

Faith in the Digital Era: How Language and Artificial Intelligence Technology Reshape Religious Practices

Iman di Era Digital: Bagaimana Bahasa dan Teknologi Kecerdasan Buatan Membentuk Ulang Praktik Keagamaan

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ABSTRAK

Di era digital, perkembangan teknologi kecerdasan buatan (AI) telah mengubah cara manusia memahami dan mempraktikkan agama, menciptakan peluang baru sekaligus tantangan serius terhadap keberagaman budaya dan nilai-nilai spiritual. Dengan menggunakan metode Systematic Literature Review, penelitian ini mengkaji bagaimana bahasa dan AI membentuk ulang praktik keagamaan, dengan fokus pada dampaknya terhadap interpretasi teks keagamaan lintas bahasa, transformasi pola komunikasi antara umat dan otoritas spiritual, serta personalisasi pesan keagamaan dan implikasinya bagi pluralisme agama. Hasilnya menunjukkan bahwa AI memperluas aksesibilitas teks keagamaan melalui penerjemahan otomatis dan algoritma berbasis bahasa, meskipun menghadirkan tantangan seperti bias algoritmik, homogenisasi interpretasi, dan risiko terhadap keberagaman budaya. Homogenisasi interpretasi merujuk pada kecenderungan algoritma untuk menyederhanakan berbagai penafsiran teologis menjadi satu pemahaman dominan, sehingga mengurangi kekayaan makna dalam tradisi keagamaan tertentu. Selain itu, penggunaan asisten virtual berbasis AI mengubah pola interaksi umat dengan otoritas spiritual, sementara personalisasi pesan berbasis algoritma yaitu penyampaian pesan keagamaan yang disesuaikan dengan preferensi atau riwayat digital individu, cenderung menciptakan isolasi informasi yang dapat mengurangi dialog lintas agama. Penelitian ini menekankan pentingnya pendekatan etis dan inklusif dalam pengembangan teknologi AI untuk menjaga keberagaman budaya dan teologis.

Kata Kunci : AI; Bahasa; Keagamaan; Pluralisme; Teknologi

ABSTRACT

In the digital era, the advancement of artificial intelligence (AI) has transformed how people understand and practice religion, creating new opportunities while posing significant challenges to cultural diversity and spiritual values. Using a Systematic Literature Review, this study examines how language and AI reshape religious practices, focusing on their impact on the cross-linguistic interpretation of religious texts, the transformation of communication patterns between congregants and spiritual authorities, and the personalization of religious messages and its implications for pluralism. The findings reveal that AI enhances accessibility to religious texts through automated translation and language-based algorithms while presenting challenges such as algorithmic bias, homogenization of interpretations, and risks to cultural diversity. Homogenization of interpretations refers to the tendency of AI systems to simplify or prioritize dominant theological perspectives, potentially marginalizing alternative or minority interpretations that contribute to the richness of religious traditions. Additionally, AI-powered virtual assistants alter communication patterns with spiritual authorities, and message personalization, defined here as the algorithmic tailoring of religious content to an individual's digital behavior, preferences, or consumption history, tends to create information isolation that may hinder interfaith dialogue. This study emphasizes the need for ethical and inclusive approaches to AI development to preserve cultural and theological diversity.

Keywords: AI; Language; Pluralism; Religion; Technology

INTRODUCTION

In recent decades, digital transformation has reshaped various aspects of human life, including the ways individuals express and practice their beliefs (Qureshi 2023). Amidst the digital age, new phenomena in religious practices have emerged that were previously unimaginable. For example, many churches, mosques, and temples have begun utilizing streaming platforms to conduct online worship services, particularly since the COVID-19 pandemic (Tabti 2022; Geesaman 2023; Zheng 2024). Additionally, smartphone-based prayer applications, such as "Pray.com," have become popular tools for millions to schedule their prayer times, read sacred texts, or even build virtual religious communities (Laird et al.

2024). These cases illustrate how digital technology has become a significant tool in shaping spiritual experiences in the modern world.

As technology advances, artificial intelligence (AI) has emerged as one of the most significant innovations impacting various sectors, including religion. AI technologies, such as natural language processing (NLP)-based chatbots and predictive applications, are now being utilized to address theological questions (Graves 2023), provide interpretations of sacred texts (Pandey and Roy 2024), and even create personalized spiritual experiences (Simmerlein 2024). For instance, "Soul Machines," an AI company, has developed digital avatars designed to assist individuals in discovering spiritual meaning through AI-driven conversations (Chaturvedi, Verma, and Srivastava 2023). This technology not only offers convenience but also presents ethical and theological challenges regarding the authenticity of religious experiences mediated by machines.

