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**ПОВЕДЕНЧЕСКИЕ ИЗМЕНЕНИЯ ПОКОЛЕНИЯ Z В ЦИФРОВУЮ
ЭПОХУ: ОБЗОР С ТОЧКИ ЗРЕНИЯ ЯЗЫКА, РЕЛИГИИ И КУЛЬТУРЫ**

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**BEHAVIORAL CHANGES OF GENERATION Z IN THE DIGITAL ERA:
A REVIEW FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF LANGUAGE,
RELIGION AND CULTURE**

Аннотация. Распространение цифровых технологий коренным образом изменило способы взаимодействия, поведения и осмысления жизни поколения Z, поскольку это поколение с раннего возраста глубоко погружено в цифровую среду. В этой статье исследуются изменения в поведении поколения Z в цифровом контексте, уделяется особое внимание языковым практикам, религиозной активности и культурной ориентации. Основываясь на тщательном обзоре литературы, исследование критически обобщает недавние междисциплинарные исследования, посвященные онлайн-коммуникации, цифровой религиозности и формированию культурной идентичности среди поколения Z. Обзор показывает, что цифровое пространство изменило языковое поведение благодаря смешению языков, доминированию неформальных способов выражения мнений и более частым межкультурным обменам. В религиозной сфере цифровые средства массовой информации изменили модели религиозности, интерпретации верований и формирования идентичности, расширив доступ к религиозному контенту. С культурной точки зрения, поколение Z демонстрирует повышенную восприимчивость и способность адаптироваться к глобальным культурным течениям, что приводит к гибридному культурному самовыражению, трансформации социальных условностей и появлению новых поведенческих норм. В то же время эти изменения порождают проблемы, связан-

ные с сохранением культурного наследия, поддержанием этических стандартов и достижением последовательного развития идентичности. Эта статья подчеркивает важную роль цифровой грамотности, межкультурной компетенции и этического образования в обеспечении сбалансированного поведения поколения Z. В конечном счете полученные результаты позволяют глубже понять, как цифровая трансформация пересекается с языком, религией и культурой во влиянии на поведение современной молодежи.

Abstract. The expansion of digital technologies has fundamentally altered the ways in which Generation Z interacts, behaves, and constructs meaning, as this generation is deeply immersed in digital environments from an early age. This article investigates behavioral shifts among Generation Z within the digital context by focusing on linguistic practices, religious engagement, and cultural orientation. Adopting a qualitative literature-based review, the study critically consolidates recent interdisciplinary scholarship addressing online communication, digital religiosity, and cultural identity formation among Generation Z. The review demonstrates that digital spaces have reshaped linguistic behavior through the blending of languages, the dominance of informal modes of expression, and more frequent cross-cultural exchanges. In the religious domain, digital media has redefined patterns of worship, belief interpretation, and identity negotiation by broadening access to religious content, while simultaneously creating risks associated with fragmented understanding and contested values. From a cultural perspective, Generation Z shows heightened exposure and adaptability to global cultural currents, resulting in hybrid cultural expressions, transformed social conventions, and new behavioral norms. At the same time, these shifts generate challenges related to sustaining cultural heritage, maintaining ethical standards, and achieving coherent identity development. This review emphasizes the critical role of digital literacy, intercultural competence, and ethical education in promoting well-balanced behavioral outcomes among Generation Z. Ultimately, the findings offer deeper insight into how digital transformation intersects with language, religion, and culture in influencing contemporary youth behavior.

Ключевые слова: поколение Z, цифровая эпоха, языковое поведение, цифровая религия, культурная идентичность.

Keywords: Generation Z, digital era, language behavior, digital religion, cultural identity.

1. Introduction

Generation Z (Gen Z), commonly defined as individuals born between 1997 and 2012, represents the first generation to grow up fully immersed in digital technology, over 95% of Gen Z globally own smartphones, and more than 90% use social

media daily, making digital interaction central to their cognitive, social, and behavioral development [4].

Digital environments do not merely serve as tools for communication but function as primary spaces for identity construction, value negotiation, and social participation. Consequently, understanding Gen Z's behavioral changes requires an integrative framework that connects language use, religious engagement, and cultural orientation

Background of the Study

Globally, social interactions, communication styles, cultural identities, and religious traditions have all been fundamentally changed by the rapid advancement of digital technology. This shift is especially noticeable among Generation Z, whose behavioral habits are very different from those of earlier generations due to their upbringing in a digitally saturated society. Their communication, identity expression, and interpretation of cultural and religious values have all been profoundly impacted by their exposure to social media, instant communication technologies, and international digital information. It is essential for anyone involved in education, religion, and cultural preservation to comprehend these behavioral shifts.

