

## Article

# Unveiling the Interplay Between Religiosity, Faith-Based Tourism, and Social Attitudes: Examining Generation Z in a Postsecular Context

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## Abstract

Contemporary religiosity is undergoing profound transformation, shaped by postsecular and postmodern dynamics. Amid global declines in institutional affiliation, religious and spiritual tourism has emerged as a salient expression of evolving faith. Poland exemplifies this paradox: witnessing one of the world's steepest declines in youth religiosity, even as Catholicism retains symbolic centrality. Drawing on survey data from 510 Polish young adults (Generation Z), this study examines how religiosity, faith-based travel, and social attitudes intersect within a postsecular framework. Findings reveal a dual trajectory: while religious tourism reinforces institutional belonging and traditional values, spiritual tourism aligns with individualized, fluid religiosity and looser ties to religious institutions. The study introduces a novel conceptual model mapping the interdependencies between religiosity, mobility, and identity among youth in postsecular societies. This framework demonstrates how faith-based travel actively mediates social attitudes and reconfigures religious engagement, positioning mobility as a generative force in shaping contemporary belief. Rather than following a linear path of secularization, Generation Z selectively blends inherited Catholic traditions with personalized, experience-driven spirituality. These findings advance sociological debates on secularization, postsecularism, and the transformation of religious identity through mobility.

**Keywords:** religiosity; religious tourism; spiritual tourism; social attitudes; Generation Z; postsecularism



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## 1. Introduction

Religious and spiritual motivations remain significant forces in global travel (Weidenfeld and Ron 2006), having evolved from a niche market with limited infrastructure into a major tourism sector, generating over \$1500 billion in annual revenue (Faith-Based Tourism Market Outlook 2023). This growth reflects profound sociocultural changes across

the twentieth and twenty-first centuries (Soljan and Liro 2022). Although linked to religiosity, the rise of religious and spiritual tourism in post-secular times reflects broader shifts in belief, identity, and mobility rather than sustained religious commitment.

In Europe, secularization, understood as the diminishing influence of religion in the public and private spheres (Dobbelaere 1981), was long considered an inevitable consequence of modernization, rationalization, and scientific progress (Berger 1967). This perspective predicted a steady shift from strong religious identification to a predominantly secular worldview (Norris and Inglehart 2004). However, rather than fully eroding religion's role in individual lives (Beaumont et al. 2020), secularization has reconfigured religious expressions leading to individualization and commodification (Gökarıksel 2009; Berger 2014). These shifts have fostered new engagements with spirituality that extend beyond traditional institutions (Ziebertz and Riegel 2012). These shifts are especially pronounced among Generation Z (born 1995–2007), shaped by an always online global environment (Turner 2015). Marked by low institutional affiliation, their religiosity reflects a hybridized approach (Ammerman 2013), prioritizing personal meaning, digital engagement, and exposure to diverse traditions over adherence to established religious structures (Manning 2019).

Recent data show that Poland exhibits some of the largest generational disparities in religious engagement, particularly among young adults (Hackett et al. 2018; Taylor and Keeter 2010). Paradoxically, despite these declines, religious and spiritual tourism remain widely practiced among young adults. This raises important questions about how Generation Z shaped by distinct sociocultural and digital influences engages with such experiences. The relationship between their evolving religiosity, participation in religious and spiritual tourism, and broader social attitudes remains largely understudied, as does religiosity's influence on the tourism industry's adaptation to emerging faith-based practices. Generation Z is a key driver of the current and future global tourism market (Uysal 2022). Therefore, understanding how religiosity and travel intersect in this cohort is crucial both for sociological inquiry into contemporary faith and the tourism industry's adaptation to emerging faith-based practices. To contextualize these aims, we review the key concepts of contemporary religiosity and faith-based travel, especially as they pertain to postsecular societies and Generation Z.

### 1.1. Religiosity and Religious Tourism in a Postsecular Era

*Religiosity* refers to a comprehensive sociological framework encompassing beliefs, practices, and symbols associated with a broadly understood God or higher power (Paterson and Francis 2017). It is a fundamental aspect of human identity, shaping self-concept and a sense of community belonging (Van Cappellen et al. 2016), while also fulfilling psychological needs, and potentially reducing perceived uncertainty (Saroglou 2002). The most relevant research on religiosity explores three interconnected dimensions: sense of faith (*believing*), religious identity and commitment to religious values (*belonging*), and participation in religious practices (*behaving*), as proposed by Davie (2006) and Davie and Wilson (2019). This tripartite framework has been widely applied in studies of contemporary religiosity in Europe. For instance, *believing without belonging* characterizes much of Western Europe, where faith coexists with low church attendance, whereas *believing and belonging without behaving* describes patterns in Central and Eastern Europe (Davie 2006), where religious identification remains strong despite inconsistent practices (Cooperman et al. 2017). Some scholars have proposed alternative perspectives, including *unchurching Europe* (Casanova 2006) and *churchless spirituality* (Davie and Wilson 2019). Expanding this debate, the *framework of multiple secularities* emphasizes the strong differentiation of secular and religious spheres beyond institutional structures (Wohlrab-Sahr and Burchardt 2012).

Similarly, the resurgence of religion has been conceptualized as both *de-secularization* and *re-sacralization* (Berger 2014). The *spiritual but not religious* paradigm reflects a growing detachment from institutionalized religion while embracing individualized spirituality (Woodhead and Heelas 2005), suggesting a shift toward alternative meaning-making (Kong 2010). Contemporary societies increasingly embrace spirituality outside institutionalized religion, as seen in the rising popularity of meditation, holistic health, and esoteric traditions (Nilsson and Tesfahuney 2017). The concept of *individualized spirituality* has gained particular prominence among younger generations, who reject rigid dogmas in favor of fluid, personal religious exploration (Ammerman 2013). Habermas (2006) introduced *post-secularism* as a theoretical framework that recognizes the continued relevance of religion in the public sphere despite ongoing secularization. This multidimensional phenomenon not only reshapes religious pluralism and transformation but also marks the re-emergence of religion in public life (Beaumont et al. 2020). *Postsecular religiosity* (Habermas 2006) is increasingly individualized and de-institutionalized. It is shaped by consumer culture and is centered on personal and emotional experiences (Casanova 2006). The *model of choice* has replaced the former *model of duty* (Henkel 2014), reflecting a shift from obligatory religious practice to voluntary, experience-driven engagement. While shifts in religiosity have been well documented, their broader implications for spiritual and religious tourism remain insufficiently explored.