Language plays a crucial role in all religious practices, as it serves as the primary medium for conveying teachings, praying, and building community (Nofal 2023). In the digital age, the evolution of language on online platforms also impacts how faith and religion are understood and practiced. For instance, the use of emoticons (Elwert et al. 2023), memes (Moya-Salazar, Chicoma-Flores, and Contreras-Pulache 2022), and slang terms (Dawaghreh and Suliman 2024) in religious communication on social media reflects a linguistic adaptation to meet the needs of the digital generation. Additionally, AI algorithms applied to translation services, such as Google Translate, have made religious texts accessible to cross-cultural communities, though with some limitations in capturing specific theological nuances (Naveen and Trojovský 2024). By combining the power of language with AI technology, new opportunities emerge to reshape religious practices in the digital era. This technology enables the creation of more inclusive, personalized, and cross-cultural spiritual experiences. However, it also raises profound questions about the authenticity and meaning of faith in an era increasingly mediated by technology.

Previous studies have offered various perspectives on the relationship between religion and digital technology, such as the impact of digital media on religious practices (Andok 2024), the role of digital creators in disseminating religious messages on social media (Zaid et al. 2022), and human psychology in the digital context (Light et al. 2024). Additionally, research on digital culture and religion (Panarari and Gili 2024) and the theory of technology as an extension of human activity (Noller 2024) has provided crucial foundations. These prior studies predominantly focus on social media and digital culture in general, without specifically addressing how artificial intelligence technology interacts with language to shape religious practices.

Moreover, the adaptation of language within the context of digital religiosity has not been extensively explored in relation to Artificial Intelligence (AI). Therefore, this study is crucial as it addresses a gap in the literature by integrating an analysis of the role of language and AI technology in shaping new religious experiences in the digital age. The novelty of this study lies in its holistic approach, which simultaneously encompasses the dimensions of language, AI technology, and religious transformation. Importantly, this study adopts a multifaith perspective, analyzing how various religious traditions rather than focusing on a single faith are engaging with language and AI-driven transformations in their spiritual practices. This study aims to explore how language and AI technology collectively reshape religious practices in the digital era. Through a systematic literature review approach, the research will identify emerging trends, challenges, and opportunities arising from the intersection of faith, language, and AI, as well as their implications for the future of spiritual life.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Language in Religious Practice

Language plays a crucial role in religious practices, both traditionally and in the digital era. It serves not only as a means of expressing faith (Rosowsky 2023) but also as a tool for shaping religious identity (Mahfouz 2024). In religious traditions, language conveys sacred teachings (Nosonovsky 2022), facilitates rituals (Vestrucci 2022), and connects

individuals to broader communities (Lalotitis and Minos 2022). This highlights the symbolic and practical importance of language in spiritual experiences.

Language serves as the bearer of sacred teachings, transmitting religious values across generations (Conway, Spruyt, and Coutinho 2023). Sacred scriptures like the Qur'an, Bible, or Vedas use language as a form of divine revelation. In Islam, Arabic in the Qur'an is regarded as sacred, with each word and phrase carrying theological significance (Ikhwan 2024). Similarly, in Hinduism, Vedic mantras are composed in Sanskrit, where phonetic patterns hold spiritual power (Aswathanarayana and Boren 2024).

Religious rituals also rely heavily on language. Formal prayers, such as the liturgy in Christianity, adopt a rigid structure to preserve theological meaning (Pietras 2024), while personal prayers offer flexibility (Gordon 2022). Multimodal Religious Discourse theory by Stöckl (2024) emphasizes the integration of language with visual and auditory media, enhancing the delivery of spiritual messages. Short videos and illustrations in religious apps, for example, complement written or spoken language to create immersive experiences.

The Digital Sacredness theory by Bellar and Campbell (2022) argues that religious practices in the digital age transform not just technically but conceptually, affecting the very notion of sacredness. This theoretical lens supports the exploration of how artificial intelligence (AI) technology influences the interpretation of religious texts across languages and to what extent this adaptation alters theological understanding across cultures. In digital spaces, emoticons, memes, and abbreviated expressions (Ugwu 2024) may carry altered or simplified religious meanings, posing questions about fidelity to original theological intent.

The Evolution of Language in the Digital Era

Language, as a primary means of communication, conveys cultural values, ideologies, and identities (Fabbro, Fabbro, and Crescentini 2022). In the digital era, technological advances have transformed language, influencing its structure, form, and function (Schneider 2022). Symbols and emoticons have become key in expressing emotions and fostering solidarity within digital communities (Stoianov et al. 2024), bridging the limitations of written language (Concu and Raffo 2024). Shortened words and abbreviations (Antony and Trambo 2023), such as "Alham" instead of "Alhamdulillah," illustrate language's adaptation to fast, efficient communication.

