

Modernity and Religious Practices: A Sociological Analysis of the State Islamic University of North Sumatra Students from the 2021–2023 Cohorts

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the influence of modernity on religious practices among students of the State Islamic University of North Sumatra (UINSU) from the 2021–2023 cohorts. Modernity, characterized by the advancement of science, technology, and digital culture, has significantly impacted students' religious understanding, practices, and the authority of religion. This research employs a qualitative approach using purposive sampling with three participants representing each cohort (2021, 2022, and 2023). Data were collected through in-depth interviews, participatory observation, and document studies, and were analyzed thematically. The findings reveal that modernity presents both opportunities and challenges. On the one hand, digital technology facilitates access to religious information, expands the scope of da'wah, and supports worship practices through reminder applications and online lectures. On the other hand, modernity also creates distractions from social media, encourages individualism, and raises concerns about the validity of religious information. Students respond to these challenges with various strategies, including time management, selective use of technology, and strengthening spiritual awareness. Thus, modernity does not merely weaken religious practices but can also serve as a means of reinforcing religious identity when approached wisely.

ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis pengaruh modernitas terhadap praktik keagamaan di kalangan mahasiswa Universitas Islam Negeri Sumatera Utara (UINSU) angkatan 2021–2023. Modernitas yang ditandai dengan kemajuan ilmu pengetahuan, teknologi, dan budaya digital telah membawa perubahan signifikan terhadap pola keberagamaan mahasiswa, baik dari sisi pemahaman, praktik, maupun otoritas keagamaan. Penelitian menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan teknik purposive sampling terhadap tiga mahasiswa dari tiap angkatan (2021, 2022, dan 2023). Data diperoleh melalui wawancara mendalam, observasi partisipatif, dan studi dokumen, kemudian dianalisis menggunakan analisis tematik. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa modernitas memberikan peluang dan tantangan sekaligus. Di satu sisi, teknologi digital memudahkan akses informasi keagamaan, memperluas ruang dakwah, serta mendukung praktik ibadah melalui aplikasi pengingat dan kajian daring. Namun, di sisi lain, modernitas juga menghadirkan distraksi media sosial, kecenderungan individualisme, serta tantangan dalam validitas informasi keagamaan. Mahasiswa menyikapi hal ini dengan berbagai strategi, seperti manajemen waktu, pemanfaatan teknologi secara selektif, serta penguatan kesadaran spiritual. Dengan demikian, modernitas tidak hanya membawa risiko melemahkan praktik keagamaan, tetapi juga dapat menjadi sarana penguatan identitas religius jika dimanfaatkan secara bijak.

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A. INTRODUCTION

Modernity is a social, cultural, and technological phenomenon that has brought profound changes to various aspects of human life,¹ including religious practices. At its core, modernity represents the application of the modern concept to everyday life, encompassing attitudes, ways of thinking, and actions that respond to the demands of the times as outcomes of rationality and scientific advancement.² Modernity has accelerated progress in science, technology, and communication, directly influencing people's mindsets, lifestyles, and worldviews. Among university students, particularly within the academic environment of Universitas Islam Negeri Sumatera Utara (UINSU), modernity often serves as a transformative force that shapes their religious orientations and practices.

Students represent a social group that is highly receptive to change and the dynamics of contemporary developments. They are situated at the crossroads between traditional values instilled by families and communities, and modern values encountered through interactions on campus, social media, and the digital world. Students of the 2021–2023 cohorts, belonging to Generation Z, have grown up in a digital era and are frequently confronted with existential dilemmas between embracing the flow of modern development and preserving their cultural identity and spiritual values. Social media, as their primary medium of interaction, plays a central role in shaping their lifestyle preferences, mindsets, and religious behavior.³ In this context, students' religious practices are inevitably influenced by the pervasive currents of modernity that permeate their daily lives. As a generation immersed in globalization and the technological revolution, UINSU students face significant challenges in maintaining religious commitment amid shifting norms and values.

