



Self-Service Religiosity Of Urban Millennials (Study On Religious Understanding Of Youth In Semarang City)

Darul Qutni,	darulqutni@mail.unnes.ac.id
Zaim EL Mubarak Ahmad Muthohar	zaimelmubarak@mail.unnes.ac.id thahar_nusha@yahoo.com,
Multazam	multazam@mail.unnes.ac.id.

ABSTRACT	<p>This study examines the Muslim community in learning religion, emphasizing the necessity of having a guiding teacher. A teacher or ustad will convey religious messages effectively and through behavior that is already actualized in daily life. Urban millennial Muslims lack the space and time for direct guidance from a teacher. This is due to the high mobility and busy schedules of parents outside the home, leading millennials to prefer instant and easy solutions. Religious or spiritual counseling is done in a very simple and time-saving manner. They often use YouTube and other social media content to enhance their spirituality, akin to shopping at a supermarket. Supermarket shopping provides convenience in fulfilling human needs by offering a complete stock of food and necessities without having to switch stores to get all desired items. Transactions at supermarkets are also straightforward, with debit or credit cards, even virtual money, completing the transaction easily and legitimately. Thus, this phenomenon becomes an analogy for self-service religiosity among urban millennials. This research uses sequential descriptive methodology with characteristics of qualitative research. Sequential descriptive research refers to continuous descriptive work on a research subject.</p> <p>Keywords: Self-Service Religiosity, Millennials</p>
-----------------	--

INTRODUCTION

Religion and culture are two inseparable entities. Religion nurtures spirituality, while culture maintains the characteristics of a nation. Religion and culture need to be validated as potential sources with magical capabilities to link moral evaluation and individual strength amidst the hustle and bustle of societal life. Religion grows dominantly in society through the realization of correct behavior via a social control system aimed at upholding behavioral systems. However, religion also encompasses social control concerning our understanding of societal religion, cultural structures, and

various social phenomena. Therefore, it is crucial to review the modern understanding of morality and social control before discussing its relationship with religion (Hoffmann 2017: 330).

Topics related to religion and culture have always been associated with varied interpretations and viewpoints in different literatures. In the context of religious studies, literary investigations tend to explore six main themes: trends in religious affiliation, beliefs, practices, and meanings of religion; how religious or spiritual identity develops and changes from childhood to adolescence and

adulthood; how social networks, institutions, and contexts shape and are shaped by the religiosity and spirituality of youth; studies of youth as agents in the development and maintenance of their religion or spiritual identity; how religiosity or spirituality enhances health (physical and mental), achievements, and prevents risky behaviors; and studies on the negative consequences of religion for youth (Pearce 298).

The technological advancements have brought intriguing phenomena into today's societal life, marking the rise of global culture and an instant lifestyle. This phenomenon results from the unstoppable globalization trend, often perceived as the hegemony of developed (Western) countries over developing nations. Absorbing news instantly without critical thinking ranges from fashion styles, lifestyle, to fast food consumption.

Millennials, born between 1980 and 2000, are a demographic group known as Generation Y, characterized by high sensitivity to technology. They currently act as students, early jobbers, and young parents. The term "millennials" was first coined by William Strauss and Neil Howe in 1987. They introduced this term as children born in 1982 entered preschool, and media began referring to them as the group connected to the new millennium when graduating high school in 2000. They wrote about this group in "Generations: The History of America's Future" and "Millennials Rising: The Next Great Generation." Millennials, born between 1980-2000, are a group highly connected to the internet. Their favorite platforms include YouTube, Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter. The internet's presence in society is inseparable from various social and cultural issues.

Another name for millennials is the Gadget Generation. This term aptly describes individuals who rely on gadgets for daily solutions. Thus, the Gadget Generation signifies a cohort constantly interacting with information-containing devices, whether the information is accurate or not. Hence, gadgets have become an integral part of life.

The development of science and technology impacts the mindset and self-upgrade strategies of millennials, including their religious

practices, which seem haphazard due to the ease of access to information. This is a shared concern regarding millennials' approach to religion. Hence, unchecked technological advancements without proper education in understanding religion lead to superficial religious comprehension among millennials. Realizing Islamic values is straightforward but not cheap to trivialize or use as a transactional tool. Applying religious values poses many challenges and obstacles. Preliminary studies indicate that millennials, as figures of moral and ethical reform, are less interested in emulating real-life role models in the community due to the more trendy and engaging virtual life orientation.

