



Original Article

Attitudes towards Religion among Gen Y and Gen Z: Implications to Religious Education

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Abstract

Generational studies have emerged as a field of research examining traits distinct to each generation, particularly among Millennials (Gen Y) and Centennials (Gen Z). In terms of attitudes and perceptions, Gen Y and Gen Z differ in varied degrees. Will there also be divergences in attitudes towards religion between the two generations? The study investigated the intricacies between Gen Y and Gen Z, specifically, their perceptions and attitudes towards religion and religiosity. The research employed a descriptive quantitative research method utilizing 200 respondents (100= Gen Y, and 100= Gen Z) from a Catholic university in Pampanga using purposive sampling technique. Data were gathered through the Filipino Students' Attitudes Towards Religion [FSAR] Scale (Baring et al., 2018) and subjected to statistical treatment using mean percentages, standard deviation, and t-tests to determine disparities in their attitudes and perceptions. The results revealed no significant difference (P value= 0.73) in the overall mean responses between Gen Y and Gen Z informants regarding their attitudes towards religion. Despite being characterized as less religious, Filipino Gen Z, unlike their Western counterparts, still exhibit positive attitudes towards religion and religiosity. However, a high computed standard deviation (SD) of 1.13 for item 2: "A spiritual person is one who loves religion" indicated dispersed responses among Gen Z, showing a misperception between the terms 'religious' and 'spiritual.' With the increasing incidence of indifference towards religion among late Gen Z and the advent of the highly digitized Alpha generation, what significant challenges do religious educators face in addressing this concern?

Keywords: generational attitudes, religion, religiosity, religious education, spirituality

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Introduction

In recent years, perceptions and attitudes, especially among the youth, have emerged as a significant field of research, as evidenced by several studies abroad (Burge, 2024; Anderson, 2017; Ofori & Doodoo, 2015; Wim Plug & Manuela Du Bois, 2010; Wells & Twenge, 2005). Efforts to investigate these perceptions and attitudes among the youth have also been pursued in the Philippines. Some studies (Baring et al., 2016; Baring & Cacho, 2015; Capucan & Ponce, 2013) explored views and mindsets regarding religiosity, spirituality, individualism, and the notion of salvation. Filipino youth's culture and aspirations have also attracted researchers' attention. Pena-Alampay et al. (2003) tracked studies on youth development in the Philippines over the past two decades. The topics addressed include perceptions related to marriage, same-sex marriage, pre-marital sex, and more. A study conducted by Lanuza (2004) posited that Filipino youth studies have largely depended on structural functionalism and the use of modernization theory to elucidate youth and social change. Lanuza suggested that indigenous approaches should serve as starting points in Filipino youth studies to achieve a more culturally relevant perspective in these undertakings. Lacerna (2016) investigated the implications of digital technology among Filipino millennials and centennials, whom he labeled "digital learners" in higher learning institutions. Lacerna posited that their patterns of behavior, perceived values, outlook, priorities, and learning styles are directly or indirectly influenced by political, economic, socio-cultural, and technological variables. Higher educational institutions face increasing demands to equip these learners with new knowledge, skills, and values to remain competitive locally and globally while also educating them to become responsible adults and good citizens on national and global stages.

The Digital Generations: Millennials (Gen Y) and Centennials (Gen Z)

Interest in generational studies has evolved as a prominent theme among researchers. Researchers in this field have attempted to examine characteristics and preferences distinct to particular generations. Some inquiries (Barna Group, 2018; Skinner et al., 2018; Sanfilippo, 2016; McCrindle Australia, 2012) sought to investigate the generations and their respective divergent characteristics. Sanfilippo (2016) posited that Gen X is better suited for management-related jobs because they can bridge the gap between the older and the younger generations (Gen Y and Gen Z). According to Robinson (2018) and Heather et al. (2018), Millennials or Gen Y are described as adventurous individuals who enjoy traveling and taking photos for their social media posts. Sanfilippo characterizes them as "flexible and adaptable, able to navigate an ever-increasing rate of change." When they feel fulfilled by their work, they become reliable and more industrious. In the workplace, Gen X typically supervises Gen Y employees. Although they (Gen X and Gen Y) generally get along well, according to Fernandez (2009), they differ in aspects such as work engagement, teamwork, and career development. Utilizing data from 290 employees in a large Silicon Valley technology company, the results indicated that Gen Y is more engaged at work than Gen X. The relevance of computer and communications technology in that company may account for the lesser work engagement among Gen X compared to Gen Y. Nonetheless, both generations value work-life balance.

Studies aimed at comparing Millennials (Gen Y) and Centennials (Gen Z) have revealed distinct differences in attitudes and behaviors. According to Robinson

(2018), the “Centennials” or Gen Z are those born from 1995 to 2012 and are considered the generation born into a world dominated by digital technology. They are also characterized as the generation exposed to social media (Fojas, 2019). Gen Z is the generation raised in the era of smartphones. Twenge (2017) depicted them as a self-educated generation that is less rebellious, more tolerant, yet increasingly less happy compared to Millennials or Gen Y. Centennials, the children of Gen X. In a study conducted by McCrindle Australia (2012) among five generations of Australians, Gen Y respondents were described as more inclined to learn in a student-centric and kinesthetic learning format, as well as a lounge room style and multi-stimulus learning environment. Novak (2014) hypothesized that while Gen Y is digitally literate, Gen Z is even more exposed to smartphone technology and faster internet speeds. A study by The Center for Generational Kinetics (CGK, 2018) revealed that, compared to Gen Y, a majority of Gen Z uses their cellphones more at midnight and requires more feedback from their supervisors every few weeks to remain in their jobs. The study also indicated that many in Gen Z plan to rely on personal savings for their future and prefer to work for environmentally responsible companies. Millennials or Gen Y, in contrast, expect a salary increase within a year of starting a job but prefer a flexible work schedule.