The development of information technology, particularly the rise of social media and the internet, has had a profound impact on students' religious practices. With unprecedented access to diverse religious information, students now have greater opportunities to explore multiple perspectives, interpretations, and discourses offered by religious leaders, academics, and faith communities across cultures and nations. However, alongside this convenience comes the challenge of filtering information that may deviate from authentic Islamic principles. Such deviations may manifest in religious practices or doctrines inconsistent with normative Islam,⁴ potentially leading to fragmentation of religious understanding. Students are thus increasingly exposed to ideologies that diverge, or even conflict, with the values promoted by Islamic educational institutions.

Modernity itself reflects a worldview and way of life closely linked to contemporary lifestyles, heavily influenced by modern—particularly Western—civilization. The West, currently dominant in global currents, has profoundly shaped modernity, much as Islam once served as the world's center of civilization between the sixth and sixteenth centuries.⁵

¹ Dwiyantri Hanandini, "Social Transformation in Modern Society: A Literature Review on the Role of Technology in Social Interaction," *Jurnal Ilmiah Ekotrans & Erudisi* 4, no. 1 (June 2024): 82–86, <https://doi.org/10.69989/j0m6cg84>.

² Arifinsyah, *Isu-Isu Kontenporer Lintas Agama* (Medan: CV. Manhaji, 2024).

³ Muhammad Zaki Arrafi et al., "Terpaan Westernisasi Terhadap Gaya Hidup Islami Pada Mahasiswa Universitas Islam Negeri Sumatera Utara," *Triwikrama: Jurnal Multidisiplin Ilmu Sosial Volume* 7, no. 2 (2025).

⁴ Masripah et al., "Penggunaan Teknologi Digital Terhadap Pemikiran Dan Praktik Keagamaan Gen-Z," *Jurnal Ilmiah Pendidikan Citra Bakti* 11, no. 3 (2024): 754–67.

⁵ Neneng Munajah, "Agama Dan Tantangan Modernitas," *Tahdzib Al-Akhlaq: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam* 4, no. 1 (2021): 83–92, <https://doi.org/10.34005/tahdzib.v4i1.1433>.

Western modernization is often associated with secularization, emphasizing worldly aspects at the expense of spiritual values.⁶ Within this framework, some students exhibit tendencies to compartmentalize their religious life and secular lifestyle. This phenomenon prompts critical reflection on how modernity influences collective religious practices such as communal prayer, routine Qur'anic study, and participation in campus-based religious activities that form the pillars of spiritual life.

Furthermore, modernity introduces the growing influence of individualism in young people's lives. On the one hand, individualism fosters students' pursuit of religious independence, where they no longer rely exclusively on traditional religious authorities. Instead, they seek religious understanding tailored to their personal conditions and needs. Religious faith thus becomes centered on the individual, with practices shaped by personal spiritual experiences deemed meaningful.⁷ On the other hand, this individualism may weaken collective dimensions of religion, such as participation in faith-based communities, engagement in religiously inspired social activities, and the cultivation of spiritual solidarity. In addition, modernity reshapes religious authority itself. Whereas in the past, religious authority was largely monopolized by conventional scholars and spiritual leaders, digital technologies have decentralized authority.⁸ New religious figures have emerged via platforms such as YouTube, Instagram, TikTok, and Islamic podcasts, often promoting new narratives of Islam.⁹ This creates a novel religious landscape in which authority becomes more fluid, open, and plural.

The influence of modernity also manifests in changing expressions of religiosity among students. Once characterized by formality, religious practices have diversified into more flexible forms adapted to modern contexts. Students, for instance, use digital applications to remind them of prayer times, attend online study sessions, and access classical Islamic texts in digital formats. Such transformations reveal that modernity does not solely present challenges but also offers opportunities for strengthening religious identity in a globalized era.