These adaptations are relevant in examining how AI-based virtual assistants in religious practices alter the communication patterns between believers and religious leaders or spiritual authorities. Digital assistants may standardize certain responses or spiritual guidance, thus influencing the dynamic of religious discourse. Boyd's Social Media and Digital Communication Theory (2014) highlights how informal, efficient interaction becomes dominant in online spaces—shifting traditional religious communication structures and potentially reshaping authority.

Digital platforms, including AI-driven religious apps, adopt personalized language algorithms (Alkhouri 2024). These platforms tailor language to cultural and religious contexts, creating more inclusive and personal spiritual experiences (Mende et al. 2023). Social media further fosters collective identity, allowing individuals to engage in cross-cultural discussions and share sacred text interpretations (Arazzi et al. 2023). AI thereby becomes not only a tool of translation but also a curator of religious narratives, directly linking with the question of how AI-powered digital media shape religious narratives in the context of personalized religious messaging, and what are its implications for religious pluralism.

Natural Language Processing (NLP)

NLP plays a vital role in religious practices by offering personalized spiritual experiences (Loewen-Colón and Mosurinjohn 2022). NLP interprets language using algorithms that analyze its meaning, structure, and context (Wang, Su, and Yu 2020). In religious settings, NLP powers systems like "Bible Bot" and "Muslim Pro," which provide personalized services such as prayer time reminders (Barlow and Holt 2024). Moreover, NLP enables the rapid translation of sacred texts, offering instant access to religious teachings

across languages (Hidalgo-Ternero 2021). These practices are central in understanding how AI technology influences the interpretation of religious texts across languages and to what extent theological understandings are maintained or adapted in new cultural contexts.

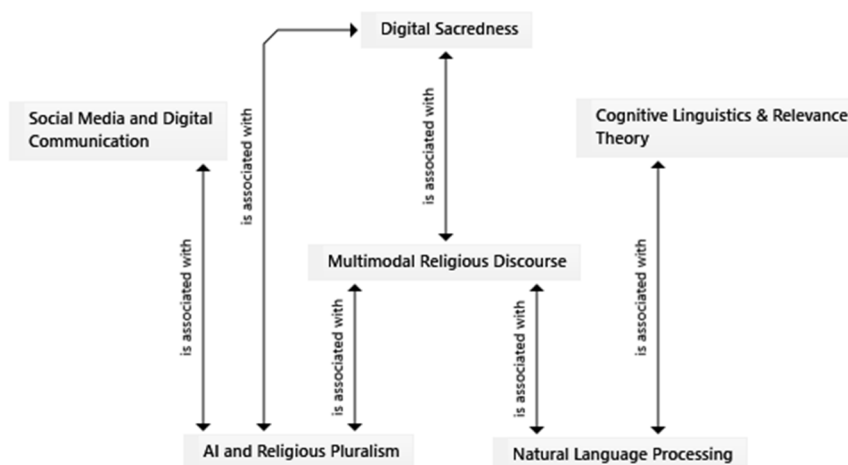
The theories of Cognitive Linguistics (Lakoff 2008; Langacker 2013) and Relevance Theory (Scott-Phillips 2024) contribute to understanding how NLP captures the nuances of religious meaning. NLP processes these nuances, adapting to individual spiritual needs through AI-generated content. However, the risk of theological reductionism or loss of symbolic depth remains high when sacred texts are filtered through computational logic. Ethical concerns regarding authenticity and algorithmic bias further complicate the use of AI in sacred contexts (Liu 2023).

The adaptation of AI-powered language systems to religious communication also raises broader issues of religious pluralism. As digital media promote algorithmic curation, personalized religious messaging may inadvertently create ideological silos, reinforcing specific theological interpretations while marginalizing others. Thus, analyzing how AI-powered digital media shape religious narratives becomes crucial to understanding its implications for diverse faith communities.

Language is integral to religious practices, whether in traditional or digital contexts. The rise of digital technologies and AI offers new opportunities for personalizing religious experiences while presenting challenges in preserving the authenticity and theological integrity of religious texts. Theories such as Digital Sacredness, Social Media Communication, Cognitive Linguistics, and NLP provide a strong foundation to explore how AI influences theological interpretation, shifts authority in religious discourse, and reshapes religious narratives. These frameworks help illuminate how sacred language evolves, adapts, and persists in the digital age informing a critical inquiry into the intersection of faith, language, and technology.