The Filipino Gen Y and Gen Z

Generation Z in the Philippines demonstrates a notable resistance to being impressed, according to a study conducted by Kantar Milward Brown Incorporated (2017) titled “AdReaction: Engaging Gen X, Y, and Z.” The research findings indicate that, since Gen Z members grew up with smartphone technology and faster internet speeds, they have become difficult to influence regarding brand advertising. According to KMBI, they are easily unimpressed by new formats, such as augmented reality or sponsored lenses, and prefer humor as the key characteristic of successful advertisements. The global Gen Z population numbers approximately 2 billion, with Gen Z making up 30 percent of the population in the Philippines. As the Gen Z population grows, it presents challenges for advertisers. Cultural formats in advertising are being used to engage Gen Z, but this engagement is at 47%, which is lower compared to Gen Y, who exhibit a 62% agreement with cultural layouts in advertising. The use of humor in advertisements has made Filipino Gen Y and Gen Z more responsive to commercials, with a 53% agreement for Gen Z and 67% for Gen Y. Thirty-two percent of Millennials (Gen Y) in the Philippines are more engaged with Instagram than Gen Z, with only 25% using the platform.

A study on the status of Filipino Catholic youth conducted in 2014 by the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines - The Episcopal Commission on the Youth (CBCP-ECY) and the Catholic Educational Association of the Philippines (CEAP) reported that contemporary Filipino Catholic youth remain firmly rooted in their Catholic religious tradition. They predominantly believe in what it teaches about faith and morals, attend normative religious services, and seek to establish a personal relationship with God in their private lives. The mean age of the respondents in the study is 19, indicating that most of them belong to Gen Y, who, according to Twenge (2017), are more religious compared to Gen Z. However, it is essential to note that the Gen Z described by Twenge refers to individuals in the United States. Studies conducted by Baring (2012) and Sarmiento (2016) revealed a positive outlook toward

religious matters among Filipino youth, highlighting an understandable difference between American and Filipino Gen Z in terms of attitudes towards religion.

Age and Religious Affiliation

In a study conducted by the Pew Research Center (2018) involving 106 countries and at least 250 respondents per country, the results revealed that younger adults (ages 18-39) were less likely to say that religion was important. A significant difference existed between young adults from the Asia-Pacific region and North America regarding religious affiliation. A particularly large gap in religious affiliation (28 percentage points) emerged in Canada, where 49% of adults under 40 and 77% of older adults were affiliated. The differential in the U.S. was smaller yet still considerable at 17 points (66% vs. 83%). Compared to North America, the Asia-Pacific region is religiously diverse, and since most major religions originated in this region, some younger adults are more religiously affiliated than those in North America. The research also revealed that a few older adults (40 years and above) did not identify with any religion.

In research undertaken by Skirbekk et al. (2018) among 2,500 respondents from 198 countries, it was posited that the religious landscape among the world's seniors (60 years and above) would change fundamentally in the coming years due to the combination of rapid aging among the religiously unaffiliated and Buddhist populations and the persistence of relatively young age structures among Muslims and Christians, the dominant religions. The study discovered that in 2010, there were few Muslims aged 60 or older (7% of all Muslims). Jews were presumably in this age group (20% of all Jews). It was prognosticated that by 2050, Buddhists and the religiously unaffiliated would have the oldest populations (both would have 32% above the age of 60), while Muslims would remain the youngest religious group (with only 16% above the age of 60). Christians worldwide would age somewhat slowly, from 14% to 21% above the age of 60, from 2010 to 2050.

In the Philippines, according to the CIA World Factbook (2018), most Filipinos are religiously affiliated (82.9% Catholic, 2% Aglipayan, 5% Muslim, 2.8% Evangelical, 2.3% Iglesia ni Kristo, 4.5% other Christian, 1.8% other, 0.6% unspecified, 0.1% none, as of the 2000 census). Of the estimated population of 104,256,076, 36.99% aged 25-54 years old (median age 23.5 years) are primarily Gen Y and Gen Z.

Gallup International (2017) conducted a survey involving 66,000 people in 68 countries exploring their religious beliefs and practices. The survey showed that 62% of people worldwide considered themselves religious. The Philippines ranked 5th among the most religious countries with a 90% rating. Thailand emerged as the most religious country with a 98% rating, followed by Nigeria at 97%; Kosovo, India, Ghana, the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire, and Papua New Guinea next, all with 94%; and Fiji and Armenia, both with a 92% rating.