It is equally important to consider the role of the university environment as a space where modernity and religious traditions intersect. As an Islamic higher education institution, UINSU provides both formal and informal religious activities aimed at nurturing and sustaining students' faith. However, in the dynamic context of modernity, the effectiveness of such activities requires innovative and creative approaches tailored to the characteristics of Generation Z—technologically literate and critically minded. This study therefore seeks to further explore how students negotiate their religious identity within the currents of modernity, and what factors either reinforce or weaken their religious practices.

Nevertheless, it must be acknowledged that the influence of modernity does not always yield negative consequences for religious practices. Although some Muslims approach modernity with suspicion, modern individuals retain the potential to be deeply religious and

⁶ Arifinsyah, *Isu-Isu Kontenporer Lintas Agama*., 90.

⁷ Siti Zidni Iman, "Individualisme Agama Dalam Modernitas," *Purwadita : Jurnal Agama Dan Budaya* 7, no. 1 (2023): 22, <https://doi.org/10.55115/purwadita.v7i1.2564>.

⁸ Patricia Izquierdo-Iranzo, "Use of Digital Tools in the Religious and Spiritual Sphere: Impact and Barrier Analysis," *Religions* 16, no. 6 (June 2025): 772, <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel16060772>.

⁹ Ika Dewi Sartika Saimima and Al-Amin, "The Influence Of Streaming Platforms On Religious Content Consumption: A Review Of The Literature On Social And Cultural Impacts," *Juteq: Jurnal Teologi & Tafsir* 2, no. 6 (June 2025): 1135–45, <https://languar.net/index.php/JUTEQ/article/view/262>.

spiritual.¹⁰ For many students, modernity serves as a catalyst to deepen religious understanding through academic studies, scholarly forums, and independent research. By offering spaces for intellectual freedom, modernity enables students to critique, evaluate, and reconstruct their religious understanding in more rational, scientific, and contextual ways. This process ultimately strengthens their religious commitment amid the sweeping tides of global change.

B. METHODS

This study employs a qualitative approach¹¹ to explore the experiences and perspectives of UIN Sumatera Utara students from the 2021–2023 cohorts regarding the influence of modernity on their religious practices. The research participants were selected through purposive sampling, consisting of three students—one each from the 2021, 2022, and 2023 cohorts—whose identities are anonymized using initials. Data were collected through in-depth interviews,¹² participant observation,¹³ and document analysis related to students' religious activities, both within the campus environment and across digital platforms. The data were subsequently analyzed using thematic analysis to identify patterns, experiences, and dynamics of religious practice amidst the currents of modernity, as well as to uncover their implications for students' religious identity in the contemporary era.

C. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Modernity and Religious Practices

Modernity represents a pivotal phase in human history,¹⁴ marking significant transformations in knowledge, technology, rational modes of thinking, and the growing role of the individual in social and religious life.¹⁵ To fully understand this concept, five key terms closely associated with modernity warrant consideration. First, the term modern refers to what is new, current, or contemporary, as opposed to that which is considered old or traditional. According to Wilson, the word modern signifies “the new” or “the latest change,” in direct contrast with inherited values. Second, a modernist denotes someone who supports or adheres to modern views, values, and methods. Third, modernism refers to an intellectual and cultural movement aimed at reinterpreting traditional values and adapting them to new developments in philosophy, history, and science. Fourth, modernization describes the process of transformation toward modern characteristics, involving the adoption of contemporary lifestyles, ideas, and styles. Finally, modernity itself refers to a condition or attitude that reflects modern life—marked by rational outlooks, openness to change, and an orientation toward progress.¹⁶

¹⁰ Syahrin Harahap, *Islam Dan Modernitas*, Edisi Pert (Jakarta: Kencana, 2015).

¹¹ Mandy Stanley, “Qualitative Descriptive: A Very Good Place to Start,” in *Qualitative Research Methodologies for Occupational Science and Occupational Therapy*, 2nd ed. (London: Routledge, 2023).