Religious and spiritual tourism are also evolving, shaped by changing participants' expectations and adapting to a dynamic, multifaceted reality (Collins-Kreiner 2010). Rising living standards, increased mobility, and the globalization of consumer societies (Kaufman 2005) have profoundly influenced contemporary travel trends (Liro 2024; Sojkan and Liro 2022). The pressures of modern life—marked by its fast pace, uncertainty, and consumer-driven routines—have contributed to a crisis in traditional practices, prompting individuals to seek experiences that offer deeper personal meaning (Liro et al. 2024; Manalang 2021). Structurally, the boundaries between religious and secular practices are becoming increasingly fluid (Beaumont et al. 2020), fostering more inclusive and diversified visitor experiences (Farias et al. 2019; Liro 2024). Pilgrimage sites and routes—once intended only for devout adherents—have evolved into hybrid spaces (Nilsson and Tesfahuney 2017). In these spaces, meaning is shaped by individual perceptions, past experiences, and personal search for authenticity (Cohen 1979; MacCannell 1973). The growing emphasis on authentic and transformative experiences attracts a diverse range of visitors for faith-related and secular purposes (Belhassen et al. 2008). These shifts align with broader trends in postmodern mobility, where engaging and authentic experiences have become central, emerging as a *megatrend* of contemporary travel (Kong 2010). Consequently, pilgrimage centers are undergoing spatial and functional changes, adapting to the increasing demand for multifaceted complexes (Sojkan and Liro 2022). *Postmodern, postsecular religious tourists* construct personalized experiences reflecting the *experience economy* paradigm, prioritizing immersion and personal fulfillment over traditional religious obligations (Pine and Gilmore 1998). However, these emerging dynamics have not been sufficiently studied (Liro and Meneghello 2025). Given their increasing complexity (Liro 2021, 2024) and social and economic significance, religious and spiritual tourism must be recognized as a multifaceted construct, shaped by postmodern and postsecular approaches (Collins-Kreiner 2019). In this study, religious tourism is defined as travel primarily motivated by faith-related practices such as pilgrimage, prayer, and participation in sacraments (Collins-Kreiner 2010; Raj and Griffin 2017), while spiritual tourism encompasses travel driven by individual search for meaning, well-being, or transcendental experiences outside institutional frameworks (Norman 2011). Recognizing their fluid boundaries, we refer to hybrid travel as a form in which devotional and cultural motives coexist (Timothy and Olsen 2006; Collins-Kreiner

2019). These operational definitions provide conceptual clarity for subsequent analysis and reflect the multidimensionality of postsecular mobilities.

Rather than treating tourism as the primary locus of Generation Z religiosity, this study approaches it as an analytical lens for observing how religiosity is negotiated and expressed in contemporary contexts. Tourism offers a vivid and dynamic arena for capturing transformations in belief and practice, yet it intersects with other domains—including digital environments, activism, and family practices—that also shape the lived experience of faith.

### *1.2. Polish Context: Current Transformations in Religiosity*

Poland remains one of Europe's most religious countries, with a predominantly Roman Catholic population—71.3%, 6.8% as nonbelievers, and 20.6% declined to answer (Statistics Poland 2021). Historically, religion has been closely intertwined with national identity in Poland, as in many Central and Eastern European nations (Bilska-Wodecka 2005; Cooperman et al. 2017). However, recent data indicate a sharp decline in religiosity, particularly among younger generations (Kościelniak et al. 2022). For years, secularization in Poland has been considered slow, estimated to lag 20–40 years behind Western Europe (Bilska-Wodecka 2009; Casanova 2006). However, over the past two decades, this trend has accelerated considerably (Cooperman et al. 2017; CBOS 2021). Catholic affiliation has declined from 96% in 1992 to 71% in 2021, whereas religious practice has declined from 67% to 28.3% (Statistics Poland 2021). These shifts are more pronounced among highly educated and urban populations, where religiosity is lower (Boguszewski et al. 2020). A particularly striking aspect of these shifts is the widening intergenerational gap in religiosity. Over the past three decades, religiosity has remained stable among Baby Boomers, declined slightly among Generation X, dropped markedly among Millennials (Generation Y), and reached its lowest level in Generation Z (Taylor and Keeter 2010). Comparative studies identify Poland as having the largest generational gap, with Generation Z showing the most pronounced decline in religious engagement (Hackett et al. 2018). Younger generations are not only disengaging from religious institutions but are also reshaping the role of spirituality in daily life. Although these trends reflect broader secular and postsecular sociocultural changes, specific factors have accelerated Poland's decline in religiosity. These include a weakening of the intergenerational transmission of religious values, particularly within families, and religious education that young people find unengaging (CBOS 2021; Polok and Szromek 2024). Major societal events have also influenced religious attitudes: the EU accession in 2004 triggered large-scale migration, and the 2005 death of Pope John Paul II—a pivotal religious figure—likely contributed to reduced religious involvement. More recently, public revelations of clerical abuse, political entanglement of church representatives, and tightening abortion laws triggering widespread *women's strikes* (2020–2024) have intensified young disaffection with institutional religion (Jonason et al. 2022). Additionally, the COVID-19 pandemic had a dual impact: initially reinforcing faith for some seeking comfort in crisis (Bentzen 2021) but ultimately accelerating disengagement as restrictions disrupted habitual religious practice, further weakening institutional ties.

Despite these profound transformations, research on the generational dimensions of religiosity remains limited (Hackett et al. 2018). Similarly, the evolving religious and social attitudes of young Polish Catholics have received little empirical attention (Bożewicz 2022; Polok and Szromek 2024). Given the scale of these shifts, further in-depth research is essential to understand how changing religious dynamics intersect with broader transformations. As younger generations disengage from institutional religion, new patterns of mobility and spirituality emerge, challenging traditional models of religious affiliation while redefining faith's role in personal identity, social cohesion, and public discourse. Ex-



amining these processes is crucial for understanding the evolving nature of belief systems in an increasingly secularized and individualized world. Given these broader changes in religious practice and travel, it is crucial to examine the generation at the forefront of these trends: Generation Z.

### 1.3. Generation Z—Digital Natives: Transforming Identity, Faith, and Travel Trends

A generation is a cohort of individuals born and raised within a specific time frame and is shaped by historical, sociocultural, and technological forces (Mannheim 1952). These shared influences shape collective values, worldviews, and identity formation (Twenge et al. 2012). Generation Z (*Gen Z*, *Zoomers*, *iGeneration*) includes individuals born between 1995 and 2007, although its exact temporal boundaries remain debated (Dimock 2019; White 2017). Now entering adulthood, Generation Z follows Millennials and precedes Generation Alpha (Turner 2015). As the first true digital natives, they have been shaped by the pervasive influence of digital technologies, and this generation benefits and drawbacks (Palfrey and Gasser 2008). The key characteristics of Generation Z include the following:

- Digital immersion: growing up in an *always online* environment, Generation Z is deeply embedded in social media and streaming platforms (Twenge et al. 2012), which raises concerns about self-awareness and mental well-being due to constant peer surveillance (Madden et al. 2013).
- Historical imprint: shaped by major global events, including the 9/11 attacks, the 2007–2008 financial crisis, and the COVID-19 pandemic (Tapscott 2009; Turner 2015), which have influenced collective consciousness and risk perception.
- Education and career anxiety: highly educated and pragmatic in career planning, yet increasingly worried about academic performance and job prospects (Adelantado-Renau et al. 2019).
- Mental health vulnerability: more susceptible to anxiety, insomnia, and cognitive disorders, while also demonstrating greater awareness of these issues (Twenge et al. 2019), with a heightened sense of nostalgia potentially linked to digital media consumption and sociopolitical instability (Burrows 2022).
- Progressive engagement and social responsibility: defined by a liberal outlook and active participation in cultural and identity debates (Coyette et al. 2015), Generation Z prioritizes environmental sustainability, ethical consumption (Puiu et al. 2022), and social justice movements focused on inequality and climate change (Tapscott 2009).
- Declining religious affiliation but sustained spiritual openness: the least religiously affiliated generation, yet many embrace non-institutional beliefs, spirituality, and alternative religious expressions (Cox 2022; Manalang 2021). Globally, only 42% consider faith important, whereas 39% view it as irrelevant. Secularization trends are particularly prevalent in Europe (46%), Australasia (50%), and the United States (36%) (Hackett et al. 2018). Digitalization plays a central role in shaping young spiritual experiences, yet it remains underexplored. Social media platforms like YouTube, TikTok, and Instagram increasingly mediate spiritual engagement, providing access to traditional religious content and alternative practices (Campbell and Tsuria 2021). Importantly, these online practices do not remain confined to the digital realm but actively influence offline behaviors, including travel choices. Digital exposure to pilgrimage vlogs, influencer-led retreats, and online faith communities increasingly motivates Generation Z to engage in physical forms of religious and spiritual tourism, illustrating a reciprocal online–offline dynamic (Campbell and Tsuria 2021; Haddouche and Salomone 2018).

Algorithm-driven curation further shapes Generation Z's exposure to spirituality by reinforcing their personalized belief systems. While these mechanisms facilitate the discov-

ery of niche spiritual practices, they also fragment religious discourse, limiting exposure to diverse perspectives (Campbell and Tsuria 2021). Consequently, social media serves as a space for spiritual exploration and a reinforcing system that deepens the individualization of religiosity (Hoover 1997). As a result, Generation Z's spirituality is characterized by a blending of elements from various traditions beyond institutional religious structures while being shaped by algorithmic recommendations (Cheong et al. 2012). Despite declining institutional affiliations, Generation Z's religiosity remains complex, blending personal spirituality, openness to religious diversity, and digital engagement in religious exploration (Cox 2022; Manning 2019). This shift reflects broader sociocultural changes, including the rise of individualized spirituality, growing skepticism toward religious institutions, and the influence of intersectional identities on nontraditional religious meaning (Bergler 2020; Manalang 2021). Although the global population is aging, Generation Z remains the largest cohort, comprising 2.47 billion individuals—32% of the global population (Miller and Lu 2018). They hold approximately 27% of the global purchasing power, with projections indicating that their share of global consumer expenditures will reach 19% by 2030 (NIQ and World Data Lab 2024). As a key demographic in the tourism sector, Generation Z accounts for 23% of global travelers. Increasing financial autonomy and preference for experiences over material goods are reshaping consumption patterns.

Research on Generation Z's tourism behaviors remains limited, with studies primarily addressing sustainable tourism (Puiu et al. 2022), consumer decision-making, and digital marketing's role in travel choices (Haddouche and Salomone 2018). Having grown up with unprecedented digital access to travel and interconnectivity (Bora and Çetin 2023), Generation Z travelers are highly informed, analytical, and pragmatic (Baltescu 2019). They favor independent, self-organized travel, positioning themselves as a *do-it-yourself* generation reliant on digital platforms, peer recommendations, and real-time information. Comfortable in multicultural environments, they prioritize socially engaging and intellectually enriching experiences that foster personal growth and belonging (Haddouche and Salomone 2018). Their travel motivations are driven by a desire for novelty, an escape from consumer-driven corporate life and the pursuit of transformative experiences (Madden et al. 2013). These preferences fuel the demand for cognitive, adventure-based, and culturally immersive travel, where deep engagement with diverse environments shapes their choices (Popşa 2024).

#### 1.4. Generation Z as Spiritual and Religious Tourists: The Research Gap

While the motivations of spiritual and religious tourism are well documented, research specifically focused on Generation Z remains scarce. Their participation in these forms of travel is poorly understood, despite their growing economic influence and impact on global tourism trends. As religiosity evolves—shaped by secularization, individualized spirituality, and emerging religious expressions—understanding its influence on Generation Z's engagement with faith-based travel becomes increasingly urgent. Although studies have explored faith-based tourism as an alternative travel experience (Bora and Çetin 2023), its psychological and social benefits (Wu et al. 2023), consumer-driven aspects (Puiu et al. 2022), and the role of social values in participation (García-del Junco et al. 2021), research on Generation Z remains limited.

Recent studies have suggested that Generation Z engages in religious tourism not only for spiritual reasons but also for cultural and social identity formation (García-del Junco et al. 2021). Despite declining institutional religiosity, faith tourism remains relevant, reflecting fluid and selective religious engagement in postsecular societies (Bora and Çetin 2023). Studies on Generation Z's broader travel behaviors further emphasize their preference for experiential, independent, and digitally mediated tourism (Popşa 2024). Amid sociocultural

shifts and changing religiosity in Poland, the lack of empirical research on this cohort presents a critical gap. As one of the most dynamic and largest generational cohorts, Generation Z is redefining religious and spiritual tourism by integrating digital engagement and alternative meaning-seeking practices.

Here, we address this gap in understanding Generation Z, a cohort that is increasingly shaping contemporary shifts in religiosity and the global tourism market by examining how components of religiosity, patterns of religious and spiritual tourism, and social attitudes among young adults intersect in a postmodern, postsecular context.

Our research aims to:

- a Define the characteristics and changes of religiosity components (*believing, belonging, and behaving*, using Davie’s 2006) analytical framework,
- b Identify key attributes of religious and spiritual tourism participation
- c Analyse social attitudes toward religiosity
- d Examine interrelations between religiosity components, religious and spiritual tourism participation, and social attitudes
- e Explore variations in these relationships across sociodemographic factors, within broader context of sociocultural shifts.

Findings contribute to theoretical perspectives on contemporary religiosity and religious tourism among young adults, while offering practical insights for religious institutions, the tourism industry, and policymakers navigating the evolving faith-based travel dynamics within the realities of postsecularism and postmodernism.

## 2. Results

The sample included 510 respondents aged 18–29, with a majority identifying as women (Table 1). Most resided in either large cities or rural areas (Table 1). The study’s focus on Generation Z, education, occupation, and economic status was not explored in detail. Most respondents reported a moderate or strong national identity. About half of the respondents viewed recent secular/postsecular changes in Poland as significant, whereas a small minority disagreed, and the remainder were undecided or did not respond.

**Table 1.** Sociodemographic characteristics of respondents ( $n = 510$ ).

Demographics	%
<b>Religious affiliation</b>	
Roman Catholicism	78.8
atheism/agnosticism/nonaffiliated	13.5
other/no response	7.7
<b>Education</b>	
primary	26.1
secondary	42.0
technical/professional	7.8
university	22.5
other	0.8
no response	0.8
<b>Place of residence</b>	
village	32.2
Small town (<10,000)	9.2
City (10,000–100,000)	19.0
City (100,000–500,000)	8.6
City (>500,000)	30.2
no response	0.8

Table 1. Cont.

Demographics	%
<b>Employment status</b>	
pupil	34.5
student	37.3
employed	23.5
unemployed	1.2
homemaker	1.0
retired	0.2
other	1.0
no response	1.3
<b>Economic status *</b>	
higher income	48.0
lower income	11.2
no response	40.8

Note \*: Economic status is based on the average monthly salary in Poland PLN 5200 (Statistics Poland 2024).