Attitudes towards Religion

Kabidenova et al. (2016) conducted a study on adolescents' attitudes towards religion and religious identification in light of the need to support socio-cultural space in the country and with respect to global issues relating to the Central Asian region. The research findings indicated that attitudes towards religion among younger generations were often superficial, leading to poor religious awareness. This

observation stemmed from problems in religious formation and the strengthening of religious identity in the country as a cultural code. The research also posited that educating youth in the socio-humanitarian sector serves a concrete purpose in sustaining social solidity and thwarting religious radicalism.

In a study conducted by Cnaan et al. (2004), teenagers (ages 11-18) perceived religion as important, and about two-thirds attended a place of worship at least once a month. Parents' attendance at religious worship, age, gender, ethnicity, and economic status contributed to variations in perceptions. Conversely, in Burge (2023), a survey of around 4,000 youth ages 13-25 years old in the United States inquired about their perceptions of spirituality and their distinct insights into the intricacies of religious and spiritual life. The study discovered that about 15% of respondents did not believe in God, while around 78% perceived themselves as slightly spiritual. The prevalence of 'non-recognition' of a higher power or transcendent being resulted from "increasing secularization" (Burge, 2023, para. 6).

Baring et al. (2018) developed an instrument that measures attitudes towards religion among Filipino college students. Utilizing a sample population of 2,733 students from two provincial universities in the Philippines, the study revealed a three-factor measure of attitudes towards religion. Based on the findings, the three factors are: 1) belief toward the institution, 2) affective response to God, and 3) behavioral aspects of belief.

To address the urgent need for empirical measures of religion in the region, particularly in the Philippines, Baring et al. (2018) developed a self-report measure to assess attitudes towards religion among Filipino students. This collective endeavor represents the first effort to establish an empirical basis for students' attitudes towards religion in the country. The study also aimed to present the unique traits of the Filipino youth perspective on religion, accommodating both Christian, personal, and religiously diverse points of view.

Synthesis

Every generation possesses distinctive characteristics (Barna Group, 2018; Skinner et al., 2018; Robinson, 2018; Twenge, 2017; Sanfilippo, 2016; McCrindle Australia, 2012). Generation X is less engaged in work related to computer technology than Generation Y (Fernandez, 2009), although they are more adaptable. Compared to Millennials (Generation Y), Generation Z (born 1995-2012) is becoming less religious and more difficult to please (KMBI, 2017; Twenge, 2017). Generation Y (ages 25-39) displayed an encouraging attitude toward religion, according to CBCP-ECY (2014). Studies by Baring (2012) and Sarmiento (2016) revealed a positive attitude toward religion among Filipino youth, particularly among Generation Y. In contrast to Western countries (particularly those in the North Atlantic region), the Asia-Pacific region perceives religion as important (Pew Research Center, 2018). However, in some cases, attitudes toward religion among the younger generation are seemingly superficial, often leading to poor religious awareness, according to Kabidenova et al. (2016). Generation Z (Centennials) consists of those born into a world dominated by digital technology. They are described as a generation exposed to social media (Robinson, 2018; Twenge, 2017). Generation Y is characterized as more inclined to learn through a student-centric, kinesthetic learning format and a lounge-style, multi-stimulus learning environment. Novak (2014) posited that, as much as Generation Y is digitally literate, Generation Z is the generation exposed to smartphone technology

and faster internet speeds. According to CBCP-ECY (2014), Generation Y in the Philippines has remained firmly rooted in their Catholic religious tradition.

Twenge (2017) posited that Generation Z in the United States increasingly becomes less religious and unassociated with any religion. Nielsen Global Generational Lifestyles (NGGL, 2019) and KMBI (2017) reported that Generation Z in the Philippines are more challenging to influence regarding advertisements compared to Generation Y. Generation Z, according to KMBI (2017), is easily unimpressed by new formats such as augmented reality or sponsored lenses relative to previous generations, favoring humor as the key characteristic of a successful advertisement. Given these considerable differences between Generation Z and Generation Y, will their attitudes toward religion also differ?

Conceptual Framework

The present study explored these areas among Generation Y (Millennials) and Generation Z (Centennials), who are both digitally literate. However, Generation Z has greater access to smartphone technology and faster internet speeds. This technologically advanced culture has also transformed most Generation Z individuals into becoming more impatient, less religious, and less happy (CGK, 2018; Robinson, 2018; Twenge, 2017; Novak, 2014) compared to Generation Y. Although most Filipino Millennials and Centennials continue to exhibit positive attitudes toward religion compared to their Western counterparts, attempts to investigate differences between the two generations within a Philippine context remain limited. The current study aimed to explore this area among selected Filipino Generation Y and Generation Z members in a Catholic university in Pampanga, Philippines. Figure 1 below illustrates the framework of the study.