Linguistically speaking, Generation Z's use and construction of language have changed as a result of digital communication platforms. The widespread usage of emoticons, memes, abbreviated idioms, and platform-specific dialects has encouraged new language patterns that prioritize contextual meaning, originality, and brevity. In addition to facilitating quick communication, these linguistic advancements also support code-switching patterns and hybrid language forms that combine regional languages with influences from throughout the world. Recent research demonstrates how Generation Z users' social interaction and communication norms are impacted by these changing digital language habits [15, 7, 3].

In the realm of religion, digitalization has transformed the ways in which Generation Z engages with faith-based content and religious communities [12, 11, 15]. Online sermons, religious influencers, and digital faith-based communities have emerged as significant sources of spiritual content, often supplementing or replacing traditional religious instruction. While digital platforms offer broader access to religious knowledge, they also expose young users to selective interpretations and misinformation, which can influence religious commitment and identity. Research in this area shows that digital media's dual role – as both enabler and disruptor of traditional religious practice – poses unique challenges for maintaining depth in religious understanding and ethical engagement.

From a cultural perspective, the digital era fosters rapid cultural exchange but also disrupts local traditions. Generation Z is continuously navigating between global

digital culture and local cultural identities. On one hand, digital platforms encourage cultural creativity and the reimagining of traditions; on the other hand, they can weaken cultural rootedness and reduce appreciation for local values. Research on cultural identity among Gen Z indicates that digital influences shape not only lifestyle choices but also collective cultural values, leading to dynamic processes of cultural adaptation and reinvention [8, 21, 9].

Although there is a growing body of research on Gen Z’s engagement with digital technologies, much of the existing literature tends to address individual domains – such as communication, religion, or culture – in isolation. There is a notable gap in interdisciplinary research that integrates these perspectives holistically to comprehensively understand how digitalization influences Generation Z’s behavior across multiple domains simultaneously. By adopting such an integrative lens, we can better appreciate the complex ways in which language, religious experience, and cultural identity intersect and evolve in response to digital environments.

Therefore, this systematic review aims to synthesize recent literature examining Generation Z’s behavioral changes in the digital era from the combined perspectives of language, religion, and culture. This interdisciplinary approach not only advances theoretical understanding but also informs educational strategies, religious engagement, and cultural policy initiatives that are responsive to the lived realities of Generation Z in a digital age.

2. Methodology

This study adopts a **qualitative literature-based review** approach. Academic sources were selected based on the following criteria: Publication between **2022–2025**, Peer-reviewed international journals, focus on Generation Z, digital behavior, language, religion, or culture. The review synthesizes findings from linguistics, sociology, religious studies, and cultural studies to identify dominant behavioral trends and emerging challenges.

3. Result

A. Digital Environment and Generation Z Behavior

Recent global data illustrates the intensity of Gen Z’s digital engagement

No	Aspects	Amount of time/%	Source
1	Average daily internet use	7-9 hours	[22]
2	Primary platforms	YouTube (95%), Instagram (86%), TikTok (82%)	
3	Cross-cultural interaction	68% of Gen Z report interacting regularly with people from different cultural backgrounds online	[10]

These patterns indicate that digital spaces operate as behavior-shaping ecosystems, rather than neutral communication channels. Digital platforms function as so-

cio-technical ecosystems that actively structure user behavior. Rather than serving as neutral channels for communication, digital spaces embed algorithmic governance, affordances, and normative cues that influence interaction patterns, identity construction, language use, and value formation. Consequently, user behavior in digital environments is shaped through continuous interaction between technological design and social practice.