### 2.1. Components of Religiosity and Temporal Change

We first examined respondents' religiosity across dimensions of believing, belonging, and behaving. The component of faith in God or a higher power showed a tendency toward stronger belief, while religious identity, commitment to traditional values, and religious practices revealed broad and polarized distributions—reflecting both deep conviction and disaffiliation. Approximately half of the respondents reported changes in each religiosity component over the past decade. The prevailing pattern was a decline in belief, identity, values, and religious practice, although a smaller group reported intensified engagement. A significant minority perceived no change, while others found it difficult to define the evolution of their religiosity. These results confirm the generational shift away from institutional religiosity. However, the observed polarization suggests not a uniform decline but rather a reconfiguration of faith across two divergent paths.

### 2.2. Associations Between Sociodemographic Characteristics and Religious Components

Women reported higher participation in religious activities (Table 2). No other significant gender differences emerged.

Table 2. Gender differences in religiosity components: Mann–Whitney U test.

Component	Women (n = 291)		Men (n = 210)		U	Z	p	r
	M	SD	M	SD				
a. belief in God/higher powers	6.57	2.71	6.10	2.94	28,021.5	−1.60	0.110	0.07
b <sub>1</sub> . religious identity	6.03	2.96	5.61	3.05	27,756.5	−1.49	0.136	0.07
b <sub>2</sub> . commitment to traditional religious values	6.54	2.64	6.33	2.66	29,004.0	−0.98	0.328	0.04
c. participation in religious practices	5.85	2.91	5.23	3.04	26,825.5	−2.26	0.024	0.10

Note: M = mean; SD = standard deviation; U = Mann–Whitney U test; Z = standardized test statistic; p = significance level; r = effect size.  $\alpha = 0.05$ .

Religiosity was generally lower among respondents with higher education levels or urban residences. In contrast, national identity and Catholic affiliation were strongly associated with higher levels of belief, belonging, and practice (Tables 3 and 4). No statistically significant relationships were found with age, economic status, or employment status, likely due to the narrow age range.



**Table 3.** Spearman’s correlation between education, residence, national identity, and religiosity.

Component	Education	Place of Residence	Sense of National Identity
a. belief in God/higher power	−0.04	−0.15 **	0.30 ***
b <sub>1</sub> . religious identity	−0.05	−0.10 *	0.35 ***
b <sub>2</sub> . commitment to traditional religious values	−0.09 *	−0.16 ***	0.33 ***
c. participation in religious practices	−0.13 **	−0.16 ***	0.33 ***

Note: \*  $p < 0.05$ ; \*\*  $p < 0.01$ ; \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$ .

**Table 4.** Religious affiliation and religiosity components: Mann–Whitney  $U$  test.

Component	Roman Catholics (n = 399)		Nonaffiliated (n = 69)		$U$	$Z$	$p$	$r$
	$M$	$SD$	$M$	$SD$				
a. belief in God/higher power	7.15	2.36	3.10	2.36	3519.5	−9.99	<0.001	0.46
b <sub>1</sub> . religious identity	6.68	2.62	2.06	1.62	2189.5	−11.22	<0.001	0.52
b <sub>2</sub> . commitment to traditional religious values	7.07	2.27	3.52	2.52	4418.5	−9.12	<0.001	0.42
c. participation in religious practices	6.38	2.62	2.06	1.54	2603.5	−10.75	<0.001	0.50

Note:  $M$  = mean;  $SD$  = standard deviation;  $U$  = Mann–Whitney  $U$  test;  $Z$  = standardized test statistic;  $p$  = significance level;  $r$  = effect size.  $\alpha = 0.05$ .

### 2.3. Patterns and Determinants of Religious and Spiritual Tourism

Approximately 40% of the respondents had engaged in religious tourism, whereas participation in spiritual tourism was somewhat lower. The majority had not participated in either event, and a minority remained uncertain. In the past year (2023), 43% had engaged in either form. The most common travel companions were friends and family (34.9%) and religiously organized groups (32.1%), whereas individual travel (8.3%) and secular organized tours (7.3%) were less frequent. These trends suggest that while Generation Z increasingly distances itself from institutional religion, spiritual engagement often takes the form of non-organized, personal practices that fall outside conventional tourism categories.

### 2.4. Perception of the Visited Place

Respondents’ perceptions of the sites reflected a broad spectrum of meanings. The most common associations were religious—such as prayer and connection with God (73.9%) and pilgrimage (52.8%)—followed by personal and emotional dimensions, including growth and serenity (39.9%). At the same time, many participants recognized cultural and recreational value, identifying sites as tourist attractions (36.2%), architectural landmarks (31.7%), and heritage sites (29.8%). Social aspects were also salient: nearly 29% described the places as spaces for bonding with family and friends, while 27.5% linked them to leisure. Notably, over one-fourth of the respondents highlighted their historical or patriotic significance.

### 2.5. Motivations for Religious and Spiritual Tourism

Travel motivation focuses on bonding, self-development, and reflection—showing how faith-based trips meet social and personal needs beyond doctrine. The most salient motivations emphasized interpersonal and experiential dimensions—such as bonding with family and friends, cognitive exploration, personal development, and spiritual reflection—indicating that faith-based travel fulfills both social and introspective functions.

### 2.6. Sociodemographic Correlates of Religious and Spiritual Tourism

Older respondents were more likely to engage in spiritual tourism than younger or undecided peers (Table 5). Religious affiliation was a significant factor for religious tourism participation (Roman Catholics more likely to engage), but it had no significant effect on spiritual tourism participation (Table 5).

**Table 5.** Religious affiliation and participation in religious tourism:  $\chi^2$  tests.

	Roman Catholics (n = 399)	Nonaffiliated (n = 69)	
yes	177 (44.4%)	13 (18.8%)	$\chi^2(2) = 16.29$
no	210 (52.6%)	54 (78.3%)	$p < 0.001$
I don't know	12 (3.0%)	2 (2.9%)	$V = 0.19$

Note:  $\chi^2$  = chi-square test statistic;  $V$  = Cramér's  $V$  (effect size).

Higher education was linked with greater involvement in spiritual tourism, but not religious tourism (Table 6). Religious tourism was also linked to stronger national identity, but it was not associated with residence or economic status (Table 6).

**Table 6.** Educational level and participation in spiritual tourism: Kruskal–Wallis and Dunn Sidak Post hoc tests.

	Primary	Secondary	Technical/Professional	University	
yes	8 (13.1%)	34 (30.9%)	9 (69.2%)	18 (32.7%)	$H(2) = 6.57$
no	43 (70.5%)	71 (64.5%)	4 (30.8%)	34 (61.8%)	$p = 0.037$
I don't know	10 (16.4%)	5 (4.5%)	0	3 (5.5%)	

## 2.7. Interdependencies of the Studied Attributes of Generation Z

### 2.7.1. Religiosity and Social Attitudes

The strongest correlation was found between religiosity and national identity (Table 7). Devout youth expressed stronger support for institutional religion and greater skepticism toward individualized or declining faith. Interestingly, support for moral engagement outpaced support for direct political involvement, even among the devout—suggesting selective public religiosity. These correlations highlight contrasting orientations: institutional attachment and individualized religiosity.