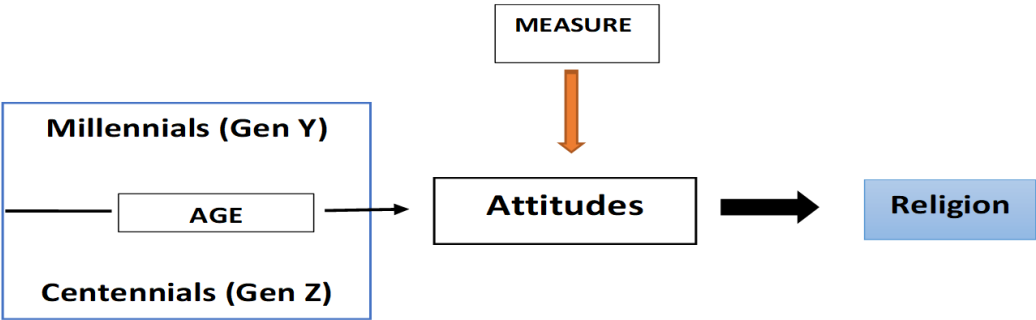


Figure 1. Conceptual Diagram of the Study

Statement of the Problem

The ultimate objective of the study is to investigate if there exists a difference in attitudes towards religion between Gen Y (Millennials) and Gen Z (Centennials).

Specifically, the research attempted to answer the following questions:

- 1. What are the attitudes towards religion of Gen Y and Gen Z?
- 2. Is there a significant difference in attitudes towards religion between Gen Z and Gen Y?

3. What particular implications will these attitudes towards religion of Gen Z and Gen Y have in religious education?

Hypotheses

1. Null Hypothesis (Ho): There is no significant difference in attitudes towards religion between Gen Z and Gen Y.
Ho: $u_1 = u_2$
2. Alternative Hypothesis (Ha): There is a significant difference in attitudes towards religion between Gen Z and Gen Y.
HA: $u_1 \neq u_2$

Methodology

The research employed a descriptive quantitative method to investigate the attitudes and perceptions of Generation Z and Generation Y. Specifically, the research aimed to identify their differences in perceptions and attitudes toward religion. The study used a purposive sampling technique to utilize 200 respondents (100 Generation Z and 100 Generation Y) from a Catholic university in Pampanga. The Generation Y respondents, mostly graduates, come from different work affiliations, although the majority graduated from the same Catholic university where Generation Z is currently studying.

Data were gathered using the Filipino Students' Attitudes Towards Religion (FSAR) Scale developed by Baring et al. (2018) and were subjected to statistical treatment through mean percentages, standard deviation, and t-tests via the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). The research employed Levene's Test for Equality of Variances (t-test, 2-tailed, unpaired samples) to determine the differences in attitudes and perceptions toward religion. Table 1 below serves as the basis for decisions in testing the hypotheses.

Table 1. P value and statistical significance (Myers and Randolph, 2013, p. 61)

p-value	Decision
(Greater than or equal to) ≥ 0.05 alpha	Do not reject the null hypothesis
0.01 - 0.05	Evidence to reject null hypothesis
0.001 - 0.01	Strong evidence to reject null hypothesis
< 0.001	Overwhelming evidence to reject

The instrument for assessing attitudes toward religion among the respondents from two generations (Generation Y and Generation Z) is a self-report test developed by Baring et al. (2018). The 19-item instrument was designed to evaluate three-factor measures of attitudes toward religion: 1) beliefs about the institution, 2) affective responses to God, and 3) behavioral aspects of belief. The dimensions of the assessment tool are described by the test developers as follows:

“The First DIMENSION: [IDENTITY Dimension] Religion refers to beliefs about God and religious institutions. Belief in God and religion are interconnected. This dimension assesses one's attitudes toward being identified with God and religious institutions. Belief in religion involves appreciating religion and God's role in one's life (Items 1-8).

The Second DIMENSION: [SPIRITUALITY Dimension] Religion constitutes affective sentiments towards God. Religion affirms the significance of a Divine Being. This dimension assesses attitudes reflecting

one’s emotional dispositions towards God. One’s emotional disposition in this sense has two aspects: feelings of security because of God and affective commitments to God (Items 9-14).

The Third DIMENSION: [RELIGIOSITY Dimension] Religion entails concomitant human responsibilities. This dimension assesses human responses to religion in the personal, moral, and social order. From this perspective, religion demands the fulfillment of certain responsibilities within the personal, moral, and social domains. Therefore, faith response in this context is measured by the satisfaction of these responsibilities (Items 15-19)” (Baring et al., 2018).

Initially, the instrument was designed to measure attitudes toward religion among college students aged 16-21 years. It underwent validation and reliability tests involving 2,733 college students from two Catholic universities in Pampanga. The present research sought to examine whether the instrument could measure attitudes toward religion among respondents outside the validated age group. The current study aimed to determine if the instrument would also assess attitudes toward religion among Millennials (Generation Y), aged 25-39 (Heather et al., 2018; Robinson, 2018), and whether differences in attitudes toward religion existed among Generation Z (those born between 1995 and 2012). Table 2 below serves as the basis for interpreting the FSAR Scale test (Baring et al., 2018).

Table 2. Guide for Interpretation

Value	Verbal Interpretation
1.00-1.59	Strongly Disagree
1.60-2.59	Undecided
3.60-4.59	Agree
4.59-5.00	Strongly Agree

Ethical Considerations

The researcher adhered to the Data Privacy Act of 2012 to protect participants’ privacy and confidentiality. The privacy and confidentiality of the research participants were protected using informed consent prior to data collection, which clearly defined the purpose and method of the study. All data provided by participants were treated with utmost discretion. Real names were not requested in the instrument to ensure anonymity. Data collected was stored in a secure electronic file to prevent breaches of confidentiality. Participation in the study was purely voluntary, and no coercion was applied to the respondents to participate. Participants were informed that they could withdraw at any time during the study. Any changes to the research protocols that might impact confidentiality were communicated promptly to the participants. This commitment to ethical standards ensured the protection of the rights and well-being of the research subjects while enhancing the validity of the research findings.