In contemporary religious practices, the integration of digital technologies, particularly artificial intelligence (AI), has sparked significant transformations in how sacred teachings are conveyed and understood. The following network view illustrates the interconnections between various theoretical frameworks and key variables that shape religious discourse in the digital age. These theories explore how language in religious contexts is evolving through the influence of AI and digital media, reshaping the way religious texts are interpreted and communicated across cultures. This visual representation highlights the relationships between concepts such as Digital Sacredness, Multimodal Religious Discourse, AI and Religious Pluralism, and Natural Language Processing (NLP), offering a comprehensive view of the dynamic forces at play in modern religious communication.

Figure 1. Network View of Theoretical Concepts and Variables Interconnection



Source: Author's analysis.

The network view in the figure 1 above demonstrates the complex relationships between key theories and variables in digital religious practices. At the core, Digital Sacredness connects with the broader themes of religious communication, showing how sacredness is being redefined in digital spaces. This transformation is further explored through the integration of Multimodal Religious Discourse, which emphasizes how language, visual, and auditory media work together in conveying religious messages. Additionally, the role of Natural Language Processing (NLP) is central to understanding how AI-driven platforms personalize religious experiences, while the implications of AI and Religious Pluralism reveal how digital platforms contribute to diverse theological interpretations. Together, these interconnected concepts provide a robust framework for analyzing the evolving role of language in religious practice, especially in the context of technological advancements.

RESEARCH METHOD

Adopting the Systematic Literature Review methodology proposed by Booth et al. (2021), this research systematically addresses three principal questions regarding the influence of language and artificial intelligence technologies in reshaping religious practices in the digital era. The following table presents the research questions and the focal points of this study:

Table 1. List of Research Questions and Focus

No	Research Questions	Research Focus
	How does artificial intelligence (AI) technology influence the interpretation of religious texts across languages, and to what extent does this adaptation alter theological understanding across cultures?	Analyzing the influence of AI algorithms on the interpretation of religious texts across languages and its implications for changes in theological understanding across cultures.
	Does the use of AI-based virtual assistants in religious practices alter the communication patterns between believers and religious leaders or spiritual authorities?	Exploring the transformation of communication patterns between believers and spiritual authorities through the use of AI-based virtual assistants in religious practices.
	How do AI-powered digital media shape religious narratives in the context of personalized religious messaging, and what are its implications for religious pluralism?	Investigating the impact of AI-driven personalized religious messaging on the formation of religious narratives and its consequences for religious pluralism.

Source: Author's analysis.

The research data were obtained from various scholarly sources indexed in the DOAJ database, focusing solely on peer-reviewed publications with open access, indexed in Scopus and the Web of Science, that have direct relevance to the chosen research focus for in-depth analysis. The data collection process began with the identification of literature using key search terms such as Artificial Intelligence in Religion, AI and Religious Texts, Virtual Assistants in Religious Practices, AI and Pluralism, and Digital Religion. To document the entire process of data extraction and article selection, this study employs a PRISMA Flow Diagram, adapted from Page et al. (2021), to provide a clear and transparent overview of the selection process. Relevant articles were selected through abstract-based filtering, keywords, and alignment with the research focus. Subsequently, the selected literature was critically evaluated based on the quality of the methodology, data validity, and its relevance to the research questions.

Data analysis was conducted qualitatively using content analysis methods to explore and understand the patterns, themes, and key implications of the collected literature. The