¹² Barbara DiCicco-Bloom and Benjamin F Crabtree, “The Qualitative Research Interview,” *Medical Education* 40, no. 4 (2006): 314–21, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1365-2929.2006.02418.x>.

¹³ Kathleen Musante (DeWalt) and Billie R. DeWalt, *Participant Observation: A Guide for Fieldworkers* (United Kingdom: Bloomsbury Publishing PLC, 2010), 1–66.

¹⁴ Edward A. Tiryakian, “The Changing Centers of Modernity,” in *Comparative Social Dynamics* (London: Routledge, 1985), 17.

¹⁵ Neneng Munajah, “Agama Dan Tantangan Modernitas,” *Tahdzib Al-Akhlaq: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam* 4, no. 1 (June 2021): 83–92, <https://doi.org/10.34005/tahdzib.v4i1.1433>.

¹⁶ Ja'far, *Agama & Modernitas* (Banda Aceh: Yayasan Pena Banda Aceh, 2013).

The term modernity derives from the Latin *modernus*, rooted in *modo*, meaning “just now” or “the present.” As a worldview and way of life, modernity reflects present-day habits and practices, heavily shaped by modern civilization. Modern civilization is typically characterized by two key features: rationalization, which prioritizes logic and reason in understanding life, and technicality, which emphasizes the use of technology and practical methods in daily activities.¹⁷

The advancement of modern life does not only introduce sophistication in facilities and infrastructure but also brings new values that are progressive in nature. This situation presents religions, including Islam, with two possible responses: first, to adapt by offering more flexible interpretations of religious teachings to remain aligned with modern developments; or second, to resist modernity, on the grounds that its progress emerges from a culture perceived as detached from divine values. The latter option, however, risks leaving religious communities behind in the march of time, potentially diminishing their relevance and influence amid ongoing social transformation.¹⁸

The dilemma of accepting or rejecting modernity reflects the tension between tradition and renewal in religious life. On the one hand, religion embodies sacred values preserved and transmitted across generations; on the other, the rapidly changing world demands contextualized and relevant understandings of faith. Should religion remain rigid and closed to change, it risks losing its appeal, particularly for younger generations living in an age saturated with information and technology. Conversely, when religion engages in dialogue with modernity without compromising its core essence, it remains vibrant, dynamic, and capable of addressing contemporary challenges constructively.

Within the strong currents of modernity, human engagement with religion has undergone substantial transformation. Such changes are not merely adaptive but also provide opportunities to critically reflect upon and reassess inherited teachings. The fast-moving world of technology, science, and rational discourse encourages religious communities to remain relevant while retaining their foundational essence. Modernity, which often introduces rapid and radical change, challenges traditional norms while prompting believers to reformulate their religious understandings in more contextual ways. In this regard, Islamic teachings require ongoing reassessment to ensure applicability without compromising their spiritual substance.¹⁹ This process has fostered the emergence of progressive thought seeking to bridge religion and science, directly and indirectly shaping various dimensions of religious practice.

The transformation of religious practice in the context of modernity illustrates a dialectic between traditional values and contemporary demands. Rational and scientific perspectives present both challenges and opportunities for Muslims, enriching religious discourse in more open and critical ways. On the one hand, this may prompt the deconstruction of rigid doctrines; on the other, it creates space for reinterpretations of Islam that are contextual, humanistic, and socially relevant. Thus, modernity should not be seen merely as a threat but

¹⁷ Juhri Jaelani, “Modernitas Kehidupan Beragama Dalam Perkembangan Pendidikan Islam,” *Civilization Research: Journal of Islamic Studies* 2, no. 2 (2023): 168–87, <https://doi.org/10.61630/crjis.v2i2.1>.

¹⁸ Harahap, *Islam Dan Modernitas*.