Social media and the virtual world have extraordinary capabilities, injecting messages to the masses like sharp bullets aimed at targeted audiences. Designers craft messages sent to the target at specific times. Media remains the primary source and medium for expression. As Muslim society, learning religion must involve a guiding teacher. Teachers or ustads effectively convey religious messages through actualized daily behaviors. Urban millennial Muslims, lacking space and time for direct guidance, turn to simple and time-efficient religious or spiritual guidance via YouTube and social media, analogous to supermarket shopping.

Supermarket shopping facilitates easy fulfillment of human needs by offering a comprehensive stock of food and necessities without switching stores. Transactions at supermarkets are simple, using debit or credit cards or virtual money, completing the process easily and legitimately. Thus, this phenomenon becomes an analogy for self-service religiosity among urban millennials. This research relates to studies on youth as agents in the development and maintenance of their religion or spiritual identity, beginning with research in Semarang. With a population of 1,653,524 in 2023, millennials in Semarang comprise about 24% of this total, a significant number with a substantial influence if not adequately religiously engaged.

STATE OF THE ART AND NOVELTY

Recent Literature and Research: Searching for recent literature and relevant research on religious understanding among millennials, particularly in Semarang. Scientific journals, news articles, and case studies can provide insights into the current state.

Interviews and Surveys: Conducting interviews with youth, religious figures, and related parties in Semarang. Surveys on religious opinions and understanding can help explore millennials' views and attitudes toward religion.

Social Media and Technology: Investigating the role of social media and technology in shaping millennials' religious views. How digital platforms influence religious perceptions and how millennials use technology for religious engagement.

Comparison with Other Cases: Comparing findings with similar cases in other Indonesian cities or internationally. This can provide broader context and understanding of common trends or significant differences.

Collaboration with Relevant Parties: Collaborating with religious institutions, universities, and civil society organizations focused on millennials and religion. This collaboration can provide greater data access and in-depth understanding.

Community Involvement: Directly engaging with millennial communities in Semarang through social activities, seminars, or discussion forums. This can help understand direct perspectives and dynamics possibly unseen from secondary data.

Analysis of Social and Economic Changes: Understanding how social and economic changes in Semarang affect millennials' religious understanding. Factors like urbanization, education, and employment can have significant impacts.

METHODS

This study employs a continuous descriptive methodology, a qualitative research characteristic. Continuous descriptive research involves ongoing descriptive work on a research subject (Moh. Nazir 2005: 56). Therefore, in researching urban millennial self-service religiosity, researchers continuously and systematically describe facts and inter-phenomena characteristics. **Research Approach**

This study uses a descriptive approach, relating to the objective and comprehensive description of research results. The researcher's relationship with the topic is as a co-creator of the research process, typically obtained through interviews (Suharsimi Arikunto 1992: 84).

Operational Definitions To clarify the research direction and focus, operational definitions of some terms in the research title are provided.

Method: Yamin states that the method is "a way of conducting or presenting, explaining, giving examples, and providing training on the lesson content to students for a specific purpose" (Yamin 2010: 157).

Religious Learning: Religious learning describes an activity with opportunities to enhance religious understanding and knowledge within a structured class. Models and methods influence the effective and optimal way of obtaining religious information.

Data Sources **Field-work data:** Information from respondents, informants, events, situations-conditions, and facts from the research object in the field. Respondents come from schools/campuses, parents, or the community categorized as millennials. Field-work data will be the primary source in this study (Soegiyono 2009:35).

Documentation: Information from library materials such as encyclopedias, books, articles, scientific works published in mass media like magazines, newspapers, scientific journals, and research reports. Library and documentation sources will be the starting point for understanding and analyzing the research results.

COLLECTION TECHNIQUES

To obtain accurate and reliable data, researchers employ several methods:

Observation: Direct access to the research object to observe religious teaching processes with or without spatial conditions.