**Table 7.** Components of religiosity and the identification with social attitudes based on Spearman's rank correlations ( $\rho$ ) (Likert scale rating 1: *strongly disagree*, 5: *strongly agree*).

Social Attitudes	a. Belief in God/Higher Power	b1. Religious Identity	b2. Commitment to Traditional Religious Values	c. Participation in Religious Practices
i. Faith and religious identity are not strongly correlated	−0.13 **	−0.24 ***	−0.18 ***	−0.21 ***
ii. Faith does not require alignment with institutional practices	−0.05	−0.14 **	−0.09 *	−0.19 ***
iii. Personal beliefs and freedom of choice are central to religiosity	−0.16 ***	−0.21 ***	−0.15 ***	−0.17 ***
iv. My faith is a personal choice rather than a result of family upbringing	−0.15 ***	−0.19 ***	−0.23 ***	−0.21 ***
v. My faith has significantly declined in recent years	−0.43 ***	−0.43 ***	−0.23 ***	−0.42 ***
vi. Religious institutions must address moral and social issues publicly	0.31 ***	0.33 ***	0.28 ***	0.33 ***
vii. Religious institutions should also engage in political discourse	0.16 ***	0.21 ***	0.13 **	0.22 ***
viii. Church involvement in public life strengthens faith and religious identity	0.35 ***	0.39 ***	0.32 ***	0.35 ***
ix. Church involvement strengthens national identity	0.31 ***	0.37 ***	0.35 ***	0.37 ***
x. Catholicism is central to Polish national identity	0.46 ***	0.48 ***	0.43 ***	0.42 ***

Note:  $0.05 < p < 0.1$ ; \*  $p < 0.05$ ; \*\*  $p < 0.01$ ; \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$ . Correlation strength:  $<0.1$  = slight;  $0.1$ – $0.3$  = weak;  $0.3$ – $0.5$  = moderately strong; significant are marked in color.

### 2.7.2. Components of Religiosity and Religious and Spiritual Tourism

Faith-based travelers—religious or spiritual—show significantly higher religiosity than non-travelers, suggesting that both forms of tourism act as expressions of religious engagement, albeit through different pathways (Table 8). Religious tourism aligned with institutional affiliation and communal identity, whereas spiritual tourism reflects personal

meaning-making and experiential practice—marking a divergent between collective and individualized expressions of faith. This distinction highlights diverging patterns of religious engagement among the younger generations, where religious tourism reinforces institutional belonging, while spiritual tourism reflects a shift toward personal spiritual exploration within a postsecular context.

**Table 8.** Religious components among participants in religious and spiritual tourism: Mann–Whitney *U* test.

	Religious Tourism								Spiritual Tourism							
	Yes (n = 202)		No (n = 291)		<i>U</i>	<i>Z</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>r</i>	Yes (n = 69)		No (n = 155)		<i>U</i>	<i>Z</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>r</i>
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>					<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>				
a. belief in God /higher power	7.40	2.60	5.59	2.79	18,305.5	−7.18	<0.001	0.32	7.83	2.41	5.70	2.88	2976.0	−5.34	<0.001	0.36
b <sub>1</sub> . religious identity	7.16	2.78	4.86	2.84	16,066.0	−8.49	<0.001	0.38	7.32	2.72	5.03	2.81	2844.5	−5.45	<0.001	0.37
b <sub>2</sub> . commitment to traditional religious values	7.27	2.39	5.81	2.72	20,040.5	−6.06	<0.001	0.27	7.22	2.42	6.09	2.73	3968.0	−3.11	0.002	0.21
c. participation in religious practices	6.79	2.64	4.67	2.93	17,358.5	−7.74	<0.001	0.35	6.81	2.65	4.64	3.13	3303.0	−4.61	<0.001	0.31

Note: *M* = mean; *SD* = standard deviation; *U* = Mann–Whitney *U* test; *Z* = standardized test statistic; *p* = significance level; *r* = effect size.  $\alpha = 0.05$ .

### 2.7.3. Religious and Spiritual Tourism and Social Attitudes

Religious tourism correlates with stronger institutional attachment, whereas spiritual tourism correlates with greater acceptance of religious decline and preference for personal belief systems (Table 9). This alignment with institutional religiosity reinforces religious identity as integral to national and public life. In contrast, spiritual tourism participants prioritized personal beliefs and freedom of choice but showed lower support for institutional involvement in political discourse (Table 9). Their greater acceptance of religious decline suggests that spiritual tourism appeals to those with fluid or evolving religious identities rather than those with firm institutional ties. These divergences underscore the emergence of distinct yet interrelated forms of religiosity: structured faith continues to provide collective identity and stability, whereas individualized spirituality meets the growing demand for autonomy and self-definition within belief systems.

**Table 9.** Participation in religious and spiritual tourism and social attitudes: Mann–Whitney *U* test.

	Religious Tourism								Spiritual Tourism							
	Yes (n = 200)		No (n = 290)		<i>U</i>	<i>Z</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>r</i>	Yes (n = 69)		No (n = 155)		<i>U</i>	<i>Z</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>r</i>
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>					<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>				
i. Faith and religious identity are not strongly correlated	3.19	1.16	3.50	1.17	24,930.5	−2.72	0.006	0.12	3.39	1.11	3.51	1.14	4994.0	−0.82	0.415	0.05
ii. Faith does not require alignment with institutional practices	3.37	1.26	3.54	1.32	26,619.0	−1.59	0.112	0.07	3.48	1.18	3.67	1.23	4768.5	−1.34	0.181	0.09
iii. Personal beliefs and freedom of choice are central to religiosity	3.63	1.21	4.09	1.15	22,026.5	−4.76	<0.001	0.22	3.75	1.21	4.11	1.03	4479.5	−2.05	0.040	0.14
iv. My faith is a personal choice rather than a result of family upbringing	2.18	1.35	2.51	1.43	25,143.0	−2.55	0.011	0.12	2.01	1.32	2.17	1.41	5064.5	−0.68	0.496	0.05
v. My faith has significantly declined in recent years	2.31	1.48	3.01	1.51	20,957.0	−5.29	<0.001	0.24	2.09	1.42	3.28	1.53	3032.0	−5.19	<0.001	0.35
vi. Religious institutions must address moral and social issues publicly	3.33	1.33	2.44	1.32	18,585.0	−6.92	<0.001	0.31	2.99	1.43	2.90	1.33	5177.5	−0.39	0.698	0.03
vii. Religious institutions should also engage in political discourse	2.48	1.33	2.05	1.27	23,385.5	−3.77	<0.001	0.17	2.25	1.22	1.85	1.20	4182.5	−2.83	0.005	0.19

Table 9. Cont.