¹⁹ M. Agus Kurniawan, “Islam Dan Modernitas Menelusuri Hubungan Antara Tradisi Dan Inovasi,” *Al Akmal : Jurnal Studi Islam* 3, no. 6 (2024): 28–42, <https://doi.org/10.47902/al-akmal.v3i6>.

rather as a medium for renewing religious consciousness and strengthening the role of faith in public life.²⁰

New interpretations of religious teachings in the modern era aim to preserve religion's relevance amid shifting times.²¹ Sacred texts are increasingly reinterpreted through attention to social and historical contexts, often employing hermeneutical approaches to make religious understanding more dynamic. This endeavor addresses contemporary issues such as human rights, gender justice, environmental sustainability, and technological advancement. Consequently, religious practices have become more inclusive, adaptive, and aligned with universal values such as tolerance, peace, and social justice. Many religious communities today demonstrate greater openness toward women's roles and encourage interfaith cooperation through dialogues grounded in shared ethical principles.

Adaptation is also evident in modes of worship and religious communication. Social media, live-streamed services, religious applications, and digital content have emerged as effective tools for disseminating teachings and fostering virtual communities. Technology not only expands accessibility but also broadens the scope of da'wah,²² especially for younger generations accustomed to digital interaction. These innovations ensure that religion remains relevant, not as a static legacy of the past, but as a living, flexible source of values responsive to the needs of modern society.

New interpretations of religious teachings highlight believers' active responses to the complexities of modernity.²³ By prioritizing hermeneutical and contextual approaches, communities do not merely preserve the relevance of sacred texts but expand their meanings to address pressing contemporary concerns. This demonstrates that religion is not a rigid entity but a value system capable of evolving with historical dynamics. Such transformation also reflects a shift in religious interpretation from a top-down model to a more participatory one, wherein believers themselves engage actively in shaping their understanding of faith in light of modern life.

Meanwhile, the integration of technology into religious practice illustrates an intelligent adaptation to social and cultural change. The ability of religion to harness digital media for preaching, community building, and worship underscores the flexibility of religious institutions in reaching adherents, particularly younger generations. This phenomenon further indicates a shift in religious authority from traditional models to more open and interactive forms. Digital adaptation not only sustains the presence of religion but also enhances its relevance and appeal in increasingly plural and digitized societies.

²⁰ Ulvia Khoirunisa Bisanti et al., "Dinamika Modernisasi Agama : Eksplorasi Penafsiran Baru , Adaptasi Praktik , Dan Menghadapi Tantangan," *Socio Religia* 5, no. 2 (2024): 111–28.

²¹ Peter Bernard Clarke, *New Religions in Global Perspective: A Study of Religious Change in the Modern World* (London: Psychology Press, 2006), 6.

²² Hadeel Zein Eddin Abudalou and Zawawi Ben Yosuf, "The Islamic Advocacy (Da'wah) in the Context of Technological Advancement," *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences* 14, no. 1 (January 2024): 2658–67, <https://doi.org/10.6007/IJARBS/v14-i1/20694>.

²³ Mary Douglas, "The Effects of Modernization on Religious Change," *Daedalus* 111, no. 1 (1982): 1–19, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/20024766>.

2. The Influence of Modernity on Religious Practices among UINSU Students

a. The Impact of Technology and Modernity on Religious Practices

Technology and modernity have brought significant transformations to religious practices.²⁴ Digital tools facilitate easier access to religious knowledge, such as through Qur'anic applications, and enable believers to attend worship services and sermons online. Social media and other digital platforms have further expanded the reach of da'wah and fostered virtual interactions across diverse religious communities. In this way, technology enriches religious experiences and adapts spiritual practices to align with the fast-paced and digitally mediated lifestyles of modern society. Moreover, the growth of technology has created new spaces for religious identity formation in online environments. These digital arenas allow the emergence of virtual communities that remain actively engaged in worship, discussions, and the exchange of religious experiences, even without physical presence. Such phenomena have paved the way for new, more interactive and participatory forms of religiosity, while simultaneously contributing to an evolving digital ontology of religion in the modern era.²⁵

Nevertheless, these developments also pose challenges. Dependence on technology can distract individuals from spiritual commitments and diminish the depth of religious engagement. Certain technological applications, such as the use of robots in religious rituals, have sparked controversy due to perceptions of incompatibility with traditional religious values. Furthermore, modernity compels religions to adapt to shifting social and cultural norms, often resulting in reinterpretations and practices that are more inclusive and flexible compared to traditional frameworks.

