed toward building critical resilience, digital ethics, and social empathy. This confirms the need for systematic collaboration among schools, universities, religious leaders, government agencies, and digital communities.

Overall, strengthening tolerance among Generation Z cannot rely on a single approach. It requires adequate digital literacy to encourage critical thinking, creative religious content to present messages of peace in an engaging way, and collaboration among institutions to build a sustainable culture of moderation. These efforts can be supported through interfaith dialogue, healthy online discussions, social media campaigns, influencers, podcasts, digital applications, education, and peaceful religious content. Therefore, tolerance among Generation Z is best developed through an

integrated approach that combines education, digital communication, and active social participation. The synthesis of the findings is presented in Table 1.

**Table 1.** Strategic Synthesis of Religious Moderation for Generation Z

Strategy	Main focus	Supporting sources	Implication for tolerance
Moderate digital literacy	Critical verification of religious information and resistance to hoaxes or hate speech	Pute et al. (2023); Agusta (2024)	Builds critical, ethical, and balanced religious understanding
Creative inclusive content	Peaceful religious narratives through visuals, podcasts, infographics, and short videos	Daud & Bafadhhal (2023); Mustakimah & Rosyad (2023)	Makes tolerance messages attractive and accessible to Generation Z
Institutional collaboration	Cooperation among schools, religious leaders, government, communities, and digital creators	Mualim (2024); Pute et al. (2023)	Strengthens a sustainable ecosystem of religious moderation

## Discussion

The findings demonstrate that religious moderation must be understood as both an educational framework and a digital strategy. In conventional religious education, moderation is often introduced as a moral value that encourages balance, tolerance, and non-violence. However, the digital habits of Generation Z require moderation to be translated into practices that are present in their everyday online interactions. (Pute et al., 2023) provide a relevant basis by showing that digital literacy can revitalize moderation through interfaith networks, constructive content, online discussions, and digital activities. This means that religious moderation should not be separated from the digital culture where young people communicate and learn. Thus, digital literacy becomes the first gate for transforming moderation from a concept into a practical competency.

Moderate digital literacy is important because Generation Z receives religious content from many sources that are not always authoritative. Algorithms, reposting practices, short videos, and fragmented quotations can shape religious understanding without sufficient context. (Agusta, 2024) warns that digital spaces may contain hoaxes and hate speech, but they can also support strong religious moderation when students have adequate digital religious literacy. This finding suggests that religious education should train students to verify sources, examine context, identify manipulative narratives, and avoid emotional responses to provocative content. Such training is not only technical but ethical because it encourages responsible digital citizenship. Therefore, schools and universities need to integrate moderate digital literacy into religious education and character education programs (Harahap, 2025).

Creative and inclusive content is the second strategic pillar because online tolerance campaigns must compete with content that is emotionally persuasive and visually attractive. Radical and intolerant narratives often become viral because they are simple, provocative, and connected to

identity anxiety. (Daud & Bafadhah, 2023) propose digital campaigns, influencer collaboration, podcasts, and moderation applications as ways to strengthen religious moderation on social media. These strategies are valuable because they adjust the medium of religious education to the communication culture of Generation Z. Religious moderation will be more effective when it is delivered through stories, visuals, and dialogues that young people consider relevant. Consequently, religious educators and institutions need to collaborate with digital creators to produce content that is both theologically responsible and aesthetically engaging.

The example of @Mubadalah.ID analyzed by (Mustakimah & Rosyad, 2023) illustrates how inclusive digital religious communication can influence public understanding. The account demonstrates that religious messages can be presented in a peaceful and dialogical tone without losing normative strength. Its content contributes to the dissemination of moderation by addressing everyday issues through accessible language and visual formats. This model is relevant for Generation Z because they often prefer short, authentic, and visually meaningful content. At the same time, the content must avoid oversimplification that can reduce the depth of religious teaching. Therefore, the development of creative religious content requires cooperation between scholars, educators, religious leaders, and media practitioners.