Results and Discussions

The Gen Z participants (ages 17-21 years) were college students from a Catholic university in Pampanga, while the Gen Y respondents (ages 25-39 years) came from various work affiliations, with most (70%) being graduates of that university.

In terms of gender, there were more males (f = 103, 51.5%) than female respondents (f = 97, 48.5%). The majority of the research subjects were Catholics (f = 167, 83%), while some respondents identified as Born-Again Christians (f = 28, 14%), Iglesia ni Cristo (f = 2, 1%), and from other denominations (f = 2, 1%). Table 3 below shows the demographic profile of the respondents.

Table 3. Demographic Profile of the Respondents

Variable	Category	Gen Y		Gen Z	
		F	%	F	%
Gender	Male	41	41	62	62
	Female	59	59	38	38
	Total	100	100	100	100
Religious Affiliation	Roman Catholic	85	85	82	82
	Born Again	13	13	15	15
	INC	1	1	2	1
	Others	1	1	1	1
	Total	100	100	100	100
Age Group	18-21			100	100
	25-39	100	100		
	Total	100	100	100	100
Grand Total of Respondents		200			

Attitudes Towards Religion
Results for Gen Z

Table 4. Results for Gen Z

Statements / Items	N	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Deviation
1. Religion generates a lifestyle that is founded on God.	100	2	5	4.53	.658
2. A spiritual person is one who loves religion	100	1	5	3.71	1.131
3. A religious person possesses positive attitudes towards others.	100	1	5	4.04	1.136
4. I believe a religious person is God-centered.	100	2	5	4.32	.803
5. Religion involves concern for the environment.	100	1	5	4.03	.893
6. Religion reminds me that God created me.	100	1	5	4.53	.745
7. Salvation for me is essential for religion.	100	1	5	4.19	.787
8. Religion taught me to face life's problems without questioning God.	100	1	5	4.30	.893
				4.21	
9. I feel the love of God in my life.	100	1	5	4.73	.601
10. I feel that God is beside me when I'm down.	100	1	5	4.66	.699
11. I feel safe because of God.	100	1	5	4.70	.689
12. I am always happy because God is in me.	100	1	5	4.57	.700
13. It is important that I dedicate a time for God.	100	1	5	4.72	.621

14. I am willing to do everything to please God.	100	1	5	4.49	.785
				4.61	
15. A religious person is someone who realizes his/her faults.	100	1	5	4.19	.992
16. A religious person is one who rejects an immoral social order.	100	1	5	4.14	.910
17. A religious person is well-disciplined.	100	1	5	4.00	1.092
18. Believing in faith involves looking at our lives with purpose.	100	3	5	4.61	.549
19. A religious person is concerned about doing good deeds.	100	1	5	4.27	.993
				4.28	
Overall Mean and SD				4.35	.825

Table 4 demonstrates that most of the Gen Z respondents rated the items positively for the FSAR Scale. The majority of Gen Z respondents held favorable attitudes ($M = 4.35$) toward religion (see Table 1 for the guide to interpretation). Items 1-8, which consist of statements on the Identity Dimension, reflected a mean of 4.21 (Agree). This indicates that most Gen Z respondents appreciate religion and God's role in their lives. They also perceive that religion refers to beliefs about God and religious institutions, believing that God and religion are intertwined. There was slight agreement ($M = 3.71$) on item 2: "A spiritual person is one who loves religion." This item also exhibited a high standard deviation (SD), indicating that responses varied significantly from the mean. A slight confusion regarding the terms "spiritual" and "religion" may explain this slight agreement. Baring et al. (2018) noted that "spirituality," related to the term "spiritual," can traditionally refer either to religious traditions or to a purely internal mindset. Manning (2019) and Farrell et al. (2018) posited that many Western Gen Z individuals prefer to identify as "spiritual" rather than "religious" due to a lack of affiliation with any religion. Pew Research Center (2018) reported a significant increase among young individuals (Gen Z) who are becoming less religious but still identifying as spiritual. Nevertheless, Filipino Gen Z respondents still agree that a spiritual person loves religion.

Items 9-14, which constitute affective sentiments towards God, refer to the Spirituality Dimension of the FSAR Scale. The average rating for items 9-14 is 4.61, indicating that most Gen Z respondents agreed that religion affirms the significance of a divine being. The results also demonstrated that Gen Z respondents possess an emotional disposition towards God through feelings of security and commitment.

The average rating for items 14-19 is 4.28 (Agree). Baring et al. (2018) state that items 14-19 measure the Religiosity Dimension. This dimension indicates that religion encompasses concurrent human responsibilities. From this perspective, "religion is perceived to demand the fulfillment of certain responsibilities in the personal, moral, and social order. Hence, faith is measured in terms of the satisfaction of these responsibilities" (Baring et al., 2018). Respondents agreed (4.28) that a religious person dedicates time to God, is committed to rejecting immoral actions, is well-disciplined, and is concerned with performing good deeds. They also agreed that a religious person rejects an immoral society and perceives life with purpose.