Interviews: Conversations between two or more people where the researcher asks questions to the subject or group of subjects to be answered. Interviews are conducted using a schedule questionnaire or interview guide, with the interviewer carrying a guide with only the main points of what will be asked. This method is

used to obtain more detailed data on religious teachings.

Documentation: A technique of collecting data by gathering and analyzing written materials, records, or documents. This method includes reviewing research articles and books to analyze the research topic's relevance.

VALIDITY CHECKING TECHNIQUES

Data validity checking is crucial in research, especially when dealing with religious data among urban millennials. Here are several techniques for ensuring data validity:

Method Triangulation: Utilize various data collection methods such as interviews, surveys, participatory observations, and social media analysis. Triangulation helps confirm the validity of findings and provides a more comprehensive view.

Internal Validity: Ensure that the research design and data analysis minimize internal bias. Conduct pilot tests of scales or instruments to ensure they accurately measure the intended variables.

Reliability: Ensure data consistency by performing reliability tests on the instruments used for data collection. This ensures that the instruments provide consistent results when repeated.

Selection of Key Informants: Choose key informants who have a deep understanding of religion and can provide valuable insights. Selecting informants with varied characteristics and backgrounds can offer a broader perspective.

Fact-Checking: Verify data with other sources and fact-check to ensure that the information obtained from respondents matches the actual situation.

Subject Reactions: Monitor the reactions of subjects to the questions or topics raised. Ensure that they feel comfortable providing answers and clearly understand the research objectives.

Data Quality Control: Always perform data quality control by ensuring correct data entry and involving a supervisory process to minimize errors.

Researcher Reflexivity: It is important to note the researcher's reflections during and after interactions with respondents. This can help

understand how the researcher's perspectives and experiences influence data interpretation.

Negative Findings Analysis: Include negative findings in data analysis. This will demonstrate openness and objectivity in reporting research results.

External Audit: Involve independent researchers or experts to conduct an external audit of the research methodology and data analysis. This can provide an objective external perspective.

By combining several of the above techniques, you can strengthen data validity in research on the religious understanding of millennials in Semarang City.

ANALYSIS TECHNIQUES

Data analysis is a continuous process involving pattern regularity, explanation, and proportion. In this cycle, researchers begin to handle data analysis components and data collection throughout the process. Data reduction is done through disambiguation and coding of similar data. Data presentation is described according to the main issues. The process of data analysis is visually depicted.

After collecting all the data through observations, interviews, documentation, and literature reviews, the next step is data analysis. The data analysis method in this research uses critical analysis. The idea of critical analytical research is to describe, discuss, and critique key ideas and meet them with other key ideas through comparative research, relationships, and model development.

RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

Urban Millennial Self-Service Religion (Study: Religious Understanding Among Young People in Semarang)

A. Involvement in Religious Practices

1. Are you involved in religious practices? (If yes, explain further)

Response: Out of 20 respondents, most answered "Yes" with reasons including performing activities based on their religious beliefs, which is Islam in this context. They mentioned practicing worship by praying as taught in Islam, trying to follow God's commands, and avoiding His prohibitions.

2. Do you tend to perform worship individually or join religious groups?

Response: Most respondents preferred individual worship. They mentioned that if they worship in groups, it is usually just communal prayers in a mosque. They lean towards performing worship individually.

3. Since when have you been active in these religious practices?

Response: Most respondents answered "No," indicating they simply understand their religion, follow its commands, and avoid its prohibitions. They feel they can maintain consistency better because of doing it together and having friends to remind them about worship.

B. Influence of Technology and Social Media

1. To what extent does technology support or interfere with your religious practices?

Response: Most respondents said it does not interfere, emphasizing that it depends on personal use. Technology can be helpful, such as through prayer apps or online religious studies. However, excessive use of gadgets can be problematic. The key is using technology wisely in religious practices.

2. Do you use social media to engage in religious activities?

Response: Most respondents answered "Yes," mentioning involvement in religious activities and sharing religious information with friends on social media. They also noted that sometimes religious content appears in their social media timelines.

3. How does it affect you?

Response: They gain religious knowledge that they may not have acquired directly. Technology plays a significant role in enhancing their religious understanding, making daily knowledge about religion more accessible.

