

## Empowering Generation Z Volunteers: The Role of Social Influence and Religiosity

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**Abstract:** *Volunteerism plays a crucial role in enhancing youth participation in community service, but the roles of social influence and religiosity in shaping Generation Z's volunteer intentions remain underexplored. This study examines the impact of social influence and religiosity on Generation Z's volunteer intentions at Masjid Al Akbar, Surabaya. Using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) and data from 104 respondents, the results show that social influence significantly affects volunteer intentions, with religiosity acting as a key mediator. The significant mediation effect reinforces how religious values amplify the influence of social networks. This research contributes to the development of social behavior and volunteerism theories, especially in religious contexts. The findings offer practical strategies for both religious and secular organizations to mobilize Generation Z, emphasizing the critical role of social and cultural factors in shaping volunteer behavior.*

**Keywords:** *Mosque Management; Religiosity; Social Influence; Volunteer Intentions*

**Abstrak:** Keterlibatan relawan di kalangan Generasi Z memainkan peran penting dalam meningkatkan partisipasi pemuda dalam pelayanan masyarakat. Namun, peran pengaruh sosial dan religiositas dalam membentuk niat relawan Generasi Z belum banyak diteliti secara empiris. Penelitian ini meneliti dampak pengaruh sosial dan religiositas terhadap niat menjadi relawan Generasi Z di Masjid Al Akbar, Surabaya. Dengan menggunakan Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) dan data dari 104 responden, hasil menunjukkan bahwa pengaruh sosial secara signifikan meningkatkan niat relawan, yang dimediasi oleh religiositas. Efek mediasi religiositas yang signifikan menunjukkan bagaimana nilai-nilai religius memperkuat pengaruh hubungan sosial. Penelitian ini memperkaya literatur mengenai relawan dengan menyoroti peran mediasi religiositas dalam meningkatkan pengaruh sosial terhadap niat relawan. Temuan ini menawarkan strategi praktis bagi organisasi keagamaan dan sekuler dalam memobilisasi Generasi Z, menekankan peran penting faktor sosial dan budaya dalam perilaku relawan.

**Kata kunci:** Manajemen Masjid; Niat Menjadi Relawan; Pengaruh Sosial; Religiositas.

### Introduction

Volunteerism has been a longstanding practice that plays a crucial role in building social connections, tackling societal issues, and providing assistance to those who require it (Clary et al., 1998; Handy et al., 2010). Volunteerism within religious organizations is of utmost importance in providing support for activities that uphold spiritual and humanitarian values (Einolf, 2011). Research has shown that individuals who engage in volunteerism are motivated by a genuine desire to make a positive impact on society, rather than seeking financial rewards (Knepper et al., 2015; Musick & Wilson, 2003). Volunteerism goes beyond just benefiting recipients and communities. It also has positive impacts on the volunteers themselves, such as enhancing their well-being, fostering positive emotions, and providing opportunities for skill acquisition (Knepper et al., 2015; Musick & Wilson, 2003; Yeung et al., 2017)). It also

promotes social connections and networks, which contribute to personal growth and social involvement (Handy et al., 2010).

Generation Z, born between the mid-1990s and early 2000s, has immense potential as future volunteers. Nevertheless, there is a scarcity of research regarding individuals' motivations to engage in volunteer activities (Garai-fodor et al., 2021). An impressive instance is Masjid Al Akbar in Surabaya, which has effectively involved Generation Z as enthusiastic volunteers, referred to as "Genzi" (Dinas Kominfo Jatim, 2023; Radarsurabaya, 2023). This mosque actively encourages young people to participate in volunteer work, which helps them develop personally, engage with society, and empower the community (Radarsurabaya, 2023). The Genzi program provides a captivating platform for young individuals to participate in a wide range of community service initiatives, making a valuable contribution to the progress of society. The program covers a wide range of activities, including religious education and various social and cultural events, which cater to the interests of Generation Z (Dinas Kominfo Jatim, 2023; Radarsurabaya, 2023).

The effectiveness of Masjid Al Akbar in encouraging Generation Z's active volunteer involvement highlights the significance of religious organizations in molding and inspiring young individuals for the betterment of their communities and increased social participation. Their participation brings numerous benefits to the mosque and community, offering Generation Z valuable chances for personal growth, fostering meaningful social connections, and making a positive difference through their contributions.