	Religious Tourism								Spiritual Tourism							
	Yes (n = 200)				No (n = 290)				Yes (n = 69)				No (n = 155)			
	M	SD	M	SD	U	Z	p	r	M	SD	M	SD	U	Z	p	r
viii. Church involvement in public life strengthens faith and religious identity	3.06	1.26	2.38	1.22	20,361.5	−5.70	<0.001	0.26	2.75	1.33	2.68	1.27	5205.5	−0.33	0.745	0.02
ix. Church involvement strengthens national identity	2.85	1.22	2.33	1.22	22,163.0	−4.52	<0.001	0.20	2.54	1.26	2.32	1.13	4863.5	−1.12	0.263	0.07
x. Catholicism is central to Polish national identity	3.56	1.29	2.81	1.34	13,147.5	−5.50	<0.001	0.28	3.16	1.38	2.95	1.39	4901.5	−1.02	0.308	0.07

Note: M = mean; SD = standard deviation; U = Mann–Whitney U test; Z = standardized test statistic; p = significance level; r = effect size.  $\alpha = 0.05$ .

### 3. Discussion

#### 3.1. Patterns of Religiosity Among Generation Z

The findings highlight substantial variability in Generation Z's religiosity, encompassing belief, identity, commitment to traditional values, and religious practice (Davie 2006). While faith remains prevalent, its intensity is fluid, with many respondents indicating a decline over the past decade. This trend aligns with broader European patterns of religious deinstitutionalization and individualization (Wohlrab-Sahr and Burchardt 2012) and is particularly evident in Poland (Cooperman et al. 2017; Statistics Poland 2021). The decline is most pronounced among Generation Z (Hackett et al. 2018; Liro et al. 2024), where religiosity exhibits strong polarization, with respondents clustering at both ends of the spectrum. These findings highlight the dynamic, context-sensitive nature of Generation Z's religiosity (Ammerman 2013), which is shaped by personal experiences and broader societal transformations (Haddouche and Salomone 2018).

#### 3.2. Religiosity, National Identity, and Social Attitudes

Despite advancing secularization, religion in Poland remains central to national identity and public discourse (Grzymała-Busse 2019; Mariański 2006). The findings reinforce the argument that religious influence persists in the social and political spheres, even as institutional participation declines (Cooperman et al. 2017). Religious affiliation continues to be a strong determinant of individual religiosity, with Roman Catholics exhibiting significantly higher levels of engagement than those without religion affiliation. These findings highlight how institutional religious membership remains pivotal in shaping social and cultural identity, reinforcing religion's role in both personal belief systems and broader public life. While secularization reduces institutional participation, the continued presence of religious affiliation reflects its deep-rooted connection to national and social identities. This persistence suggests that secularization does not necessarily diminish religion's role in shaping national identities but rather transforms its modes of expression (Jonason et al. 2022). Instead of eroding, faith is increasingly individualized yet socially embedded, reflecting its adaptability in shaping collective identity (Ziebertz and Riegel 2012) and being continuously negotiated in response to shifting cultural and political conditions (Casanova 2011).

This transformation aligns with Berger's (2014) postsecular assertion that secularization does not erase religion but reshapes it within pluralistic societies. Dobbelaere's (1981) differentiation between societal, organizational, and individual secularization further explains how macro-level secularization can coexist with religion's sustained role in national identity formation. In post-socialist Europe, secularization follows distinct trajectories, often preserving religion as a politically and culturally significant force rather than causing a uniform decline (Müller 2011). In Poland, religion remains deeply entangled with state policies and public life, reinforcing its influence across multiple spheres (Bilska-Wodecka

2009). Beyond institutional structures, Polish religiosity is increasingly cultural and ritualistic, shaped more by identity and tradition than by doctrinal belief. This aligns with contemporary transformations in religious practice (Hervieu-Léger 2000), where religion's resilience stems from its capacity for adaptation, which is continuously reshaped through individual agency and sociopolitical change. In Poland, religious identity is not only a personal or cultural phenomenon but also a key factor in political discourse, shaping policy debates and electoral dynamics (Grzymała-Busse 2019). Beyond the Polish case, our findings resonate with broader trends showing that religiosity among Generation Z is not confined to tourism experiences. Rather, it is continuously negotiated across multiple domains of everyday life. Digital environments—such as social media platforms, religious apps, and online communities—provide new arenas for expressing and reinterpreting faith (Campbell and Tsuria 2021). Similarly, activism related to ecological concerns, social justice, or humanitarian engagement often becomes a channel through which young people articulate spiritual and moral commitments (Beaumont et al. 2020; Nilsson and Tesfahuney 2017). Family practices, including shared rituals, devotions, and intergenerational transmission of values, also shape the ways in which religiosity is lived and experienced (Ziebertz and Riegel 2012). Situating faith-related tourism within this wider spectrum of practices allows for a more nuanced understanding of how Generation Z navigates the interplay of religion, spirituality, and contemporary culture.

While this paper has focused on Poland as a single case study, this choice was intentional. Poland is one of the most religious societies in Europe but is also undergoing rapid processes of secularization, hybridization, and generational change (Davie 2006; Casanova 2011). This makes it a particularly instructive context for exploring how Generation Z negotiates religiosity within a postsecular framework. At the same time, we acknowledge that questions of generalizability require further comparative analysis. Evidence from other European contexts, such as Spain, Ireland, and Czechia, points to both convergences—such as generational shifts toward individualized spirituality—and divergences shaped by distinct historical and cultural trajectories (Hervieu-Léger 2000; Tomka 2011). Future research, including our ongoing projects (2025–2026), will extend this study to multiple European contexts, thereby situating the Polish case more explicitly within a broader postsecular European framework.

### 3.3. From Institutionalized Religion to Individualized Spirituality

Notably, postsecular shifts are most pronounced at the individual level, particularly Generation Z. This shift marks a departure from institutional affiliation toward experiential and individualized spirituality. Poland exemplifies cultural secularization, where religion loses institutional authority yet retains symbolic and moral significance within public discourse. Wohlrab-Sahr and Burchardt's (2012) theory of multiple secularities highlights that secularization is neither linear nor uniform but rather context-dependent. These dynamics are particularly evident in Poland, where generational differences in religiosity are among the most pronounced in Europe (Hackett et al. 2018; CBOS 2021). Similar to Spain and Ireland, which have undergone rapid institutional secularization, Poland exhibits a widening generational gap, especially regarding religious practices and church identification. This divergence echoes earlier findings: some young adults disengage, whereas others engage in a personalized, hybrid faith (Cheong et al. 2012).