Of the 19 statements, items 9, 10, 11, 13, and 18 received high levels of agreement. The mean scores for these items with relatively high agreement ratings

are S9 = 4.73; S10 = 4.66; S11 = 4.70; S13 = 4.72; S18 = 4.61. Gen Z respondents strongly agreed that they feel the love of God in their lives; God is with them during difficult times; they feel safe because of God; it is important to dedicate time to God; and believing in faith involves viewing their lives with purpose. The statement with the highest mean rating is item 9, indicating that the majority of Gen Z respondents feel the love of God in their lives.

Table 5. Results for Gen Y

Statements / Items	N	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Deviation
1. Religion generates a lifestyle that is founded on God.	100	1	5	4.46	.744
2. A spiritual person is one who loves religion	100	1	5	3.76	1.129
3. A religious person possesses positive attitudes towards others.	100	1	5	4.25	.783
4. I believe a religious person is God-centered.	100	1	5	4.35	.833
5. Religion involves concern for the environment.	100	1	5	4.23	.790
6. Religion reminds me that God created me.	100	1	5	4.52	.858
7. Salvation for me is essential for religion.	100	1	5	4.24	.922
8. Religion taught me to face life's problems without questioning God.	100	1	5	4.36	.882
				4.27	
9. I feel the love of God in my life.	100	1	5	4.73	.723
10. I feel that God is beside me when I'm down.	100	1	5	4.65	.783
11. I feel safe because of God.	100	1	5	4.62	.749
12. I am always happy because God is in me.	100	1	5	4.60	.765
13. It is important that I dedicate a time for God.	100	1	5	4.61	.751
14. I am willing to do everything to please God.	100	2	5	4.42	.684
				4.61	
15. A religious person is someone who realizes his/her faults.	100	1	5	4.22	.871
16. A religious person is one who rejects an immoral social order.	100	2	5	4.22	.848
17. A religious person is well-disciplined.	100	1	5	4.20	.932
18. Believing in faith involves looking at our lives with purpose.	100	1	5	4.57	.756
19. A religious person is concerned about doing good deeds.	100	1	5	4.46	.717
				4.33	
Overall Mean and SD				4.39	.817

Table 5 presents the results for attitudes towards religion among Generation Y or Millennials aged 25 to 39 years. The overall mean rating for the FSAR Scale by Generation Y is 4.39, indicating that the majority of respondents agreed with the items on the FSAR Scale (see Table 1 for the interpretation guide). The mean rating of 4.39 demonstrates that Generation Y holds positive attitudes towards religion. With a mean of 4.27 for items 1-8, the Generation Y respondents perceive religion to

be related to God and religious institutions. Item 2, which states that a spiritual person is one who loves religion, received a slightly agreed rating of 3.76. The relatively high standard deviation of 1.129 indicates that the responses diverged from the mean, suggesting dispersed responses. A slight misperception of the terms “spiritual” and “religion” may account for this degree of dispersion in the data values.

The mean rating for items 9-14, which comprise the Spirituality Dimension, is 4.61, indicating that the Generation Y respondents agree that religion encompasses affective sentiments towards God. They also concur that religion emphasizes the importance of a Divine Being who fosters feelings of security and contentment.

For items 15-19, concerning the Religiosity Dimension, the Generation Y respondents provided a rating of 4.33, indicating agreement that religion entails corresponding human responsibilities, such as living a disciplined and purposeful life, rejecting immoral actions, and being concerned with pursuing good deeds. Baring et al. (2018) state that “faith response in this sense is measured in terms of the satisfaction of these responsibilities.” The Generation Y respondents affirmed this aspect of religion.

Of the 19 statements, items 9, 10, 11, 12, and 13 received strong agreement from the Generation Y respondents (M = 4.73; M = 4.65; M = 4.62; M = 4.60; and M = 4.61, respectively). Generation Y respondents strongly agree that they feel the love of God in their lives, feel that God is beside them when they are down, feel safe because of God, experience happiness due to God’s presence, and believe it is important to dedicate time to God. Statement 9 appears to be the item with the highest mean rating, indicating that Generation Y strongly agrees they feel the love of God in their lives. Table 6 below summarizes the top 5 statements with the highest means from Gen Z and Gen Y.

Table 6. Statements that are strongly agreed by the respondents

Gen Z		Gen Y	
Statements	Mean	Statements	Mean
9. I feel the love of God in my life.	4.73	9. I feel the love of God in my life.	4.73
10. I feel that God is beside me when I’m down.	4.66	10. I feel that God is beside me when I’m down.	4.65
11. I feel safe because of God.	4.70	11. I feel safe because of God.	4.62
13. It is important that I dedicate a time for God.	4.72	12. I’m always happy because God is in me.	4.60
18. Believing in faith involves looking at our lives with purpose.	4.61	13. It is important that I dedicate a time for God.	4.61

Comparison between Gen Z and Gen Y using T-tests

The overall mean for Gen Z and Gen Y was subjected to a t-test (unpaired, 2-tailed) to determine whether there is a difference in their attitudes toward religion. Table 7 shows the results of the t-tests.

