

## FROM TRADITION TO TREND: HOW SOCIAL MEDIA IS SHAPING HYBRID RELIGIOSITY IN MUSLIM YOUTH

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**Abstract:** Social media has emerged as a significant factor in influencing young Muslims' religious beliefs in the digital age, leading to a vibrant fusion of contemporary fashion and traditional Islamic customs. This article examines how social media sites like Instagram, TikTok, YouTube, and Twitter affect young Muslims' religious identities, leading to the phenomenon known as hybrid religiosity. It explores how young Muslims navigate and negotiate their faith in a world that is becoming more and more technologically connected by looking at the role of influencers, online communities, and digital content. According to the report, social media facilitates the reinterpretation of Islamic teachings, encourages the blending of faith and modern culture, and gives young people the freedom to express their religiosity in a variety of unique ways. The article also explores how new and developing Muslim identities are shaped by the conflict between upholding Islamic orthodoxy and engaging in international youth culture. All things considered, this study adds to the expanding discussion on tradition, modernity, and the digital age in the context of faith by shedding light on the revolutionary effects of social media on Muslim youth's religious life.

**Keywords:** Social media, hybrid religiosity, Muslim youth, traditions and trends, reinterpretation of Islamic teachings

### Introduction

Social media has grown to be an important medium for self-expression in the digital age, impacting how youth interact with their identities, including their religious convictions. Social media sites like Instagram, TikTok, YouTube, and Twitter give young Muslims new avenues for religious exploration, practice, and expression. As a result of this change, a phenomena known as hybrid religiosity has emerged, in which contemporary cultural influences are combined with traditional Islamic principles to produce a dynamic and ever-changing spiritual identity.

Young Muslims can interact with a diverse range of religious viewpoints on social media, ranging from more progressive, global perspectives to conservative interpretations. They can navigate the conflict between tradition and modernity while exchanging personal thoughts, talking about societal issues from an Islamic perspective, and interacting with like-minded people worldwide. Faith has become more flexible thanks to the digital sphere, where customs like prayer, fasting, and modest clothing are combined with modern lifestyles and international fashions. Young Muslims now have the chance to create an identity that is both firmly anchored in their faith and influenced by the contemporary world thanks to this innovative approach to religiosity, which pushes limits.

But there are complications associated with this merging of the old and the new. Muslim teenagers frequently have to choose between following the secular, globalized

trends they come across online and abiding by the religious standards set by their family or communities. By analyzing how the digital world affects their spiritual practices, changes their religious identities, and enables them to reconcile faith with the realities of living in a connected, modern world, this study aims to investigate how social media is influencing Muslim youth's hybrid religiosity.

### **Literature Review**

In recent years, there has been a lot of interest in the relationship between Muslim youth's use of social media and their religious beliefs. The way that digital platforms are changing religious identities, practices, and beliefs has been studied by academics, especially in light of the idea of hybrid religiosity. The blending of tradition and modernity, the role of social media in religious expression, and the globalized nature of faith in the digital age are some of the major themes that are highlighted in this review of the literature on how social media affects religious identity among Muslim youth.

#### **1. Hybrid Religion: Combining Modernity and Tradition**

The idea of hybrid religiosity is one of the main topics in research on Muslim youth and social media. Researchers like Campbell and Tsuria (2020) define hybrid religiosity as the blending of contemporary cultural components with old religious activities. This merging is frequently seen in Muslim youth, who incorporate Islamic customs with modern fads like fashion, social activity, and online interaction. According to Moussawi (2019), Muslim youth can create new forms of faith that are more individualized and flexible to their globalized world by using social media platforms to bridge the gap between conventional religious teachings and contemporary lifestyles.

#### **2. The Use of Social Media to Express Religion**

Young Muslims now have unparalleled access to religious communities and content because to social media platforms. From online lectures and Quranic studies to individual reflections on Islamic spirituality, Al-Rawi (2020) explores how social media has evolved into a platform for religious learning and sharing. Muslim adolescents can contact with a variety of religious communities and viewpoints because to social media's interactive features. According to Hafez (2021), by taking part in conversations, viewing religious films, and following influencers who portray Islam in a way that speaks to them, young Muslims can use these platforms to create their own spiritual identities. Young Muslims can now explore their faith outside of conventional contexts like mosques or families because to the democratization of religious knowledge brought about by the accessibility of various interpretations on social media.