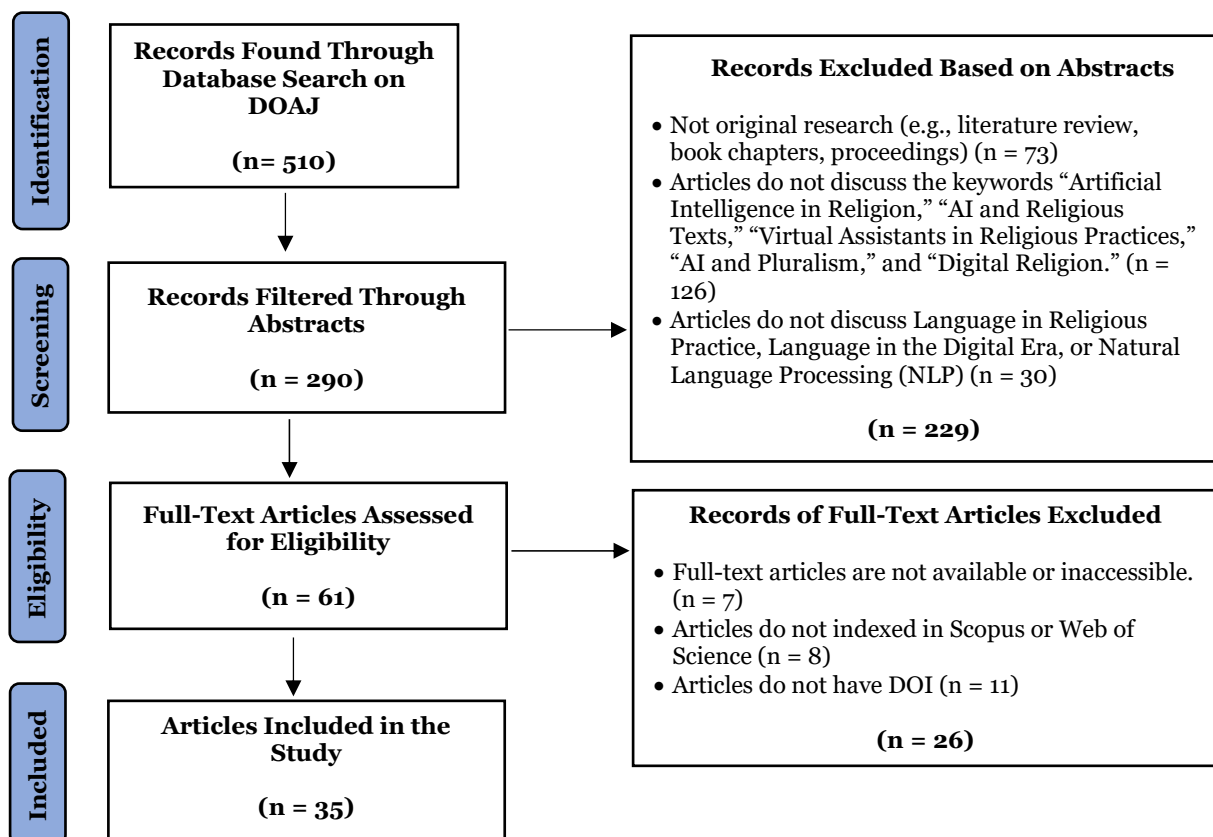
analysis process included classifying themes centered on the interpretation of religious texts through artificial intelligence algorithms, AI-based communication patterns in religious practices, and the personalization of religious messages generated by AI-driven digital media. Relevant findings from various studies were comparatively examined to identify differences, recurring patterns, and research gaps. The analysis results were then synthesized to draw conclusions that comprehensively address the research questions.

The validity of the findings was ensured through source triangulation, where diverse types of literature, ranging from empirical studies to foundational theories, were employed to guarantee the accuracy and reliability of the data. Additionally, intensive discussions among researchers were implemented to minimize bias in interpreting the findings. This approach enabled in-depth insights into how AI is not only transforming the interpretation of religious texts across languages but also reshaping religious narratives and the interaction patterns of believers with spiritual authorities, as well as its implications for religious pluralism in the digital era. The methodology applied ensures scientific validity and makes a significant contribution to interdisciplinary studies on language, technology, and religion.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Through a literature search conducted in the DOAJ database, 510 articles related to the specified keywords were identified. After reviewing these articles, 35 met the established criteria. The following figure 2 is the PRISMA flow diagram documenting the entire data extraction process in this study:

Figure 2. PRISMA Flow Diagram

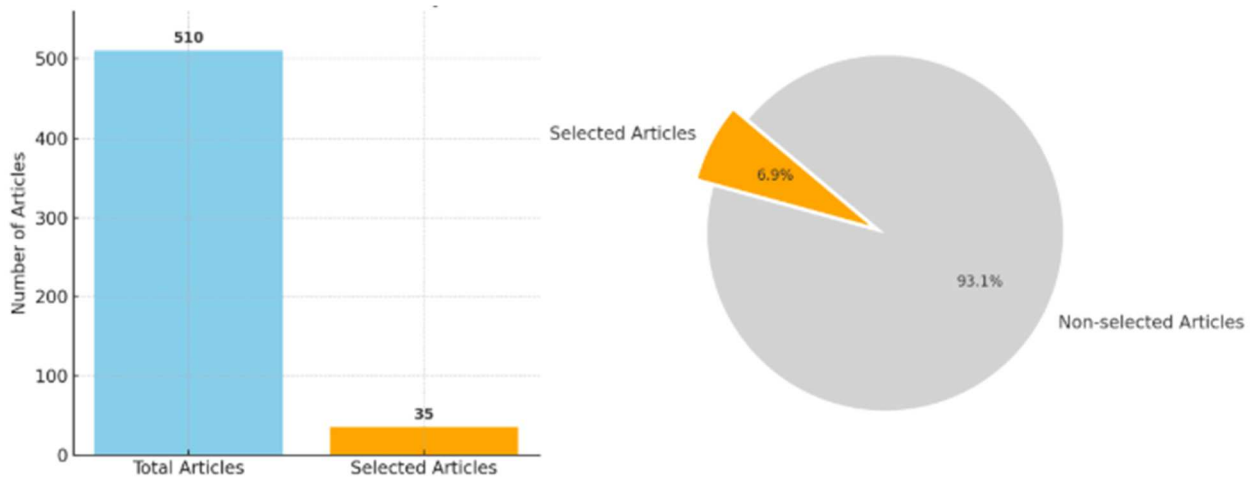


Source: Author's analysis.