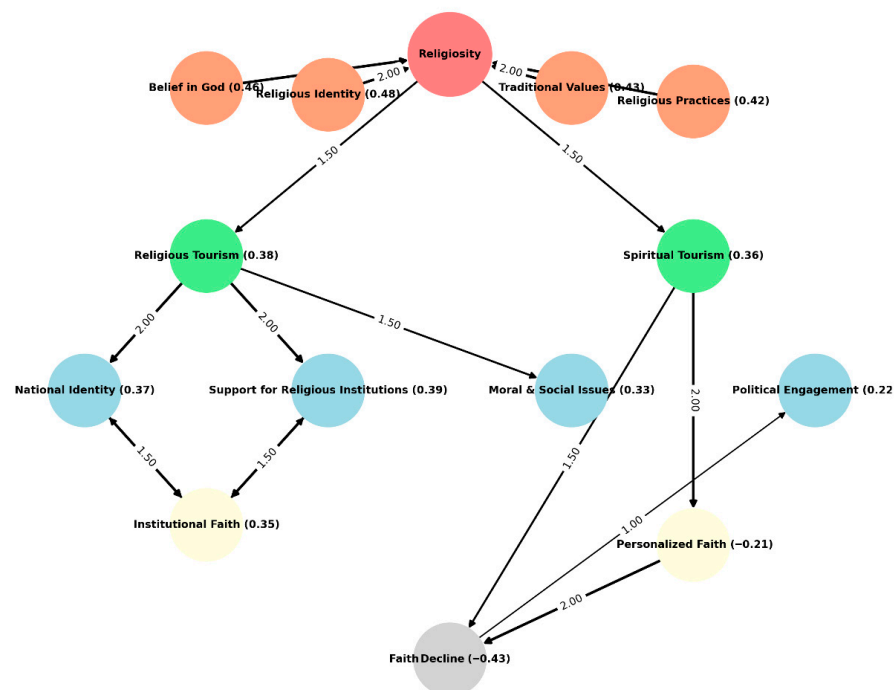
These dynamics position Poland within a broader global trend in which Generation Z either disengages from institutional religion or selectively integrates religious and spiritual elements beyond traditional frameworks. While younger cohorts in Latin America and Africa exhibit sustained or growing religiosity, Generation Z in Poland follows the Western European trajectory of religious disengagement (Davie and Wilson 2019). However,



rather than abandoning faith entirely, some individuals reconfigure their spirituality, often aligning with the *spiritual but not religious* model (Woodhead and Heelas 2005).

### 3.4. Religious Engagement, Tourism, and Social Attitudes: Institutional and Personalized Faith in Motion

Building on the empirical findings, we propose a conceptual model illustrating the interdependencies between religiosity, religious and spiritual tourism, and social attitudes among Generation Z (Figure 1). Following Davie’s framework (Davie 2006; Davie and Wilson 2019), religiosity is conceptualized as a multidimensional construct encompassing *believing* (faith), *belonging* (identity and values), and *behaving* (religious practices). Although the correlation coefficients are modest ( $r = 0.3\text{--}0.4$ ), they are statistically significant and point to meaningful associations between these components and social attitudes. These results suggest that religiosity functions as a cohesive force that reinforces institutional affiliation and national identity. Institutionalized and personalized faith mediate these relationships, shaping distinct trajectories in religious and social identity formation. These dynamics warrant deeper reflection on how tourism mediates between institutional and personalized religiosity—particularly among younger cohorts navigating pluralistic belief landscapes.



**Figure 1.** Conceptual framework of religiosity, religious and spiritual tourism, and social attitudes among Generation Z in the postsecular era. Note: Arrows illustrate statistically significant correlations between variables. Line thickness reflects the relative strength of association (see Tables 7–9). Color coding: coral (core religiosity), orange (its components), green (religious/spiritual tourism), blue (social attitudes), yellow (institutional/personalized faith), gray (faith decline).

The model offers a novel perspective on the role of religious and spiritual tourism in post-secular transformations, identifying two interconnected forms of mobility shaped by religiosity. Religious tourism emerges as a vehicle for reinforcing institutional faith—immersing young participants in communal rituals that bolster both their religious engagement and their ties to national identity—whereas spiritual tourism encourages a more individualized faith, marked by weaker institutional bonds and a greater likelihood of waning religious commitment.

Although prior research has documented the decline of institutional religiosity (Cooperman et al. 2017; Statistics Poland 2021), our model—grounded in empirical data—illustrates how institutional and personalized forms of faith coexist within Generation Z,

reinforcing postsecular perspectives that see religiosity not as disappearing but as diversifying. This shift reflects a move away from rigid institutional structures toward hybrid, individualized belief systems (Gökarkınel 2009). Moreover, it positions tourism as a central mechanism in shaping contemporary religious engagement, capturing broader societal transformations within the postsecular landscape.

### 3.5. Religious and Spiritual Tourism as a Postsecular Experience

Religious and spiritual tourism offer valuable insights into contemporary transformations in religiosity. A substantial segment of Generation Z engages in faith-related travel, with participation in religious tourism notably more common than in spiritual tourism—suggesting that such trips serve not only devotional purposes but also broader social, cultural, and personal functions (consistent with previous studies; Liro 2018, 2021, 2024). This aligns with a global *megatrend* in tourism (Kong 2010), where experience-driven travel has become central to personal meaning-making. In postsecular societies, religious tourism is increasingly diverse, serving not only as an act of devotion but also as a space for spiritual exploration and identity negotiation (Nilsson and Tesfahuney 2017). The growing individualization of religiosity amplifies this trend, as travel itself becomes a spiritual practice, with destinations acquiring symbolic and transcendental significance beyond the traditional religious context (Collins-Kreiner 2010). For some, religious tourism substitutes for traditional religious practices, whereas for others, it complements institutional faith (Wu et al. 2023). These dual dynamics position religious and spiritual tourism as transformative spaces where continuity and change intersect (Collins-Kreiner 2019), mirroring broader evolutions in faith, identity, and contemporary mobilities (Liro and Meneghello 2025).

### 3.6. Faith in the Digital Age: Generation Z, Religious Engagement, and Mobility

An increasingly significant dimension of religiosity among Generation Z is its deep integration with digital environments. As the first generation of digital natives (Prensky 2001), Generation Z engages with faith in highly visual, interactive, and short-form narratives, fostering the rise of religious influencers and spiritual content on social media (Golan and Martini 2022). This interconnection highlights a two-way relationship: online religious engagement shapes offline travel motivations, while embodied travel experiences are subsequently shared and reinterpreted online, feeding back into digital religious cultures (Cheong et al. 2012; Golan and Martini 2022). Such reciprocal dynamics suggest that digital religion is not a parallel sphere but an integral driver of contemporary faith-based mobility (Campbell and Tsuria 2021). However, technology does not merely disseminate religious messages—it reconfigures how spirituality is defined, shifting the focus from institutional doctrines to experiential and self-directed faith. Digital platforms have become central to religious engagement, offering interactive spaces where belief systems are continuously shaped and negotiated. These platforms function both as alternative spiritual spaces and as catalysts for real-world religious participation, illustrating the fluidity of contemporary religiosity (Campbell and Tsuria 2021). For Generation Z, religious and spiritual tourism extends digital engagement into physical experiences, as online religious communities, pilgrimage vlogs, and influencer-led retreats shape faith perceptions and inspire direct participation. This online offline convergence exemplifies the broader transformation of belief and belonging in the digital age (Hackett et al. 2018).

## 4. Materials and Methods

To achieve these objectives, we employed a combination of survey research and statistical analysis. Trained interviewers conducted the survey between May and September 2023. Primary data were collected through a questionnaire that targeted individuals

born between 1995 and 2007 and classified as Generation Z young adults. The final sample consisted of 510 valid responses, and the sociodemographic characteristics are summarized in Table 1. Participation was voluntary and respondents were selected through random sampling. The questionnaire was theory-driven and author-designed, informed by Davie's tripartite framework of religiosity (believing, belonging, behaving) and established distinctions between religious and spiritual tourism. It consisted of four sections and 15 items (Supplementary Material), Polish original; an English translation is provided).