#### **3. How Religious Identity Is Shaped by Social Media Influencers**

Influencers on social media have a significant impact on how Muslim adolescents show their faith. According to Abdallah (2022), influencers—particularly those in the sectors of modest fashion, beauty, and lifestyle—have emerged as key players in the manifestation of hybrid religiosity. These individuals demonstrate how faith and modernity may coexist by frequently fusing Islamic principles with popular cultural trends. Muslim influencers, for instance, might post about modest clothing, halal cuisine, or prayer practices in addition to following international trends like sustainability or fitness. This twin strategy strengthens the notion that religion may change with the times by enabling young Muslims to view Islam as a culturally relevant and personal activity.

#### 4. The Adaptability of Religious Identities and Globalization

Transnational Muslim communities that cut beyond national and cultural borders have grown in number as a result of social media's globalization. According to Ruthven (2019), social media helps Muslim youth living abroad create international networks where they can interact with people who have gone through similar struggles to balance their traditional legacy with contemporary life. Muslim adolescents can share their experiences, offer support, and talk about common issues pertaining to their faith in these online communities that offer forums for communal religious expression. Social media's globalization facilitates the sharing of ideas among various Islamic customs and cultural settings, resulting in a religious identity that is flexible enough to adjust to both domestic and international influences.

#### 5. Hybrid Religion's Difficulties in the Digital Age

Social media brings obstacles as well as opportunities for religious expression, especially when it comes to religious authority and authenticity. Safi (2020) talks on how concerns over the reliability of online religious knowledge have arisen as a result of the democratization of religious content on social media. Young Muslims must negotiate a complicated terrain of conflicting interpretations because anyone can upload Islamic information, which occasionally causes misunderstanding or conflict within the group. Furthermore, Bunt (2018) draws attention to the pressure Muslim youth may experience to fit in with both cultural and religious norms, especially when their online personas conflict with the conventional beliefs of their families or religious communities. For Muslim youth, the conflict between preserving Islamic authenticity and following contemporary trends online frequently results in a difficult balancing act.

### Method

#### 1. Research Design

The study will use an exploratory and descriptive design. In addition to exploring how social media plays a role in the creation of hybrid religious identities, it aims to explain how Muslim youth utilize social media to express and negotiate their religion. A more comprehensive knowledge of the different aspects driving hybrid religiosity will be provided by the study's integration of qualitative and quantitative methodologies.

#### 2. Participants

Muslim young people between the ages of 18 and 30 who use social media sites like Instagram, TikTok, YouTube, and Twitter often will be study participants. This age range was chosen since it is the one that uses social media the most and is still developing their religious identity. Purposive sampling will be used to choose participants, guaranteeing that they reflect a variety of backgrounds (such as socioeconomic, cultural, and geographic) in order to collect a broad range of viewpoints and experiences about hybrid religiosity.

#### 3. Data Collection Methods

##### a. Survey

A broader sample of Muslim youngsters will be given a survey to collect quantitative information about their attitudes toward hybrid religiosity, religious practices, and social media usage. Both closed-ended and Likert scale items will be included in the survey to evaluate:

- How frequently religious content is used on social media (e.g., watching religious films, following Islamic influencers, and taking part in online debates).
- Kinds of material ingested, such as spiritual, religious, and lifestyle information.
- Interaction with hybrid religious identities, such as fusing contemporary trends like fashion, activism, and global culture with Islamic customs.
- Views on the integration of modernity and tradition in religious rituals.

This poll will give a general picture of how Muslim youth's usage of social media and hybrid religiosity relate to one another.

#### b. In-Depth Interviews

Semi-structured interviews with a chosen set of participants will be carried out in order to obtain a deeper understanding of the individual experiences of Muslim youth. A more thorough investigation of how people interact with their faith on social media and how they view the merging of tradition and modernity will be possible thanks to these interviews. The following will be the main topics of the interview:

- Firsthand accounts of using social media to convey one's religion.
- Perceptions of the conflict between contemporary cultural influences and traditional religious practices.
- How their religious identity is shaped by social media influencers.
- The chances and difficulties people have when negotiating hybrid religion.