B. Linguistic Behavioral Changes

1. Digital Language Practices

Research consistently shows that Gen Z demonstrates:

Feature	Description	Examples of Words / Expressions
Slang & Creativity [6]	Inventing new, rapidly changing terms	<i>baper (bawa perasaan), gengges (annoying), receh (not funny / trivial), bestie, spill, ngadi-ngadi, julid</i>
Code-Mixing & Shift [2]	Blending languages within posts	<i>"Aku literally capek banget today", "No comment sih, terlalu cringe", "Mood-nya off dari pagi"</i>
Platform-Specific Styles [13]	Short-form, emoji usage, abbreviations	<i>LOL, TBH, IDC, FWIW, wkwk, hehe, 😏, 🙄, 🤔 (to express irony or humor)</i>
Identity & Community Marking [14]	Language as social participation	<i>bestie, slay, era, main character, healing, anak skena, sobat misqueen</i>
Pragmatic Politeness Online [17]	New norms in speech choice	<i>izin reply, maaf spam, no offense ya, CMIIW, respect, pls jangan salah paham</i>
Global Influences [16]	Multilingual adaptation & content borrowing	<i>POV, relatable, plot twist, canon event, soft spoken, red flag, green flag</i>

A study by [19] confirms that digital discourse encourages linguistic creativity but also challenges traditional academic and formal language norms. Through informal, multimodal, and hybrid language practices, digital discourse encourages linguistic inventiveness. Traditional academic and formal language norms, which place an emphasis on standardization, clarity, grammatical precision, and register appropriateness, are also challenged by these practices. Therefore, learners' sensitivity to context-specific language use may be weakened by the growing use of digital communication, especially in academic settings.

2. Cross-Cultural Linguistic Exchange (CCLE)

Digital platforms intensify exposure to global English varieties and intercultural communication. According to [18], Gen Z users are more tolerant of non-native English forms, redefining notions of linguistic correctness and identity. This statement suggests that Gen Z's extensive engagement in global digital communication has led to greater acceptance of non-native English varieties. Consequently, traditional native-speaker norms are being challenged, as linguistic correctness is increasingly defined by intelligibility, inclusivity, and identity construction rather than adherence

to standardized forms. This reflects a broader shift toward World Englishes and English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) perspectives.

The examples of CCLE

No	Aspect	Countries	Words	The use	
1	Borrowed Words Across Cultures	English	POV	used worldwide on TikTok to frame personal narratives	
		Korean	Hallyu	used by non-Korean Gen Z to refer to Korean pop culture	
		Japanese	Otaku	globally used to describe anime or fandom enthusiasts	
		Arabic/Islamic term	Hijrah	used digitally to express moral or lifestyle change	
2	Code-Mixing in Online Communication		<i>“Aku lagi burnout banget from work.”</i> <i>“This song tuh benar-benar healing.”</i> <i>“No offense ya, tapi itu red flag.”</i>		
3	Cultural Slang Crossing Borders	African Vernacular origin	American English	Slay	meaning “do very well”
				Bestie	used globally to signal closeness
				Cringe	adopted across cultures to express embarrassment
		Indonesian slang		Receh	used by diaspora communities online
4	Memes as Linguistic-Cultural Exchange			<i>“This is fine”</i>	meme used worldwide to express stress
		Anime meme		<i>“Yamete kudasai”</i>	Indonesian memes mixing English captions with local humor used humorously by non-Japanese users
5	Religious & Ethical Language in Digital Contexts			Astaghfirullah	used humorously or seriously in non-Arabic contexts
				MasyaAllah	used in comment sections worldwide
		Sanskrit/Buddhist origin		Karma	used casually to mean “consequences”

3. Religious Behavioral Shifts in Digital Spaces

3.1. Digital Religiosity

Digital religiosity refers to the ways religious beliefs, practices, identities, and communities are **expressed, negotiated, and transformed through digital technologies** such as social media, mobile apps, websites, and online platforms. It highlights

how religion is no longer confined to physical spaces (mosques, churches, temples) but increasingly operates within **online and hybrid (online–offline) environments**.

No	Aspects	Activities	Examples
1	Core Meaning of Digital Religiosity	Practicing religion online	online sermons, Qur'an or Bible apps, virtual prayer groups
		Constructing religious identity digitally	bio statements, hashtags like #Hijrah, #MuslimTok, #ChristianYouth
		Engaging in religious discourse	commenting, debating, sharing religious content
		Experiencing spirituality mediated by technology	Prayer and dhikr apps, Qur'an, Bible, or Bhagavad Gita apps, Meditation and mindfulness apps
2	Key Characteristics of Digital Religiosity	Mediated Practice	Live-streamed khutbahs and worship services, Religious reminders via Instagram, TikTok, or WhatsApp, AI-powered prayer schedules and dhikr apps
		Personalization and Individual Authority	Which religious influencers to follow, Which interpretations align with their beliefs This often shifts authority from traditional institutions to individuals and online preachers .
		Participatory and Interactive	Posting reflections, da'wah videos, or testimonies Engaging in comment-based theological discussions
		Hybrid Sacred Space	Religious messages appear alongside memes, entertainment, and commercial content, Faith is integrated into everyday digital life
3	Digital Religiosity among Generation Z	Visual and short-form	TikTok da'wah, Instagram reels
		Emotion-driven	stories of hijrah, repentance, self-improvement
		Identity-based	religion as lifestyle and moral branding
		Peer-influenced	rather than institution-led

The way people "live their religion" online through screens, platforms, and digital interactions is known as "digital religiosity," and it reshapes identity, authority, and faith.

