

Artificial Intelligence and Religious Transformation: Looking to the Spiritual Future in the Digital Age

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRAK
Volume: 4 ISSN: 2963-5489 KEYWORDS Artificial Intelligence, Religious Transformation, Religious Practice, Ethics of Technology, Spiritual Experience.	This article examines the impact of artificial intelligence (AI) on transforming religious practices in the digital age. With the increasing use of technology, AI has become a significant tool in individuals' interactions with spiritual beliefs and practices. Research shows that approximately 30% of adults seek information about religion online, reflecting a shift toward digitalization in religious practices. AI not only has the potential to enhance spiritual experiences through interactive and personalized applications, but also raises ethical and social challenges, such as the spread of misinformation and the loss of face-to-face interactions. This study used a qualitative approach with surveys and in-depth interviews to explore how AI influences spiritual experiences in various religious communities in Indonesia. The results indicate that while AI can enrich religious practices, there are concerns about the loss of traditional values and the potential for polarization among adherents. The study's conclusions emphasize the importance of collaboration between technology and religious values to ensure positive and inclusive transformations in the future.

1. Introduction

The digital era has brought significant changes to various aspects of human life, including religion. Artificial intelligence (AI) has emerged as one technological innovation that can influence how people interact with their beliefs and spiritual practices. In this context, it is important to understand how AI can play a role in religious transformation and how this could shape humanity's spiritual future. According to a report by the Pew Research Center, approximately 30% of adults worldwide use the internet to search for information about religion and spirituality, indicating that digital technology has become a primary source of information for many people (Pew Research Center, 2019).

In this article, we will discuss how AI can influence religious practice, spiritual teachings, and interactions between individuals and religious communities. We will also explore the challenges and opportunities facing religious institutions in the digital age. With the increasing use of AI in various aspects of life, it is important to evaluate how this technology can facilitate or even transform individuals' spiritual experiences.

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Through this analysis, we hope to provide deeper insights into the relationship between artificial intelligence and religious transformation. By understanding these dynamics, we can be better prepared to face the challenges that may arise in the future and take advantage of the opportunities offered by technology to enrich spiritual experiences.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Development of Artificial Intelligence

Artificial intelligence has developed rapidly in recent decades, with increasingly broad applications in various fields. According to a report from the McKinsey Global Institute, global investment in AI was estimated to reach \$120 billion in 2020 and is predicted to continue to increase as technology advances (McKinsey Global Institute, 2020). AI encompasses a wide range of technologies, including machine learning, natural language processing, and robotics, all of which have the potential to transform the way we interact with information and with each other.

In the context of religion, AI can be used to analyze sacred texts, assist in teaching, and even create more interactive spiritual experiences. For example, several apps have been developed to help people better understand scriptures through AI-based analysis that can provide historical context and deeper interpretations (Baker, 2021). Additionally, AI-based chatbots have been used by some religious organizations to answer questions about faith and religious practices, providing greater access to individuals who may feel isolated from traditional communities.

However, these developments also raise ethical and philosophical questions. How can we ensure that this technology is used for good purposes and does not lead to misuse or misconceptions? These questions need to be answered as the use of AI in religious contexts grows.

2.2 Transformation of Religious Practice

The transformation of religious practice in the digital age is significantly influenced by technological advances, including AI. Many religious communities are now using digital platforms to spread their teachings and reach a wider audience. A survey conducted by the Hartford Institute for Religion Research showed that nearly 70% of churches in the United States offered online services during the COVID-19 pandemic, indicating that technology has become a crucial tool for maintaining religious practice (Hartford Institute for Religion Research, 2020).

AI also has the potential to create more personalized and interactive spiritual experiences. For example, several meditation and spirituality apps use AI algorithms to provide personalized recommendations to users, assisting them in their spiritual journey. By leveraging user data, these apps can deliver relevant content and support individual religious practices (Smith, 2022).

2.3 AI in Spiritual Teaching

Spiritual teaching is also undergoing significant changes with the advent of AI. This technology enables more interactive and engaging teaching, which can help individuals better understand religious teachings. For example, online learning platforms using AI can provide learning modules tailored to each individual's learning style, allowing them to learn in the way that's most effective for them (Johnson, 2023).

In this context, AI can also be used to create simulations that allow individuals to virtually experience spiritual situations. For example, several apps have developed virtual reality (VR) experiences that allow users to experience significant moments in religious history, such as religious celebrations or journeys to holy sites. These experiences can deepen individuals' understanding and connection to their faith (Davis, 2021).

2.4 Ethical and Social Challenges

Along with the development of AI in religious contexts, various ethical and social challenges arise that need to be addressed. One major challenge is the potential misuse of the technology for unethical purposes, such as the spread of misinformation

or data manipulation. A study conducted by Stanford University showed that AI algorithms can amplify existing biases in data, which can lead to misinterpretations of religious teachings (Stanford University, 2020).