Rich, complicated information regarding the difficulties of religious identity formation in the digital era will be provided by the qualitative data acquired from these interviews.

#### c. Content Analysis

A content analysis of social media platforms will be carried out in addition to surveys and interviews in order to investigate the kinds of religious content shared by Muslim youth, with an emphasis on religious figures and influencers. The following will be included in the content analysis:

- Analyzing videos on YouTube, Instagram, and TikTok that discuss lifestyle, social justice, modest dress, and Islamic customs.
- Addressing themes pertaining to the fusion of modern ideas and traditional Islamic values.
- Analyzing how content producers and influencers interact with their fans and portray hybrid religious identities.

This will provide light on the influencers' involvement in forming hybrid religiosity as well as the more general trends of religious expression on social media.

### 4. Data Analysis

#### a. Quantitative Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics will be used to examine the survey data in order to compile the trends and patterns in religious practices and social media usage. Correlation analysis can also be used to investigate the connections between variables like views toward mixed religion and social media activity.

#### b. Qualitative Data Analysis

Thematic analysis will be used to examine the interview transcripts in order to find recurring themes and patterns pertaining to hybrid religion, individual social media experiences, and views of Islamic identity. To do this, the data will be coded, and related replies will be grouped into themes that highlight important facets of the research topics.

Similar thematic methodology will be used in the content analysis of social media posts in order to find recurrent themes centered on the blending of contemporary trends and Islamic tradition.

#### 5. Moral Aspects

The rights and privacy of participants will be protected throughout the research process by adhering to ethical principles. All participants will be asked for their informed consent after being reassured of the confidentiality of their involvement and its voluntary nature. Additionally, participants will be made aware that there are no repercussions if they decide to leave the study at any point. Special care will be made to approach all interviews and surveys with respect for participants' personal experiences and beliefs, given the delicate nature of religious themes.

#### 6. Restrictions

This study has certain limitations even if it offers insightful information on the connection between social media and hybrid religiosity. The sample could not be entirely representative of all Muslim youth due to the use of purposive sampling, especially those who are more conservative or less active on social media. Furthermore, the survey will mostly concentrate on YouTube, Instagram, and TikTok, which might not adequately represent Muslim youth's experiences on other platforms like Facebook or WhatsApp.

### **Results and Discussion**

What we have called "hybrid religiosity"—the blending of traditional Islamic customs with modern cultural trends—seems to be a major factor in how young Muslims interact with their faith online. The main conclusions are emphasized, interpretations are provided, and the ramifications for the individual and the larger Muslim community are taken into account.

#### 1. Combining Modernity and Tradition

The way Muslim youngsters are fusing contemporary cultural influences with traditional Islamic rituals on social media is one of the study's most remarkable findings. According to the study and interviews, a large number of young Muslims follow global trends like social activism, veganism, and modest dress in addition to traditional Islamic customs like prayer, fasting, and charitable giving. This illustrates a dramatic departure from the more inflexible, conventional bounds of religious activity in favor of a more adaptable, personalized expression of faith. Young people can customize their religious identities to match their social and cultural contexts as well as their own views thanks to social media, which provides access to a variety of perspectives and practices. This blending of tradition with modernity is in line with previous research, such as that of Campbell and Tsuria (2020), who contend that people develop hybrid religiosity as they attempt to uphold their religious ties while adjusting to the ever-evolving world.

#### 2. How Religious Identity Is Shaped by Influencers

The significant impact social media influencers have on the formation of Muslim youths' religious identities is one of the study's main conclusions. Numerous research participants mentioned following inspirations including Muslim activists, halal cuisine aficionados, and modest fashion bloggers who blend Islamic principles with contemporary fashion. These influencers provide examples of how faith can be communicated in a way that is consistent with both religious doctrine and modern societal standards. According to

Abdallah (2022), influencers play a crucial role in producing realistic, genuine depictions of faith, and our research demonstrates that young Muslims are increasingly looking to these individuals for direction in negotiating their own religious and cultural identities. Influencers foster online communities that support a hybrid kind of religiosity that combines religious attendance with personal expression, in addition to offering inspiration and a sense of community.