At the same time, modernity provides opportunities for revitalizing religion through new interpretive approaches and more open interfaith dialogues. Rather than being eroded, religion evolves by leveraging technology to enhance community engagement, particularly among younger generations. The use of digital media as a platform for religious instruction and virtual communities addresses spiritual needs within an increasingly interconnected global society. In this regard, religion remains relevant and dynamic in the midst of modernity and technological transformation.²⁶

To contextualize these dynamics, insights from interviews with three UINSU students from the 2021–2023 cohorts (pseudonyms are used for anonymity) provide deeper perspectives on the influence of technological and modern developments on their religious practices.

Student A stated: "The development of technology and modernity has significantly influenced my religious practices. Technology makes it easier to access various kinds of religious information, such as online lectures, prayer reminder applications, and digital scriptures. However, on the other hand, modernity also brings challenges, as distractions from social media or daily busyness can make a person neglectful in worship."

²⁴ Francis Robinson, "Technology and Religious Change: Islam and the Impact of Print," *Modern Asian Studies* 27, no. 1 (February 1993): 229–51, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0026749X00016127>.

²⁵ Hero Gefthi Firnando, "Spiritualitas Di Era Digital: Pengaruh Teknologi Terhadap Pengalaman Keagamaan Masyarakat Perspektif Filsafat," *NAHNU: Journal of Nahdlatul Ulama and Contemporary Islamic Studies* 1, no. 2 (2023): 159–74, <https://doi.org/10.63875/nahnu.v1i2.27>.

²⁶ Bisanti et al., "Dinamika Modernisasi Agama: Eksplorasi Penafsiran Baru, Adaptasi Praktik, Dan Menghadapi Tantangan." ..., 111–28.

Student F explained: "In my view, technology has been very helpful, such as through prayer reminder applications and online lectures. But I also feel that distractions from social media can reduce one's focus during worship."

Student W emphasized: "Overall, the development of technology and modernity are equally influential on religious practices. Technology makes it easier for me to search for and study religious matters that can be accessed through available digital applications. Thus, my religious practices become easier to carry out, anytime and without time limitations. However, modernity also poses challenges today. The religious information circulating on digital media is not always accurate, so we must be very careful in evaluating it. In essence, technology and modernity bring both positive and negative impacts. It is up to us to filter and use these advancements wisely, especially to ensure that our faith remains intact amid rapid developments."

The interviews with these three students reaffirm that technology has provided tangible conveniences, particularly in accessing religious information. Prayer reminder applications, digital scriptures, and online lectures make worship more practical and flexible, suggesting that modernity—especially digital technology—can serve as a supportive medium for strengthening students' religiosity.

However, alongside these benefits, the respondents also acknowledged the challenges posed by modernity. Students A and F emphasized the distractions caused by social media that could reduce focus in worship, while Student W highlighted the issue of religious information validity circulating online. These findings indicate that modernity does not produce exclusively positive outcomes; rather, it requires students to adopt critical and selective attitudes to ensure that their religious practices remain meaningful and uncompromised in a rapidly evolving context.