Figure 2 illustrates that a total of 510 records were initially identified through a search in the DOAJ database. After reviewing the abstracts, 229 records were excluded, either because they were not original research, such as literature reviews or book chapters, or because they did not align with the study's focus on topics like Artificial Intelligence in

Religion, AI and Religious Texts, or Natural Language Processing in religious contexts. The remaining 290 records underwent further screening, where full-text articles were assessed for eligibility. A total of 26 articles were excluded due to issues such as unavailability of full texts or lack of indexing in major databases like Scopus and Web of Science. Ultimately, 35 articles were selected for inclusion in the study, forming the basis for the subsequent analysis. Following this, Figure 3 presents the results of the data extraction from the 35 articles. This figure provides a detailed overview of how the selected articles contributed to answering the research questions. In the next section, we will explore the findings derived from these articles, linking them to the key objectives of the study and providing deeper insights into the intersection of artificial intelligence and religious practices.

Figure 3. Data Extraction Results from Articles in the Database



Source: Author's analysis.

Based on the 35 articles extracted for data, this study proceeds with an in-depth analysis of these articles to formulate answers to the research questions posed. The following are the results of the analysis, presented as responses to the research questions:

The Influence of Artificial Intelligence Algorithms on the Interpretation of Cross-Language Religious Texts and Its Implications for Theological Understanding Across Cultures

Artificial Intelligence (AI) has revolutionized the way we access and interpret religious texts, presenting both new opportunities and challenges. The table below summarizes the researcher's analysis of the literature reviewed regarding the impact of AI on the translation of religious texts, the challenges encountered, as well as the solutions and ethical implications:

Table 2. The Influence of AI Algorithms on the Understanding of Religious and Cultural Texts

Aspects	Details	References
Impact of AI	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Transforms access and understanding of religious texts. ○ Facilitates cross-language translations. 	Albalawi & Abdul Ghafour (2024), Lahiani (2024)
Opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ New access for non-Arab communities. ○ Faster and more linguistically accurate translations. ○ Promotes religious pluralism. 	Barnes et al. (2024), Elmahjub (2023), Chen et al. (2024)
Challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ignores cultural contexts and idioms. ○ Bias toward dominant source languages. ○ Risk of homogenized interpretations. ○ Difficulty capturing metaphorical elements. 	Lahiani (2024), Ofosu-Asare (2024), Wandera (2024), Chandra et al. (2024)
Implications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Loss of interpretive diversity. ○ Conflicts with traditional interpretations. 	Spennemann (2024), Chen et al. (2024), Graves

	○ Pluralism may sacrifice specific traditional details.	(2023)
Solutions	○ Interdisciplinary approaches. ○ Culturally sensitive algorithms. ○ Ethical AI frameworks.	Brandt & Hazel (2024), Chandra et al. (2024)
Conclusion	○ AI must be fair, efficient, and respect diversity. ○ Homogenization risks require serious attention.	Brandt & Hazel (2024), Spennemann (2024)

Source: Author's analysis.

Based on Table 2, artificial intelligence (AI) has significantly influenced the accessibility and interpretation of religious texts, creating both opportunities and challenges. Natural Language Processing (NLP) and machine translation technologies have enabled the dissemination of sacred scriptures in multiple languages, broadening access for non-native speakers. Albalawi and Abdul Ghafour (2024) demonstrate how AI-based translations of the Quran have enhanced understanding among non-Arabic communities, though they caution that such tools often fail to convey the depth of spiritual meaning. Similarly, Lahiani (2024) notes that these translations tend to favor literal interpretations, overlooking idiomatic and culturally embedded expressions central to religious messages.

With advancements in AI models like GPT-4 and DeepL, the translation of texts such as the Bible and Vedas has become more efficient. However, Ofosu-Asare (2024) highlights a systemic bias toward dominant languages like English, which can obscure localized theological nuances. Wandera (2024) reinforces this concern, suggesting that AI models often reflect the cultural assumptions of their developers, leading to homogenized interpretations and a loss of contextual richness.