Institutional collaboration forms the third strategic pillar because the problem of digital intolerance cannot be solved by individuals alone. Intolerant and radical narratives are often spread through networks, so the response must also be organized through networks. Educational institutions can provide critical knowledge, religious leaders can provide normative guidance, government agencies can develop policies, and digital communities can distribute messages widely. (Tinggi et al., 2024) shows that religious moderation can become a cognitive filter for Generation Z when they encounter sensitive religious issues online. This finding implies that collaboration should aim not only to remove harmful content but also to strengthen young people's interpretive capacity. Therefore, collaborative religious education must be designed as a long-term ecosystem rather than a temporary campaign .

The integrative framework developed in this article connects literacy, content, and collaboration as mutually reinforcing dimensions. Moderate digital literacy equips Generation Z with the ability to evaluate information critically. Creative content ensures that moderate messages are visible, attractive, and emotionally meaningful in digital spaces. Institutional collaboration provides legitimacy, continuity, and wider social support for tolerance education. If one dimension is absent, the strategy becomes incomplete: literacy without content may remain abstract, content without literacy may be consumed superficially, and collaboration without both may become bureaucratic. Therefore, religious moderation in the social media era should be implemented through a comprehensive model that involves knowledge, communication, and institutional support.

The discussion also reveals policy implications for education and curriculum development. Religious moderation should not be treated only as an extracurricular theme or campaign slogan. It should be institutionalized in curriculum design through learning outcomes related to digital ethics, interfaith understanding, critical media analysis, and civic responsibility. Educational institutions

can develop modules that analyze real social media cases, compare inclusive and intolerant narratives, and train students to produce moderation content. Such activities align religious learning with the realities of digital citizenship. Thus, curriculum development becomes a strategic site for translating religious moderation into competencies required by Generation Z.

Finally, the study contributes to the discourse on religious moderation by emphasizing the digital and generational dimensions of tolerance. Previous discussions often focus on religious moderation as a general social or theological concept. This article extends that discussion by showing how moderation must operate in the specific context of social media, where Generation Z constructs religious identity and encounters diversity. The proposed framework is preventive because it helps young people resist intolerance and digital radicalism. It is also transformative because it enables them to become producers of peaceful and inclusive religious narratives. Therefore, religious moderation can function as a model of digital religiosity that is tolerant, critical, and socially responsible.

## Conclusions

This study concludes that religious moderation is a strategic approach to building Generation Z's tolerance in the social media era. The findings show that social media is not merely a space of risk but also a space of opportunity for strengthening inclusive religious understanding. Religious moderation helps Generation Z understand religion proportionally, respect differences, reject violence, and respond critically to provocative religious narratives. In the digital context, moderation should be implemented through three interconnected strategies: moderate digital literacy, creative and inclusive religious content, and institutional collaboration. These strategies can transform social media into a space for learning, dialogue, and social harmony. The study also concludes that religious moderation should be institutionalized in educational policy, digital literacy programs, and curriculum development. Schools, universities, religious leaders, government agencies, families, digital communities, and content creators need to work together to create a sustainable ecosystem of moderation. Future studies may examine the effectiveness of specific digital moderation programs through empirical research involving Generation Z participants in schools, universities, or online communities. Further research can also compare different social media platforms to identify which formats are most effective for spreading tolerance messages. Therefore, religious moderation based on digital literacy, creative content, and collaboration offers a preventive and transformative model for developing an inclusive, critical, tolerant, and resilient Generation Z.

## Acknowledgment

The authors express appreciation to all parties who supported the preparation of this manuscript. The author information, institutional affiliations, and research funding details can be completed according to the actual submission requirements.