b. Ease and Challenges of Worship in the Context of Modernity

Modernity has brought significant transformations to religious worship, offering both opportunities and challenges.²⁷ On the one hand, advancements in technology and information enable believers to access religious knowledge and worship guidelines easily through digital media. This facilitates the performance of daily rituals, provides interactive alternatives for worship, and broadens the scope of da'wah into virtual spaces. In this sense, modernity renders religious practice more practical and relevant to contemporary developments. On the other hand, modernity also presents considerable difficulties in maintaining consistent worship. Shifts in social and cultural values, such as the rise of individualism and the erosion of traditional practices, sometimes lead younger generations to become distracted from religious discipline. Moreover, modern societies tend to interpret religious teachings more flexibly, occasionally diverging from traditional norms and generating debates or polarization within religious communities. These dynamics demand a careful negotiation between preserving tradition and responding to the dynamic demands of modern life.²⁸

²⁷ Joy Dixon, "Modernity, Heterodoxy and the Transformation of Religious Cultures," in *Women, Gender and Religious Cultures in Britain, 1800-1940* (London: Routledge, 2010), 20.

²⁸ Habibah Shofi Futuhal Aulia, "Hubungan Agama Dengan Modernisasi Di Indonesia," *Maliki Interdisciplinary Journal (MIJ)* eISSN 3, no. 6 (2025): 791-99.

In addressing these challenges, religious institutions and leaders across communities have sought to adapt by integrating religious education with modern approaches to da'wah. The use of digital technologies to disseminate religious teachings has become a primary strategy for sustaining spiritual values in the modern era. Through moderation and context-sensitive reinterpretation, religion not only survives but also evolves, providing new modes of worship that preserve essential spirituality amid the complexities of contemporary life.

Findings from the student interviews highlight this ambivalence. Student A viewed modernity as a double-edged phenomenon. While he appreciated the convenience of prayer reminder applications and access to online lectures, he also acknowledged the risk that worldly busyness could distract individuals from their spiritual obligations. His perspective suggests that the quality of worship depends heavily on time management and the ability to balance religious and secular commitments.

Student F emphasized the advantages of modernity, highlighting how constant access to religious information makes worship more flexible. Nevertheless, he also recognized the challenge posed by social media distractions, which can encourage procrastination in fulfilling religious duties. This perspective underscores that while modernity offers technical ease, it simultaneously requires personal discipline to prevent convenience from turning into an obstacle.

Student W argued that modernity primarily strengthens worship practices, especially through online religious lectures and prayer reminder applications that help sustain worship despite busy schedules. However, he cautioned that not all religious information circulating online is reliable, requiring careful scrutiny to avoid being misled. For him, modernity provides substantial opportunities to enhance the quality of worship, but it also necessitates prudence and critical discernment.

Taken together, the three participants agreed that modernity generally facilitates religious practice. Constant access to religious information, anytime and anywhere, integrates worship more seamlessly into daily life. Student W even considered modernity as a reinforcement of religiosity, particularly through digital applications that help remind believers of worship schedules. This perspective affirms that modernity can serve as a partner to religious life if utilized appropriately.

At the same time, the students also acknowledged that modernity can complicate worship. Student A pointed to worldly busyness as a recurring barrier to consistent religious practice, while Student F highlighted the temptation to delay worship due to social media distractions. These findings reaffirm the ambivalence of modernity: it simultaneously eases and complicates worship, depending on how individuals negotiate their spiritual lives within the modern context. In other words, its impact is contingent upon the ways in which students manage their daily routines and discipline in the midst of modernity.

c. Strategies for Maintaining Consistency in Worship Amid Modernity

Amid the pervasive currents of modernity, characterized by distractions and demanding schedules, maintaining consistency in worship presents a significant challenge for many individuals. These challenges stem from both internal and external factors. Internal factors include lack of motivation, limited religious understanding, difficulties in time management, and a tendency toward laziness, whereas external factors consist of unsupportive social environments, exposure to permissive lifestyles, and the prioritization of entertainment and

technology over spiritual obligations.²⁹ Such scheduling allows time for prayer, remembrance (dhikr), and Qur'an recitation even amidst demanding worldly activities. In addition, utilizing technology as a supportive tool further strengthens consistency in worship. Prayer reminder applications and digital dhikr features on smartphones provide practical assistance, while online lectures and religious podcasts can deepen spiritual understanding and enhance the continuity of worship practices.