Section S1 assessed personal religiosity through four independent indicators, each measured on a 10-point scale (1 = not at all, 10 = very strong). Believing was operationalised as faith in God or a higher power (Q1) and commitment to traditional religious values (Q3). Belonging referred to the declared importance of religious identity (Q2), while behaving captured the frequency of religious practices such as prayer or participation in sacraments (Q4). As each construct was measured by a single item, no composite subscales were constructed, and internal consistency (Cronbach's  $\alpha$ ) and factor analysis were not applicable.

Section S2 examined participation in religious and spiritual tourism, both clearly defined within the questionnaire to ensure consistent understanding. Religious tourism referred to institutional forms of activity (e.g., pilgrimages, shrine visits, prayer, sacraments), whereas spiritual tourism captured non-institutional and individualised experiences (e.g., meditation retreats, sacred landscapes, wellness activities). Respondents who reported participation in either form of travel answered additional questions on frequency, motivation, and satisfaction. Responses were coded categorically and, where relevant, dichotomised (0 = non-participant, 1 = participant) for nonparametric testing.

Section S3 included ten independent social-attitude items (e.g., tolerance, civic engagement, views on tradition and change) measured on 5-point Likert-type scales (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree) and analysed as separate dependent variables. Section S4 collected sociodemographic information (age, gender, education, and place of residence). The questionnaire combined 10-point interval and 5-point Likert-type scales; therefore, mean values exceeding 5 reported in Table 2 correspond to the 10-point measures. Data were analysed using IBM SPSS Statistics 25, applying descriptive statistics, frequency analysis, Mann–Whitney U, Kruskal–Wallis with Dunn–Šidák post hoc correction,  $\chi^2$  and Fisher's exact tests, with a significance level of  $\alpha = 0.05$ . Bivariate relationships between ordinal variables were estimated using Spearman's rank correlation ( $\rho$ ). These methods enabled us to (1) identify interdependencies among variables, (2) explore sociodemographic differences, and (3) develop a conceptual model of religious and spiritual tourism within Generation Z's faith trajectories.

## 5. Conclusions

This study explored Generation Z's religiosity in a postsecular context, revealing a dual trend: weakening institutional ties and evolving spiritual engagement. Taken together, these findings lead to three conclusions. First, religiosity among Generation Z is not disappearing but is evolving into new hybrid forms. Second, religious and spiritual tourism are important arenas through which these transformations become visible. Third, the intersection of digital technologies, mobility, and postsecular pluralism requires new strategies for the religious and tourism sectors. As younger generations reshape their religious experience through mobility and digital engagement, the future of faith lies in personalized, reflective, and socially embedded practices.

In this postsecular context, our findings show that Generation Z's engagement with religion is not disappearing but rather evolving into new hybrid forms that blend traditional faith with individualized spirituality. Digital platforms and religious tourism not only reflect

sociocultural transformations but also actively create alternative spiritual spaces—illustrating how declining institutional affiliation drives personalized faith exploration and collective meaning-making through travel. Religious tourism, through its hybrid formats and growing accessibility, actively shapes new spiritual expressions that blend ritual, heritage, and personal reflection. The findings call for adaptive strategies across the religious and tourism sectors, as they confront shifting patterns of belief and practice—balancing heritage preservation with the evolving spiritual needs and experiential expectations of younger generations. Younger travelers increasingly prioritize personalized, reflective spiritual experiences, shifting their focus from doctrinal religious sites to spaces that facilitate self-exploration and meaning making. In practice, these findings suggest several adaptive strategies for religious and tourism institutions. Pilgrimage centers could foster hybrid forms of engagement that combine on-site participation with digital interaction, for example through live-streaming, mobile applications, and social media storytelling. The culture and heritage managers could promote inclusive programs that resonate with both secular and spiritual visitors, encouraging intergenerational dialogue and cultural participation. Furthermore, cultural and tourism authorities should integrate heritage interpretation with experiential learning, aligning religious traditions with contemporary values such as sustainability, social justice, and intercultural dialogue. Such initiatives would provide concrete pathways for institutions to remain relevant to younger generations while preserving the richness of religious heritage in today's societies.

Despite its contributions, this study has certain limitations. Reliance on self-reported data introduces potential biases related to social desirability and retrospective recall. Additionally, its cross-sectional nature limits the ability to capture long-term changes in religious engagement. Future research should explore longitudinal shifts in religiosity and the evolving relationship between digital religious practices and traditional faith expressions. Comparative studies could determine whether the observed patterns reflect broader European trends or distinct national transformations. Future research could also extend beyond demand-side perspectives to examine how tourism supply adapts to changing forms of religious and spiritual travel. This includes analyzing geographical patterns of such tourism, conducting comparative studies with neighboring European countries and Latin American contexts. Such perspectives would further situate the Polish case within broader global transformations of postsecular religiosity and tourism. Further investigation into religious tourism as a postsecular experience may provide deeper insights into how travel shapes contemporary religious identities. Alongside clear declines in institutional affiliation, religiosity among a subset of young people is being reconfigured through mobility, digital engagement, and hybrid spiritual practices, warranting continued interdisciplinary inquiry into its evolving forms.

**Supplementary Materials:** The following supporting information can be downloaded at: <https://www.mdpi.com/article/10.3390/rel16101325/s1>.

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**Institutional Review Board Statement:** The research was conducted exclusively on fully anonymous survey material, which did not contain any identifiers or information that could allow the recognition of individual participants. The dataset was analyzed only in an aggregated form, without storing or processing any individual-level records. In accordance with the Declaration of Helsinki (1975, revised 2013), formal ethics approval is required only for research that involves human subjects or identifiable personal data in a way that could raise ethical or privacy concerns. Since this study was based entirely on anonymous, non-identifiable data, it does not fall under this requirement. Furthermore, in line with the EU General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR, Regulation (EU) 2016/679) and the Polish legal framework, anonymous data that cannot be traced back to individual persons are not considered personal data and therefore do not require ethical clearance. At the Jagiellonian University, research based solely on anonymous data is exempt from the requirement of Ethics Committee approval, as confirmed through internal institutional consultation on research ethics.

**Informed Consent Statement:** The study described in the manuscript did not involve the collection of any personal, sensitive, or identifiable data. Participation in the survey was entirely anonymous, voluntary, and non-traceable. Respondents were informed about the purpose of the study, the anonymity of their responses, and their right to withdraw at any point. In this type of survey-based research, written informed consent is not required under the Declaration of Helsinki (1975, revised 2013), the EU General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR, Regulation (EU) 2016/679), nor under Polish law and the regulations of the Jagiellonian University. Instead, implied consent was obtained: participants expressed their agreement to participate by voluntarily completing the questionnaire after reading the study information. This procedure is standard practice for anonymous questionnaire research. For this reason, no signed consent forms exist, and a blank consent form cannot be provided. However, We can confirm that all participants provided their informed and voluntary consent through participation, consistent with both international and institutional ethical standards.

**Data Availability Statement:** The data supporting the findings of this study are not publicly available, as extended research based on this dataset is currently ongoing and the results have not yet been published.

**Conflicts of Interest:** The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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