The Volunteer Functions Inventory (Clary et al., 1998) identifies six motivational drivers for volunteers, two of which—Values and Social—are particularly relevant in faith-based settings. These drivers are particularly important for Generation Z volunteers at Masjid Al Akbar, where religious values and social networks significantly shape volunteer behavior. This study seeks to investigate how social influence and religiosity impact the volunteering intentions of Generation Z at Masjid Al Akbar Surabaya. To address these gaps, this study draws on the Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1991), which posits that volunteer intentions are shaped by attitudes toward volunteering, perceived social expectations, and the perceived ease or difficulty of engaging in volunteer activities. The TPB framework is especially suited for understanding how these social expectations and religious values converge to shape volunteer behavior in this context. Utilizing a functionalist theoretical framework, this study delves into the intricate dynamics between various factors and their impact on volunteer motivation and behavior. Using a quantitative approach called Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM), this research examines data from 104 respondents to understand the connections between various variables. The study provides valuable insights into the voluntary motivations of Generation Z. This research examines the role of social influence in shaping volunteer intentions, with particular attention to how religiosity may mediate this relationship.

Prior research has shown that factors like social care, empathy, and social responsibility play a significant role in motivating individuals to engage in volunteer work (Knepper et al., 2015). In addition, the decision to volunteer is greatly influenced by social factors such as peer influence, family support, and community involvement. These factors have been extensively studied and documented in recent research (Garai-fodor et al., 2021). Research has

demonstrated that religiosity has a significant impact on individual motivation and involvement in volunteer work. Studies have found that religious values frequently inspire individuals to contribute their time and energy to religious activities and community services that promote spiritual values (Sallam et al., 2018).

This research provides valuable insights into the context of volunteerism and the participation of Generation Z in volunteer activities. Firstly, it offers a comprehensive insight into the factors that drive Generation Z to participate in religious volunteer work. The findings can provide valuable insights for mosques and other religious organizations looking to create engaging volunteer programs for young people. Additionally, this study enhances our comprehension of how social influence and religiosity impact Generation Z's willingness to volunteer, ultimately bolstering their dedication and involvement in volunteer work. This study also adds to the theoretical understanding of volunteer motivation among Generation Z and how these factors come together to shape their intentions to volunteer. This article lays the groundwork for future studies on the participation and empowerment of young volunteers in society. It offers valuable insights into community development and sheds light on the important role that Generation Z plays in enhancing social and religious life.

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## **Method**

This study adopts a functionalist paradigm to explore regularities and relationships that may lead to generalizations and universal principles (Gioia & Pitre, 1990). The research framework follows a deductive approach based on a review of existing literature, and hypotheses were formulated by identifying specific variables as potential causes of the observed effects. Data were collected via surveys using structured questionnaires and analyzed using variance-based Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM). PLS-SEM was selected for its robustness in handling complex models with small to medium sample sizes and non-normal data distributions, making it suitable for this study's model complexity and sample characteristics.

The study examines the influence of social factors and religiosity on the volunteer intentions of Generation Z at Masjid Nasional Al Akbar Surabaya. The following hypotheses were proposed:

H1: Social influence positively affects the intention of Generation Z to volunteer.

H2: Religiosity positively affects the intention of Generation Z to volunteer.

H3: Social influence positively affects religiosity.

H4: Religiosity mediates the relationship between social influence and the intention to volunteer.

The target population consisted of Generation Z congregants at Masjid Nasional Al Akbar Surabaya. Given the large and dispersed population, purposive sampling was employed, which allows for the selection of respondents based on specific criteria. The purposive sampling technique was chosen because it ensures the inclusion of respondents most relevant to the study's objectives. In comparison to other sampling methods, purposive sampling was deemed the most effective for targeting respondents who had direct experience with Genzi activities, ensuring that data collected were relevant and focused. The inclusion criteria were: (1) respondents aged between 15-24 years old, consistent with Generation Z definitions in prior research (Dimock, 2019; Ismail et al., 2021), and (2) respondents who had participated in Genzi activities at least once. These criteria ensured the sample aligned with the research objectives. To meet the requirements of Structural Equation Modeling (SEM), a minimum sample size of 100 was targeted, as recommended by Hair et al. (2014), taking into account model complexity and data quality. A final sample of 104 respondents was obtained.

Primary data were collected through an online survey distributed via Google Forms, shared through WhatsApp to maximize outreach and convenience for respondents. The structured questionnaires included validated scales from previous studies. The social influence scale was adapted from Clary et al. (1992), consisting of five indicators tailored to the context of Generation Z respondents. The religiosity scale was adapted from Arli and Lasmono (2015), measuring intrinsic religiosity using five indicators. Volunteer intention was measured using four indicators from Chen et al. (2021) and Wang et al. (2019). All items were rated on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree."