## References

- Agusta, E. S. (2024). Pemanfaatan literasi digital keagamaan dalam menumbuhkan sikap moderasi beragama siswa. *Jurnal Lingkar Mutu Pendidikan*, 21(1), 1-9. <https://dx.doi.org/10.54124/jlmp.v21i1.125>
- Armiah, Hasanah, R., Falikhah, N., & Khodijah, S. (2023). Moderasi di ruang digital: Studi netnografi dalam postingan akun Gus Baha, Ma'ruf Khozin, Ilham Humaidi. Pena Cendekia Pustaka.
- Azizah, M., Tumanggor, R. O., Hayfatunisa, G., Andriyani, A., Niziliani, S., & Natahsya, A. (2024). Peran media sosial dalam membentuk sikap moderasi beragama pada Generasi Z. *Jurnal Review Pendidikan dan Pengajaran*, 7(4), 16205-16210. <https://doi.org/10.31004/jrpp.v7i4.37412>
- Daud, S. M., & Bafadhal, M. I. (2023). Penguatan moderasi beragama di media sosial dalam melawan radikalisme online. *Indonesian Journal of Islamic Education and Local Culture*, 1(2), 75-86. <http://dx.doi.org/10.22437/ijielc.v1i2.30768>
- Edi, R. N., Pradikta, H. Y., & Normasyhuri, K. (2024). Fostering religious moderation in Generation Z: The impact of cultural environment and social media. *Fikri: Jurnal Kajian Agama, Sosial dan Budaya*, 9(2). <http://dx.doi.org/10.25217/jf.v9i2.4925>
- Harahap, N. F. (2025). *Internalization of Gender Equality Values through Character Education in Elementary Schools*. 7(December). <https://doi.org/10.29300/hawapsga>
- Hidayah, A. R., & Nur, M. A. (2024). Analisis tantangan moderasi beragama di era digital melalui perspektif teori filter bubble dan echo chamber. *Jurnal Sosial Humaniora*, 17(2), 150-160. <https://dx.doi.org/10.12962/j24433527.v17i2.22119>
- Iswanto, A. (Ed.). (2021). *Moderasi beragama di media sosial: Panduan untuk guru/pembimbing dan Gen Z*. Arti Bumi Intaran.
- Maknun, M. L., Kurniawan, S., & Wahyudi, W. E. (Eds.). (2023). *Moderasi beragama: Akar teologi, nalar kebudayaan, dan kontestasi di ruang digital*. Penerbit BRIN. <https://penerbit.brin.go.id/press/catalog/book/904>
- Mandala, I., Witro, D., & Juraidi. (2024). Transformasi moderasi beragama berbasis digital 2024: Sebagai bentuk upaya memfilter konten radikalisme dan ekstremisme di era disrupsi. *Jurnal Bimas Islam*, 17(1), 127-160. <https://dx.doi.org/10.37302/jbi.v17i1.1242>
- Monita, D., & Hasan, M. F. (2025). *Moderasi beragama dalam lensa Generasi Z dan Alpha*. AMS Pustaka.
- Mualim. (2024). The moderating role of religious moderation in shaping tolerance attitudes among Generation Z in the digital religious landscape. *Khazanah Theologia*, 6(2), 71-84. <https://dx.doi.org/10.15575/kt.v6i2.45238>
- Mustakimah, L., & Rosyad, R. (2023). Pesan moderasi beragama akun Instagram @Mubadalah.ID dalam mencegah radikalisme di media sosial. *Moderatio: Jurnal Moderasi Beragama*, 3(2), 181-193. <https://dx.doi.org/10.32332/moderatio.v3i2.7369>
- Pute, J. P., Alferdi, & Lilo, D. D. (2023). Revitalisasi moderasi beragama melalui pemanfaatan literasi digital oleh Gen-Z. *Masokan: Jurnal Ilmu Sosial dan Pendidikan*, 3(1), 44-59. <https://dx.doi.org/10.34307/misp.v3i1.108>
-



- Putri, N. W. (2023). Implementasi moderasi beragama di era digital pada Generasi Z sebagai upaya preventif intoleran di Indonesia. *Moderatio: Jurnal Moderasi Beragama*, 3(2), 142-152. <https://dx.doi.org/10.30984/pp.v2i2.2126>
- Tinggi, S., Syariah, I., Khotimah, H., & Kuningan, S. (2024). *The Moderating Role of Religious Moderation in Shaping Tolerance Attitudes among Generation Z in the Digital Religious Landscape Abstrak*. 6(2), 71–84. <https://doi.org/10.15575/kt.v6i2.45238>