Equally important is cultivating a supportive religious environment, such as joining faith-based communities or engaging with peers who share similar spiritual commitments. A positive environment fosters mutual encouragement and motivation, reducing susceptibility to the distractions of modern life. Combined with routine self-evaluation and a renewed sense of intention, these strategies serve as powerful mechanisms for sustaining consistent worship in the midst of modern challenges.

Findings from the student interviews further highlight the diverse strategies employed in negotiating modernity. Student A emphasized time management through the creation of daily schedules, the use of prayer reminder applications, and a selective approach to technology to avoid unproductive distractions. Beyond these practical measures, he underscored the importance of spiritual awareness, regarding worship as a fundamental necessity rather than a mere formal obligation. His approach illustrates the integration of positive technological engagement with self-awareness as key to sustaining religious practice in the modern era.

Student F similarly stressed the importance of personal scheduling, but placed particular emphasis on limiting social media use during worship times. This strategy reflects an awareness of the potential distractions posed by digital technology, particularly social media, which can reduce focus and discipline in religious life. By exercising restraint in media consumption, he sought to prevent procrastination and negligence in worship. His account underscores that maintaining religious consistency in the modern age requires not only technological utilization but also self-control to prioritize spiritual commitments amid competing distractions.

Student W, however, adopted a broader perspective, highlighting that consistency in worship cannot be sustained solely through routine practices but must be grounded in deeper spiritual consciousness. He argued that worship should be seen as a fundamental human need rather than a mechanical obligation, and emphasized the importance of sincerity in order to transform worship from a duty into a source of spiritual fulfillment. Furthermore, he pointed to the decisive role of social environments, stressing that positive companionship strongly influences religious consistency and character formation. His strategy underscores the integration of spiritual awareness, sincerity, and supportive environments as critical foundations for sustaining religious devotion within the flow of modernity.

Taken together, the students articulated varied but complementary strategies for maintaining religious consistency. Students A and F emphasized practical approaches such as time management and limiting digital distractions, demonstrating adaptive engagement with technology combined with self-discipline. By contrast, Student W highlighted the spiritual and social dimensions, framing consistency in worship as dependent not only on effective scheduling but also on sincere faith and supportive environments. These perspectives

²⁹ Ilham Bissalam et al., "Tantangan Mahasiswa Muslim Dalam Menjaga Konsistensi Ibadah Di Lingkungan Kampus," *Karakter: Jurnal Riset Ilmu Pendidikan Islam* 2, no. 2 (2024): 144–52, <https://doi.org/10.61132/karakter.v2i2.559>.

collectively suggest that in the era of modernity, consistency in worship requires a holistic balance between practical discipline, spiritual consciousness, and social reinforcement.

D. CONCLUSION

Based on the findings, it can be concluded that modernity exerts a significant influence on the religious practices of UINSU students from the 2021–2023 cohorts. Modernity presents two contrasting dimensions: it functions simultaneously as a facilitator and as a challenge. On the positive side, advancements in information technology enable students to access religious knowledge more widely, facilitate worship practices, and enrich spiritual experiences. The study reveals that many students engage in religious learning through online sermons, while digital media also provides easier access to the Qur'an through digital applications. On the negative side, however, modernity has the potential to create distractions, weaken the discipline of worship, and blur the boundaries of religious authority within digital spaces. Consequently, students' religious practices are highly dependent on their ability to manage time effectively, filter information critically, and strike a balance between the demands of modern life and spiritual commitments. This study underscores that modernity should not be perceived as an absolute threat to religion, but rather as an opportunity to strengthen the religious identity of younger generations—provided it is approached with critical, moderate, and selective attitudes.

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