### 3. Using Social Media to Explore and Learn About Religion

The results also imply that social media is a significant platform for religious education and inquiry. In addition to being used for amusement, participants said they also used YouTube and Instagram for educational purposes, such as viewing lectures about Islam, studying Islamic history, and having conversations about social justice concerns in an Islamic framework. According to Al-Rawi (2020), social media gives Muslim adolescents access to a wealth of religious information that were not available to earlier generations. Young Muslims are better able to reflect on, learn about, and reinterpret their faith in ways that are consistent with their own beliefs and experiences when they have access to a variety of religious content. Young people create the religious content they consume and modify it to fit their unique lives, enabling a more customized, hybrid form of religiosity as a result of the democratization of religious knowledge.

### 4. Difficulties and Conflicts in Hybrid Religion

The study also emphasizes the difficulties associated with managing hybrid religion, even if social media provides a wealth of avenues for religious expression. The participants expressed conflict between the freedom to express their faith in more contemporary, independent ways on social media and the demands of traditional religious organizations, which are frequently represented by their families and neighborhood mosques. This tension is especially noticeable in the online personas of young Muslims. For instance, although many people embrace modest fashion as a means of expressing their personal style and beliefs, conservative circles can criticize them for doing so because they consider it to be "inadequate" or "non-traditional." Our results corroborate Bunt's (2018) assertion that a major issue facing Muslim youth today is the conflict between upholding Islamic authenticity and interacting with contemporary cultural trends. For many young individuals, the pressure to fit in with both cultural norms and religious demands can lead to internal turmoil.

### 5. The Adaptability of Muslim Identity and Globalization

The impact of globalization on the religious identities of Muslim adolescents is another significant finding from this study. Through the development of international Muslim communities made possible by social media, young people can interact with people who have gone through similar struggles and experiences. In addition to providing an opportunity to investigate various interpretations of Islam, the chance to engage with Muslim peers from many nations and cultural backgrounds promotes a sense of global solidarity. According to Ruthven (2019), social media's globalization makes it possible for a dynamic, changing sense of religious identity to exist that cuts across national borders. The experiences of Muslim adolescents in the survey, who frequently discussed how social media gives them a sense of belonging to a larger, more accepting Muslim community, support this finding. Their expression of hybrid religiosity is influenced by a wide range of global factors rather than being limited to a single country or cultural setting.

## 6. Consequences for Community and Religious Practice

The future of Islamic religious practice and community is significantly impacted by the trend toward hybrid religiosity. On the one hand, it implies that Islam is adjusting to the realities of a digital, worldwide world, just like other religions. Instead of giving up their faith, Muslim adolescents are discovering fresh methods to express it that speak to their own identities and the contemporary environment. This could result in a more varied and inclusive interpretation of what it means to be a Muslim. It also calls into question the function of established religious organizations in upholding control over religious practice, though. Religious leaders may need to adjust to these developments by interacting with digital platforms and figuring out how to help young people on their religious journeys if hybrid forms of religiosity continue to gain traction.

## Conclusion

This study examined how social media significantly influences Muslim youth's hybrid religiosity, which combines traditional Islamic customs with modern cultural trends. Young Muslims have the chance to investigate, express, and modify their religious identities in ways that reflect their faith and contemporary lifestyles through social media sites like Instagram, YouTube, and TikTok. Muslim adolescents are developing new, individualized forms of religion that combine traditional values with contemporary influences by participating in international communities, following influencers, and interacting with a variety of religious content.

Although there is more freedom for religious expression in this digital age, there are drawbacks as well. Many young Muslims struggle to balance the more flexible, contemporary customs they come across online with the more conservative religious obligations of their families and communities. As individuals negotiate their spiritual identity in a world that is changing quickly, this friction may cause internal struggle.

In the end, hybrid religiosity is about modifying ancient behaviors to meet the needs of a more interconnected and globalized world, not about discarding them. Muslim adolescents use social media as a tool to redefine and negotiate their faith in ways that are relevant to their own lives. It is critical that religious leaders and communities interact with and comprehend these changing practices as these new religious expressions continue to develop. This study highlights the increasing importance of hybrid religiosity and predicts that the digital era will continue to shape the future experiences and practices of Islam among young Muslims.

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