C. Changes in Religious Practices.

1. Do you see changes in your religious practices compared to previous generations?

Response: Most respondents answered "Yes," noting differences in methods but with the same good intentions. The current generation is more open to technology, making access to religious information easier and enabling participation in online religious activities. However, traditional values are still upheld.

2. Do factors like technological advancement or social changes affect your religious practices?

Response: Most respondents answered "Yes," stating that technology facilitates easier access to religious information and participation in online religious activities. Social changes can also influence their religious practices, emphasizing the importance of consistency in following religious teachings despite these changes.

D. Relationship Between Religion and Moral Values

1. How do your religious practices affect the moral and ethical values you uphold?

Response: Most respondents stated that religious practices significantly influence their moral and ethical values. They learn about compassion, honesty, helping others, and other positive values from religious teachings, which guide their daily lives.

2. Do you feel that religious practices help you make moral decisions in daily life?

Response: Most respondents answered "Yes," indicating that religious teachings guide them in making moral decisions, helping them determine right from wrong in challenging situations.

E. Emotional and Well-being Impact

1. How do your religious practices affect your mental and emotional well-being?

Response: Most respondents stated that worship provides peace and tranquility. Engaging in religious activities makes them feel connected with others and God, contributing to mental and emotional well-being.

2. Do you experience positive or negative impacts of religious practices on your well-being?

Response: Most respondents reported positive impacts, such as inner peace, gratitude, and social support from religious communities, which positively influence their overall well-being.

F. Decision-Making and Lifestyle

1. To what extent does religion play a role in your daily decision-making, especially related to lifestyle?

Response: Most respondents said they check their decisions against religious teachings, ensuring alignment with their values. Religion

guides them in leading a consistent lifestyle according to their principles.

2. How does religion influence your social relationships with fellow millennials?

Response: Most respondents indicated that religious activities foster positive environments and strong support systems among millennials with similar values, facilitating discussions and mutual support in daily life.

CONCLUSION

Based on the study of religious practices among urban millennials in Semarang's supermarkets, several conclusions can be drawn: Variety in Religious Practices: Millennials show diversity in their religious practices, ranging from consistent traditional worship to more individual and informal practices. Social Context Influence: The unique social context of supermarkets, with a strong consumer atmosphere, often conflicts with spiritual values. However, some millennials strive to balance material and spiritual needs. Role of Identity and Digital Presence: Religious identity remains crucial, often integrated with consumer and digital identities. Millennials use social media to share religious experiences and seek inspiration from online religious content. Challenges and Opportunities: While faced with fast-paced, materialistic consumer contexts, there are opportunities to deepen religious experiences and strengthen spiritual identity through relevant programs. Community Engagement: Religious communities in Semarang can support millennial religious practices by providing worship spaces, organizing religious events, and offering moral and social support. Understanding these trends and patterns in religious practices is essential for designing effective strategies to support the spiritual development of millennials amidst contemporary challenges.

DAFTAR PUSTAKA

1. Azami, T. (2018). *Kurikulum PAI kontra radikalisme: studi kasus di*

MA Al-Asror Semarang (Doctoral dissertation, UIN Walisongo).

2. Almaghfiroh, N. Z. (2020). *Pembinaan Wawasan Kebangsaan Bagi Generasi Muda Untuk Menghadapi Disintegrasi Bangsa (Studi Kasus Kantor Kesatuan Bangsa Dan Politik Kota Batu)* (Doctoral dissertation, Universitas Muhammadiyah Malang).
3. Ariyani, I. D. (2020). *DAKWAH MELALUI INSTAGRAM (Studi Pada Para Follower Akun Instagram@IndonesiaTanpaPacaran Melalui Opini Tentang Isu Perilaku Seks, Pacaran dan Pernikahan)*.
4. Innada, T. N. (2019). *Strategi dakwah bagi remaja milenial (studi kasus Keluarga Remaja Islam Masjid (KARISMA) Baitul Muttaqin Kauman Mranggen Demak)* (Doctoral dissertation, UIN Walisongo).
5. Koles, N. (2020). *Spiritualitas di kalangan kaum muda kampus: studi kasus mahasiswa ahlith thariqah al-mu'tabarrah an-nahdhiyah UIN Walisongo Semarang* (Doctoral dissertation, UIN Walisongo Semarang).