Data analysis was conducted using variance-based Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM). PLS-SEM integrates factor analysis and multiple regression, allowing for the simultaneous assessment of complex relationships between measured variables and latent constructs (Hair et al., 2014). The model evaluation involved testing both the structural model (inner model) and the measurement model (outer model). The measurement model was assessed for composite reliability, indicator reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity. Reflective indicators were used in the model, influenced by the latent constructs they represent. For the structural model,  $R^2$ , path coefficients, and predictive relevance ( $Q^2$ ) were calculated. Mediation analysis was performed using bootstrapping techniques to test the significance of the indirect effects of religiosity between social influence and volunteer intention, following guidelines for assessing mediation effects in PLS-SEM. This ensures that the model accurately represents the relationships among the constructs and provides robust insights into the factors influencing Generation Z's intention to volunteer at Masjid Nasional Al Akbar Surabaya.

## Results and Discussion

This study aimed to examine the role of social influence and religiosity in shaping the volunteer intentions of Generation Z at Masjid Nasional Al Akbar Surabaya. Of the 120

questionnaires distributed, 104 were valid for analysis. Participants were selected using a purposive sampling method to ensure that respondents belonged to Generation Z and had attended at least one Genzi event at the mosque. Females made up the majority of respondents (58%), a pattern consistent with broader trends of active female participation in volunteer initiatives within religious organizations.

In terms of age distribution, 68% of respondents were between 21 and 25 years old, indicating that volunteerism at the mosque is largely driven by young adults in their early 20s, a stage in life often associated with a strong sense of community engagement and identity formation. The presence of a smaller proportion of respondents in the 26–30 and 16–20 age brackets (13% and 17%, respectively) further highlights that the majority of active volunteers are in a transitional phase between education and full-time employment.

The largest occupational group consisted of students (53%), followed by workers (31%). This suggests that educational institutions may play a significant role in shaping volunteer engagement among Generation Z, as students often have more flexible schedules and access to service-learning opportunities. Participation frequency varied, with 55% of respondents attending Genzi events only once, while a smaller group (22%) attended twice or more. These figures highlight a potential area of focus for the mosque—understanding the factors that contribute to long-term engagement in volunteer activities.

The validity and reliability of the instruments were tested to ensure accurate measurement of the constructs. Convergent validity was established as all indicators showed loading factors above 0.5 (see Table 1). Discriminant validity was confirmed through cross-loading analysis, with each item loading higher on its respective construct than on any other. The Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values for all constructs exceeded 0.5, further supporting convergent validity. Additionally, the composite reliability and Cronbach's Alpha values for each construct exceeded the recommended thresholds of 0.7 and 0.6, respectively, indicating strong internal consistency.

Table 1. Validity and Reliability of Measurement Instruments

<b>Construct</b>	<b>Item</b>	<b>Loading Factor</b>	<b>AVE</b>	<b>Composite Reliability</b>	<b>Cronbach's Alpha</b>
Social Influence	SI1	0.737	0.608	0.885	0.841
	SI2	0.791			
	SI3	0.856			
	SI4	0.801			
	SI5	0.705			
Religiosity	RG1	0.806	0.642	0.900	0.862
	RG2	0.722			
	RG3	0.848			
	RG4	0.829			
	RG5	0.797			
Volunteer Intent	VI1	0.939	0.903	0.974	0.964
	VI2	0.971			
	VI3	0.942			
	VI4	0.948			

Source: Data generated using PLS-SEM analysis

To test the hypotheses, Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) was used. Table 2 summarizes the results of hypothesis testing and mediation analysis. The results demonstrate a significant positive effect of social influence on volunteer intentions ( $\beta = 0.274$ ,  $t = 2.892$ ,  $p = 0.004$ ), indicating that social influence accounts for 27.4% of the variance in volunteer intentions. Similarly, religiosity significantly impacts volunteer intentions ( $\beta = 0.393$ ,  $t = 3.016$ ,  $p = 0.003$ ), contributing to a 39.3% increase in volunteer intentions. These findings suggest that social support, peer influence, and religious engagement play key roles in motivating Generation Z to engage in volunteer activities.

Moreover, the effect of social influence on religiosity was also significant ( $\beta = 0.277$ ,  $t = 2.970$ ,  $p = 0.003$ ), underscoring that social influence enhances religiosity by 27.7%. The mediation analysis revealed that religiosity partially mediates the relationship between social influence and volunteer intentions, with a mediated path coefficient of 0.109 ( $t = 2.054$ ,  $p = 0.040$ ). This result suggests that religiosity explains an additional 10.9% of the variance in volunteer intentions, emphasizing the intertwined nature of social and religious factors in influencing volunteer behavior.