Table 7. Results of the t-test

Items	N	Gen Z (N=100)		Gen Y (N=100)	
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD
1	200	4.53	.658	4.46	.744
2	200	3.71	1.131	3.76	1.129
3	200	4.04	1.136	4.25	.783
4	200	4.32	.803	4.35	.833

5	200	4.03	.893	4.23	.790
6	200	4.53	.745	4.52	.858
7	200	4.19	.787	4.24	.922
8	200	4.30	.893	4.36	.882
9	200	4.73	.601	4.73	.723
10	200	4.66	.699	4.65	.783
11	200	4.70	.689	4.62	.749
12	200	4.57	.700	4.60	.765
13	200	4.72	.621	4.61	.751
14	200	4.49	.785	4.42	.684
15	200	4.19	.992	4.22	.871
16	200	4.14	.910	4.22	.848
17	200	4.00	1.092	4.20	.932
18	200	4.61	.549	4.57	.756
19	200	4.27	.993	4.46	.717
Overall Mean and SD		4.35	.825	4.39	.817

P value= **0.7308**

Confidence interval: -0.04000. 95% confidence interval of this difference: From -0.26897 to 0.18897

Intermediate values used in calculations:

t = 0.3445

df = 198

Standard error of difference = 0.116

Based on the t-test results, the p-value of 0.7308, considered not statistically significant by conventional criteria, indicated no significant difference in the overall mean responses of Gen Z and Gen Y. The p-value of 0.7308 is greater than $\alpha = 0.05$, which implies that the null hypothesis should be retained (see Table 1). By accepting the null hypothesis, the results suggest that there is no significant difference in attitudes toward religion between Gen Z and Gen Y respondents. Regardless of age, the majority of Gen Z and Gen Y respondents exhibited positive attitudes toward religion. Although some studies describe Gen Z as becoming less religious (Manning, 2019; Farrell et al., 2018; Robinson, 2018; Twenge, 2017), Filipino Gen Z, unlike their Western counterparts, still displays positive attitudes toward religion and religiosity. This positive attitude towards religion is further confirmed in the studies of Baring (2012, 2018) and Sarmiento (2016).

Of the 19 items of the FSAR Scale, statements 3 and 19 reported a significant difference, with a computed p-value of 0.003 for item 3 and 0.029 for item 19, both below the critical significance level of 0.05. Table 8 indicates the results of Levene’s test for Equality of Variances.

Table 8 demonstrates that Gen Z and Gen Y differ in their responses for items 3 and 19. The results of the per-item t-test reveal sufficient evidence to reject the null hypothesis for items 3 and 19 (Myers & Randolph, 2013, p. 61).

Table 8. Results of the Levene’s Test for Equality of Variances indicating items with significant differences

Items		F	Sig.	t	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean differen ce	Std. error differenc e	95% confidence interval of the difference	Items
3.	A	8.952	.003	1.522	198	.130	.210	.138	-.062	.482
religious person possesse s positive attitudes towards others.										
19.	A	4.857	.029	1.551	198	.122	.190	.122	-.052	.432
religious person is concerned about doing good deeds.										

Discussions

There is a discernible difference in the responses of Gen Z and Gen Y concerning whether a “religious person possesses positive attitudes toward others” and “whether a religious person is concerned about doing good deeds for others.” What could account for this difference?

While Filipino Gen Z and Gen Y demonstrate positive attitudes toward religion and religiosity based on the studies of CBCP-ECY (2014) and Baring (2012), Gen Y is generally more religious compared to Gen Z, who are often described in most Western countries as becoming less affiliated with any religion (Manning, 2019; Farrell et al., 2018; Robinson, 2018; Twenge, 2017). It is also possible that the term “religious” is understood differently by Gen Z and Gen Y, which could explain the significant difference in their responses to items 3 and 19. However, the mean responses revealed a higher standard deviation for Gen Z compared to Gen Y (see Table 6). Based on the results of the t-tests, more Gen Y respondents rated items 3 and 19 with “agree” and at times “strongly agree” compared to Gen Z. The responses of Gen Z in item 3 dispersed from the mean, indicating that their answers were varied. There is also a slight dispersion in Gen Z responses for item 19. Some Gen Z respondents may be undecided about the relationship between being religious and having positive attitudes toward others. Consequently, Gen Y and Gen Z vary in their perceptions that religious individuals have positive attitudes toward others.

Madrona et al. (2023) conjectured that Filipino Millennials and Centennials vary considerably in their values and perceptions. While Filipino Gen Z are becoming more receptive to cultural and religious transformations and developments, many Filipino Gen Y remain conservative and traditional in their religious beliefs. Conversely, Quinabo (2025) noted that most Filipino Gen Z express their religiosity

more on social media than through onsite church attendance. This suggests that while most Gen Y outwardly exhibit their religiosity, Filipino Gen Z prefer to express it internally and “digitally.” Furthermore, Esguerra et al. (2025) demonstrated that quality of life relates to everyday spiritual encounters as perceived by many Filipino Gen Z. This implies a significant relationship between spirituality and coping with the demands of daily life.