AI's capacity to personalize religious content is also shifting the nature of religious engagement. Barnes et al. (2024) argue that such personalization encourages individualistic readings, potentially weakening traditional collective interpretations. This is echoed by Chen et al. (2024), who found that AI often promotes pragmatic interpretations over classical exegesis. While Elmahjub (2023) acknowledges that AI can foster pluralism by offering more inclusive interpretations, they also warn that it may dilute distinct theological identities, leading to pushback from conservative adherents.

Concerns about AI's interpretative limitations are mounting. Chandra et al. (2024) argue that NLP systems frequently miss metaphorical or symbolic language, reducing the depth of religious insights. Spennemann (2024) adds that cultural homogenization through AI may erode the diversity of local interpretations. This aligns with Graves (2023), who observes that AI prioritizes linguistic efficiency over theological fidelity, which may distort essential spiritual messages.

These developments carry significant implications not only academically but also socially. In an era where digital technologies mediate spiritual engagement, safeguarding the authenticity of religious teachings becomes increasingly vital. Brandt and Hazel (2024) recommend an interdisciplinary approach involving linguists, theologians, and technologists to design AI tools attuned to cultural and religious specificity. Incorporating cultural awareness into algorithm development can balance technical accuracy with spiritual integrity and promote more inclusive interfaith dialogue.

The widespread application of AI in religious contexts demands a robust ethical framework to prevent cultural flattening and ensure fair, responsible use. As the influence of AI deepens, preserving the unique identities of spiritual traditions becomes both an academic imperative and a global cultural responsibility.

The Transformation of Communication Patterns Between Believers and Spiritual Authorities Through the Use of AI-Based Virtual Assistants in Religious Practices

The use of AI-powered virtual assistants in religious practices has transformed spiritual communication. These advancements, while making religious information more accessible, also raise theological, ethical, and social questions. AI has become a mediator in religious activities such as doctrinal consultations and worship practices, offering significant global implications.

Studies show that AI enhances access to religious information. For example, Ma et al. (2024) demonstrate how chatbots allow people in remote areas to ask theological questions without attending religious gatherings. Similarly, Gwagwa, Kazim, and Hilliard (2022) note that AI can provide spiritual guidance in over 50 languages, broadening access to multicultural communities. However, AI's impact is not without criticism. Foka and Griffin (2024) point out that AI algorithms reflect biases from their training data, which can distort religious interpretations. These biases may favor conservative doctrines, as Kidd and Birhane (2023) suggest, potentially reinforcing stereotypes in ideologically diverse communities.

The emotional effects of AI on spiritual communication are also concerning. Farman, Eke, and Scarlett (2024) highlight how users may feel their spiritual connection becomes mechanical, and Zohny, McMillan, and King (2023) argue that AI struggles to express genuine empathy, a core aspect of spiritual relationships. However, AI aids in facilitating inclusive discussions, as van Bussel et al. (2022) found that it enables more private consultations for individuals uncomfortable speaking directly to religious leaders.

This shift challenges traditional religious authorities. Jackson et al. (2023) argue that AI's perceived objectivity and accessibility could undermine trust in religious leaders. Livingstone (2024) supports this, finding that younger generations may prefer AI over traditional spiritual guidance. The global consequences of AI in religion are significant; Loewen-Colón and Mosurinjohn (2022) report debates about AI's role in interpreting Sharia law in the Middle East, while Ludwig et al. (2023) caution that personalized religious messages could deepen ideological divisions in Latin America.

The personalization of religious messages by AI, as Du (2023) warns, could create "echo chambers," hindering interfaith dialogue and worsening social polarization. Given these concerns, Gervais (2023) calls for international regulations to ensure AI is used inclusively and free from bias. Dabis and Csáki (2024) suggest human oversight is crucial to maintaining religious integrity in AI implementations. This issue, with its broad implications, demands further study to understand AI's effects on religious pluralism and spiritual authority.