Table 2. Hypothesis Testing and Mediation Analysis Results

Hypothesis/Path	Path Coefficient	T-Statistic	P-Value	Significance
Social Influence -> Volunteer Intent	0.274	2.892	0.004	Significant
Religiosity -> Volunteer Intent	0.393	3.016	0.003	Significant
Social Influence -> Religiosity	0.277	2.970	0.003	Significant
Social Influence -> Religiosity -> Volunteer Intent	0.109	2.054	0.040	Significant

Source: Data generated using PLS-SEM analysis

The findings from this study provide strong evidence of the dual roles of social influence and religiosity in driving volunteerism among Generation Z at Masjid Nasional Al Akbar Surabaya. As illustrated in Table 2, social influence has a direct and significant impact on volunteer intentions, corroborating previous research that highlights the importance of peer influence, community involvement, and social norms in shaping volunteer behavior (Clary et al., 1998; Neely et al., 2013). This finding reflects the pivotal role of social contexts in encouraging individuals, particularly young adults, to engage in community service.

In today's digital era, social media has amplified these social influences, offering a powerful platform for organizations to extend their reach, promote volunteer opportunities, and cultivate a sense of belonging within their communities. This is particularly relevant for Generation Z, who are deeply integrated into digital networks and respond positively to content that resonates with their values and social identity (Masduki et al., 2022). Furthermore, for religious organizations, the strategic use of these digital platforms not only enhances volunteer engagement but also aligns traditional religious values with modern communication methods, ensuring that these values remain relevant and accessible in the digital age (Thoha & Ibrahim, 2023).

Additionally, religiosity was found to exert an even stronger influence on volunteer intentions, which aligns with studies by Hill and Den Dulk (2013) and Arli and Lasmono (2015). These researchers have similarly identified religiosity as a critical factor in motivating prosocial behavior, especially within faith-based organizations. The significant path coefficient of 0.393 indicates that individuals who are more religiously inclined are more likely to volunteer, driven by their adherence to spiritual teachings that emphasize altruism and community service.

The mediation analysis further reveals the complex interaction between social influence and religiosity. As hypothesized, religiosity significantly mediates the relationship between social influence and volunteer intentions, indicating that social environments not only promote volunteerism directly but also foster religious engagement, which in turn enhances the likelihood of volunteering. This finding supports earlier work by Sallam et al. (2018), who argued that religiosity amplifies the effect of social influence by embedding volunteer activities within a broader framework of moral and religious obligations.

Recent research by Aksoy and Wiertz (2024) also lends credence to these results by demonstrating that religious participation fosters trust and civic engagement, which in turn promotes volunteering. This reflects the unique context of Masjid Nasional Al Akbar, where religious and social activities are intertwined, making religiosity both a motivator and a reinforcement mechanism for volunteer engagement. Additionally, studies by Denning (2021) and Büssing et al. (2018) have shown that religious values often promote sustained prosocial behaviors, further validating the findings of this study.

However, it is important to note that while social influence significantly affects volunteer intentions, its impact is not as strong as religiosity. This suggests that while social networks can initially motivate volunteerism, the internalization of religious values offers a deeper, more sustainable motivation for continued community involvement. This finding contrasts with research by Cho, Bonn, and Han (2018), who found that social motives alone did not significantly drive volunteer behavior in Generation Z. The present study offers an alternative perspective, suggesting that religiosity plays a more critical role in sustaining volunteer behavior among this demographic.

In summary, the findings of this study underscore the complementary roles of social influence and religiosity in motivating volunteerism among Generation Z. Religious organizations aiming to increase volunteer participation should consider strategies that not only leverage social networks but also reinforce religious teachings. By fostering an environment that integrates both social and religious motivations, organizations can more effectively mobilize Generation Z for sustained community service.

## **Conclusion**

This study explores the interplay between social influence, religiosity, and volunteer intentions among Generation Z at Masjid Nasional Al Akbar Surabaya. The findings highlight the critical role that both social influence and religiosity play in shaping the motivations of young individuals to engage in volunteer work within a religious context. The research demonstrates that social influence significantly impacts volunteer intentions, with support from peers, family, and social networks acting as pivotal motivators. Religiosity emerges as a crucial

mediator, linking social influence to volunteer intentions and underscoring the importance of religious values in fostering altruistic behaviors. These insights are aligned with recent studies, affirming the role of religious involvement and intrinsic motivations in prosocial behaviors among Generation Z.

This study contributes to the literature by elucidating the interactions between social influence and religiosity in determining volunteering intentions among Generation Z. It offers new insights into the cultural and religious dynamics that drive volunteerism, enhancing our understanding of these processes in different settings. Future research could explore the influence of digital and social media networks on volunteer intentions across diverse cultural and religious contexts. Longitudinal studies could examine the evolution of these motivations over time, providing insights into sustained volunteer engagement. Investigating other mediators, such as personal values or community identity, could deepen our understanding of what drives Generation Z's commitment to volunteerism. In conclusion, strategies to boost volunteer participation among Generation Z should focus on leveraging social networks and reinforcing religious values. By fostering an environment that integrates social influence with religious teachings, organizations can cultivate a deeper sense of purpose and community engagement among young volunteers.

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