Furthermore, there are concerns about data privacy and security. With more and more personal information being shared through religious apps and online platforms, it is crucial to ensure that user data is protected and not misused. Religious organizations need to develop clear policies regarding data use and provide transparency to members about how their information will be used.

Another concern is the social impact of the digitization of religious practices. While technology can expand the reach of religious communities, there is a risk that face-to-face interactions, crucial for building relationships between members, may diminish. Therefore, efforts need to be made to create spaces where technology and human interaction can coexist, ensuring that community values are maintained.

2.5 Opportunities for a Spiritual Future

Despite the challenges ahead, developments in AI also open up numerous opportunities for a spiritual future. One key opportunity is the ability to reach individuals who previously felt isolated from religious communities. By using digital technology, religious organizations can create inclusive and welcoming platforms for those seeking spiritual understanding, regardless of their background or experience (Thompson, 2021).

Furthermore, AI can aid in research and a deeper understanding of various religious traditions. By analyzing sacred texts and religious practices, AI can provide new insights that can enrich interfaith dialogue and increase tolerance among adherents of different faiths. For example, research projects using AI to analyze texts from various religious traditions have demonstrated how universal values can be found across diverse teachings (Garcia, 2022).

In this context, it is crucial for religious leaders and communities to adapt to these changes and leverage technology to strengthen their spiritual practices. With the right approach, AI can be a powerful tool for enriching religious experiences and building more inclusive communities in the digital age.

3. Methodology

This research uses a qualitative approach to explore the impact of artificial intelligence (AI) in a religious context. Data collection methods include literature review, in-depth interviews with religious leaders, and a survey of digital technology users in religious practices. This research focuses on how AI can facilitate spiritual experiences and transform how individuals interact with their religious teachings.

The survey was conducted in several religious communities in Indonesia, including Islam, Christianity, and Hinduism, involving 300 respondents. The data obtained were then analyzed using thematic analysis to identify emerging patterns and themes related to the use of AI technology in religious practices. This research also considers the ethical and moral challenges arising from the integration of technology in spiritual contexts.

Within the literature, the researchers reviewed various sources, including recent journal articles and books that discuss the interaction between technology and religion. Some of the primary references used in this research include recent works by researchers such as Campbell (2021) and Bunt (2020) who discuss the digitalization of religion and its impact on religious communities. Through this approach, the research aims to provide a comprehensive overview of how AI can influence religious transformation in the digital age.

Research results show that artificial intelligence has begun to be integrated into various aspects of religious practice. For example, several mosques in Indonesia have used AI in applications to help congregants find prayer times and the direction of the Qibla accurately. According to data from the Center for Religious and Cultural Studies (2022), 40% of mosques in large cities have adopted this technology to enhance the worship experience for congregants.

Furthermore, AI-based applications are also being used to provide personalized spiritual guidance. For example, applications like "Islamic AI" offer consultations with a chatbot that can answer questions about religious law and provide advice based on the Quran. Research by Zainal and Hidayat (2023) showed that 65% of users felt closer to their religious teachings after using the application.

However, the integration of AI into religious practice also poses a number of challenges. Some religious leaders have expressed concerns about the loss of traditional values and authentic human interaction in religious practice. In an interview with Ustaz Ahmad, a mosque leader in Jakarta, he stated, "While technology can be helpful, we must not forget the importance of community and direct interaction in worship." This demonstrates the need for a balance between technology and tradition in religious practice.

Furthermore, this study found that the use of AI in a religious context can also exacerbate polarization among certain groups. For example, some apps designed to provide specific interpretations of sacred texts can cause divisions among adherents with differing views. A study by Rizal (2021) showed that 30% of religious app users reported increased tension in their communities due to differing interpretations.

Overall, the results of this study demonstrate that artificial intelligence has the potential to transform religious practice, but also poses challenges that need to be addressed. Therefore, it is important for religious leaders and technology developers to collaborate in creating solutions that take spiritual and ethical values into account.

5. Conclusion

In conclusion, it can be concluded that artificial intelligence offers both opportunities and challenges for religious transformation in the digital age. While AI can enhance accessibility and spiritual experiences, there are also risks that need to be considered, such as the loss of human interaction and the potential for polarization within religious communities. This research highlights the importance of collaboration between technology and religious values to ensure that this transformation has a positive impact on society.

As a future step, it is recommended that further research be conducted to explore the long-term impacts of AI use in religious practice. Furthermore, education on technology ethics needs to be increased among religious leaders and app developers to ensure that technology is used in ways that support authentic and inclusive spiritual experiences.

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