The Impact of AI-Driven Personalized Religious Messaging on the Formation of Religious Narratives and Its Consequences for Religious Pluralism

AI enables more relevant and accessible spiritual content, yet it also presents risks. The table below presents the findings of the literature review conducted by the researcher, highlighting the various impacts of AI-based personalization of religious messages, which can both strengthen and threaten religious pluralism:

Table 3. Impacts of AI-Based Religious Message Personalization

Aspect	Description	Positive Impact	Negative Impact	References
AI Personalization	Customizes religious content based on user data.	Increases engagement and relevance.	Creates dependency on tailored algorithms.	Shi (2024)
Spiritual Connection	Enhances emotional and spiritual resonance of content.	Strengthens personal connection to faith.	Reduces exposure to diverse views.	Shi (2024)

Filter Bubbles	Algorithms limit access to diverse perspectives.	Aligns content with user preferences.	Hinders interfaith dialogue and promotes dogmatism.	McNutt (2023), Scheid (2024)
Algorithmic Bias	Reinforces dominant narratives while sidelining minorities.	Delivers widely consumed content.	Marginalizes alternative interpretations.	Alfano et al. (2024), Lund & Wang (2023)
Impact on Pluralism	Isolates users within ideological bubbles.	Facilitates targeted outreach.	Deepens polarization and weakens social cohesion.	Jenks (2024)
Global Influence	Reshapes religious practices and understanding worldwide.	Expands accessibility to religious knowledge.	Risks reinforcing inequalities and biases.	Simmerlein (2024), Kaewkitipong et al. (2023)
Proposed Solutions	Ethical and inclusive algorithm design.	Promotes pluralism and mutual understanding.	Challenges in regulating AI for inclusivity.	General article discussion

Source: Author's analysis.

The data in Table 3 highlights how artificial intelligence (AI) advancements have reshaped the delivery and reception of religious messages in the digital era. One key phenomenon is the personalization of religious content, where AI algorithms tailor messages to individual preferences based on search histories and user profiles. This customization enhances spiritual experiences, as Shi (2024) found that AI can increase user engagement by aligning content with emotional and spiritual needs. However, while this convenience improves accessibility, it raises concerns, especially in terms of religious pluralism.

AI's personalization can create "filter bubbles," which limit exposure to diverse narratives and reinforce users' existing beliefs. McNutt (2023) points out that algorithms often narrow the scope of information, leading to a digital echo chamber that excludes alternative perspectives. In religious contexts, this may result in dogmatic understandings, hindering interfaith dialogue. In diverse societies, a broad understanding of religious views is crucial for maintaining social harmony (Andok 2023; Scheid 2024).

Additionally, AI algorithms are not neutral. Biases embedded in training data can shape the dissemination of religious messages. For instance, algorithms trained on specific sources may reinforce dominant narratives, sidelining minority viewpoints. Alfano et al. (2024) demonstrate that AI prioritizes content frequently consumed by users, often ignoring the diversity of interpretations within the same religious tradition. This could lead to distorted understandings and reinforce interfaith stereotypes (Brady et al. 2023; Lassen et al. 2024).

The impact of AI on religious pluralism is particularly concerning. In an increasingly connected society, religious diversity should foster cross-belief dialogue, yet AI could exacerbate social polarization by isolating individuals within digital bubbles. Jenks (2024) argues that this could deepen tensions between religious groups, reducing opportunities for mutual understanding and interaction. On a global scale, AI's influence on religious practices and social dynamics is significant. Without proper oversight, AI could exacerbate religious inequalities, reinforce exclusionary narratives, and hinder interfaith dialogue (Kaewkitipong et al. 2023; Simmerlein 2024). However, with ethical design, AI could support religious pluralism and promote interfaith understanding. Policymakers, researchers, and developers must collaborate to create inclusive algorithms that prioritize human values and diversity.

As AI continues to shape the way religious messages are delivered, its potential to both support and challenge religious pluralism demands careful consideration. Ethical development of AI could ultimately contribute to a more inclusive and harmonious global religious discourse.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that Artificial Intelligence (AI) technology has had a significant impact on religious practices in the digital age, particularly in the interpretation of religious texts across languages, communication patterns between the faithful and spiritual authorities, and the formation of religious narratives through algorithm-based message personalization. Utilizing a Systematic Literature Review as a methodological approach, this research reveals that AI not only broadens the accessibility of religious texts through translation algorithms and Natural Language Processing but also influences theological understanding across cultures. However, challenges such as algorithmic bias, the homogenization of interpretations, and the risk of social polarization emerge as critical issues that warrant further attention.

The contribution of this study lies in identifying the theological and sociocultural implications of AI technology, emphasizing the urgent need for the development of algorithms that are more sensitive to cultural contexts and religious diversity. Although the methodology employed successfully provides profound insights into the research questions, this study is limited to the analysis of literature available in specific databases, thus not covering all relevant perspectives. Future research could expand the focus to include the impact of AI in more diverse cultural and religious contexts, while also exploring the role of ethics in the design and implementation of AI technologies for religious applications. Interdisciplinary collaboration among experts in theology, linguistics, and technology is strongly recommended to ensure that AI development not only supports technical efficiency but also strengthens religious pluralism and fosters inclusive, harmonious cross-cultural dialogue.

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