4. Cultural Orientation and Identity Transformation

4.1. Hybrid Cultural Identity

Gen Z demonstrates high cultural adaptability:

72% identify as having a "blended" or "hybrid" cultural identity [20]

Digital culture promotes global trends while reshaping local traditions

This results in glocalized behavior, where global values are adapted to local contexts.

[1] emphasizes the urgency of integrating cultural literacy into digital education frameworks.

Aspect	Statistical Data	Year	Source
Smartphone Ownership	95% of Gen Z globally	2024	(1)
Average Daily Internet Use	7–9 hours per day	2024	[22]
Social Media Usage	Over 90% daily usage	2023	[10]
Online Religious Engagement	64% access religious content online	2022	(27)
Cross-Cultural Online Interaction	68% interact with other cultures online	2023	[10]

5. Discussion

The intersection of **language, religion, and culture** in digital environments reveals interconnected behavioral shifts: because social media platforms serve as venues for the convergence of linguistic inventiveness, religious expression, and cultural values, the junction of language, religion, and culture in digital contexts exposes interrelated behavioral alterations among Indonesian Gen Z. Religious terminology like *hijrah*, *masyaAllah*, and *astaghfirullah* are often incorporated by Gen Z users into hybrid, code-mixed digital language, expressing both cultural identity and global digital influences. Peer-mediated and performative forms of belief formed by platform norms, visibility, and algorithmic feedback are replacing institutionally led religion, according to these practices.

In digital connections, language choices not only express cultural and religious affinity but also redefine moral norms through public discourse instead of official authority. As a result, traditional boundaries of linguistic correctness, cultural norms, and religious practice are redefined as Gen Z's religious identity becomes fluid, publicly negotiated, and entangled with digital culture [17, 16, 19, 18].

Without adequate digital literacy and intercultural competence, these transformations risk producing fragmented identities and weakened value systems. rapid digital transformations – such as changes in language use, cultural interaction, and religious expression in online spaces – do not automatically lead to positive development. When individuals lack digital literacy (the ability to critically evaluate, interpret, and responsibly use digital content) and intercultural competence (the ability to understand, respect, and navigate cultural and value differences), these transformations may instead result in fragmented identities and weakened value systems.

Fragmented identities occur when individuals adopt multiple, inconsistent beliefs, behaviors, or self-representations across different digital platforms without re-

flective integration. Meanwhile, weakened value systems emerge when moral, cultural, or religious principles are shaped more by algorithms, trends, and peer validation than by critical understanding or grounded ethical reflection.

6. Conclusion

This review highlights that Generation Z's behavior in the digital era is characterized by linguistic innovation, digitally mediated religiosity, and hybrid cultural identities. While digital transformation offers unprecedented opportunities for expression and connection, it also presents serious challenges related to ethics, cultural sustainability, and identity coherence. Educational institutions and policymakers must prioritize digital ethics, intercultural competence, and value-based education to foster balanced behavioral development among Generation Z.

Digital technologies have a significant impact on how Generation Z behaves in terms of language, religion, and culture. Digital environments reconfigure religious engagement through mediated participation and personalized meaning-making, while also facilitating language hybridity, informal communication habits, and increased cross-cultural interaction. In terms of culture, Generation Z is more receptive to influences from throughout the world, which results in hybrid cultural expressions and changing social standards.

Critical issues are also brought about by these changes, such as fractured identity development, the deterioration of frameworks for shared values, and conflicts between exposure to the world and cultural continuity. In order to navigate digital worlds in a thoughtful and responsible way, this study emphasizes the significance of enhancing digital literacy, intercultural competency, and ethical education. In increasingly complicated digital ecosystems, these skills are crucial for encouraging Generation Z to build a cohesive identity and behave in a way that is consistent with their values.

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