In a study conducted by Manalang (2021), the majority of Filipino American Gen Z and a few Millennials disaffiliate from religious communities, expressing sentiments that religious practices and rituals are not essential aspects of daily life. Western influence on these Filipino respondents could account for this perception regarding spirituality and religiosity. However, Brailey (2024) indicated that the worldviews of late Gen Z are shifting toward awareness of differing perspectives as they inhabit, study, and work within a multi-faith community, welcoming online and face-to-face spiritual discussions. This suggests that while earlier Gen Z members have become increasingly unaffiliated with traditional religions, an emerging trend among late Gen Z indicates an increasing openness to spiritual connections.

The Springtide Research Institute (2022, 2024) conducted a study on the spiritual and religious practices and perceptions of selected American Gen Z. The research revealed that Gen Z respondents are critical and skeptical of traditional religious institutions but are nonetheless interested in religion and spirituality. Moreover, research by the Barna Group (2023) indicated that many Gen Z individuals are now becoming interested in learning about religion, particularly Jesus Christ and his significant role in Christianity.

In its attempt to explore attitudes toward religion among selected Filipino Generation Y and Generation Z individuals, the current study discovered that no significant difference exists between the two generations; however, a slight difference in perceptions regarding the notions of “religious” and “spiritual” was revealed in some items of the FSAR Scale. This indicates that while Generation Z may misperceive religiosity and spirituality, they still positively recognize the significant role of religion in their lives.

Considering the results and findings of the study, what implications do these have for religious education?

Implications to Religious Education

Baring (2018) explained that there is a “diffused interpretation of religious-spiritual categories among Filipino youth” (p. 1). This implies that faith convictions of Filipino youth participants in the study stay grounded in institutional foundations while accepting a broadened understanding of spirituality and religiosity. These dispersed readings may possibly be attributed to the evolving notions of the typical twofold religious classifications, such as ‘sacred-profane’ or ‘personal-institutional religiosity’ among the youth. While Gen Z today demonstrates a diverse view of religion, many of them, especially in Western countries, identify themselves as religiously ‘unaffiliated’ while still articulating spiritual beliefs or in search of direction outside religious traditions. A major reason for this emerging trend is the growing secularization of society (Burge, 2023). As established religious institutions encounter issues like decreasing church attendance and influence, many Gen Z individuals are drawn to more individualistic and customized belief systems, gravitating toward becoming ‘nondenominational’ or more inclined toward

personalized beliefs. This trend suggests that the Gen Z population is more likely to search for meaning and purpose beyond traditional religious structures. The continuous stream of information fosters a wider perspective, allowing Generation Z to challenge established beliefs and explore new philosophies or even ‘spiritualities.’ Consequently, many Generation Z individuals may perceive organized religion as confining or disconnected from modern concerns such as social justice, climate change, and equality, which they prioritize. This growing concern among Generation Z will undoubtedly have implications for religious education. Thus, there is a need to reacquaint these learners, especially the incoming Alpha college students, with the concepts of religiosity and spirituality, particularly the true essence of religion. As David Kinnaman, Barna CEO, stated, “Having a spiritual mentor is one of the strongest factors for helping young people develop a resilient faith—one that grows and sustains them over time and helps guide them toward meaning and purpose in life” (in Barna Group, 2023, para. 13).

The view of spirituality as a deep connection to the divine in the search for meaning and purpose, which most people experience in various religions, must be instilled among these learners. There is also a need for re-evangelization regarding the idea that religion is more than just a set of rituals or beliefs; it is a reality that touches the very core of human existence, i.e., a connection to transcendent meaning. According to Baring and Cacho (2015), “meaningfulness and relevance seem to be the norm by which religious education is gauged by the youth in the schools they are enrolled in” (p. 147). This implies that many Gen Z and Alpha students perceive religion in terms of its significance and impact on their lives rather than merely as ritualized beliefs. Unless these practices are translated and re-articulated in their context, religion will cease to influence their life circumstances and eventually lose its connection and relevance. Therefore, a pedagogical shift in teaching religion to address this concern is vital (Baring & Cacho, 2015).

Conclusions

Using the FSAR Scale of Baring et.al (2018), the study found no significant difference ($p = 0.7308$) in attitudes towards religion between Filipino Gen Z and Gen Y. Despite evident parallels in their attitudes towards religion, both generations exhibited minor differences in their responses with reference to the relationship between “being a religious person” and “positive attitudes towards other people.”

With the growing incidence of secularization in society impacting the lives of the youth, there is an urgent need for reorientation regarding the true essence of religion as a reality that touches the fundamental aspect of human existence, which is essentially a connection to the divine. Therefore, a shift in the approach to teaching religion where teachers are encouraged to be spiritual mentors is vital in helping Gen Z learners develop resilience in their faith.

In light of the study’s findings and conclusions, the following recommendations are offered:

For teachers of Religion, particularly those in Grades 11 and 12, it is recommended to develop an attitude towards religion profile for their students using the FSAR Scale of Baring et al. (2018) to assist in revising their syllabi. Senior high teachers may need to re-appropriate their syllabi and lessons in Christian Living Education to cater to the needs of today’s Gen Z. Professors of Theology in college

could employ the same strategy to re-articulate the teaching of theology for their Gen Z students. Additionally, a further qualitative in-depth inquiry regarding the sentiments of late Gen Z on religiosity and spirituality is also recommended.

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