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Transcultural religious communication in the age of artificial intelligence: Ethical challenges and opportunities for global harmony

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ABSTRACT

Background: The development of Artificial Intelligence has fundamentally transformed human communication patterns, including the practice of religious communication that is now taking place in a transcultural digital space. This research aims to critically examine the ethical challenges and opportunities arising from AI's involvement in cross-cultural religious communication. Previous studies have shown that AI is increasingly playing a role in facilitating interfaith dialogue and cross-border spiritual interaction, despite concerns about algorithmic bias, homogenization of spiritual meaning, and commodification of religious values. **Methods:** This study used a reflective qualitative method with a literature study and critical analysis approach. Data is systematically collected from the latest scientific publications, then analyzed thematically and hermeneutically to capture the complexity of transcultural religious interactions in the digital age. **Finding:** The results of the study show that AI, on the one hand, opens up opportunities to create spaces for inclusive, participatory, and reflective intercultural dialogue, but on the other hand poses significant ethical risks. These risks include narrowing religious interpretations due to algorithmic bias, loss of richness of local cultural meaning, and manipulation of religious narratives for the benefit of certain markets or ideologies. However, AI has great potential to become a strategic instrument in strengthening global religious harmony if developed and used based on the principles of communication ethics and transcultural awareness. This article recommends implementing strategies such as the development of algorithms that are accountable and adaptive to cultural diversity, strengthening community-based religious digital literacy, and implementing ethical audits of AI-based content. **Conclusion:** This study concludes that the use of AI in religious communication must be accompanied by close collaboration between technology developers, religious leaders, and academics to ensure that AI becomes a bridge of spiritual solidarity between cultures, not a source of polarization or cultural reduction. **Novelty/Originality of this article:** The novelty of this article lies in its comprehensive approach, which combines critical reflection on the ethical implications of AI with proposed practical strategies to encourage sustainable transcultural religious communication. This article contributes to enriching the discourse on digital ethics, cross-cultural communication, and the transformation of religiosity in an increasingly digitized global society.

KEYWORDS: artificial intelligence; global harmony; religious communication; transcultural.

1. Introduction

Pope Francis' visit to Jakarta a few years ago was a rare momentum. Francis was warmly welcomed by the dignitaries of religions including Islam. In fact, the Grand Imam of the Istiqlal Mosque kissed the Pope's forehead as a form of tolerance despite the controversy. The presence of the Pope in Indonesia, which is predominantly Islamic, is a form of solidarity. Even on the sidelines of the visit, a dialogue was held between religious

umar which was so warm. This is a symbol of friendship and closeness between differences. Will moments like this continue to happen in the future?

The visit of the top Catholic leader to Indonesia is particularly meaningful. Indonesia represents a unique choice due to its immense religious pluralism, where multiple faith traditions coexist side by side. Moreover, the country's hundreds of ethnic groups—each with distinct cultures, languages, and customs—are united under the national motto of unity in diversity. This environment facilitates cross-cultural and interfaith communication at national, regional, and international levels (Menchik, 2021). In particular, the digital era—with its social media platforms and online forums—provides cost-effective and wide-scale opportunities for dialogue and engagement in ways that were previously difficult or impossible (Alwi et al., 2021; Tsuria & Campbell, 2021).

In the digital era, particularly with the rise of artificial intelligence (AI), cross-cultural and interfaith communication has experienced profound transformations. AI increasingly contributes to the dissemination, management, and moderation of religious content across digital platforms. While these developments offer significant opportunities—such as enhancing understanding across cultural and religious boundaries—they also raise serious ethical challenges. Algorithmic bias, disinformation, and the homogenization of cultural and religious values are among the key risks (Floridi & Cowls, 2021; Jobin et al., 2019). For instance, in religious education, one study warns that AI systems trained on datasets biased toward Western or Protestant theological traditions may marginalize Catholic, Orthodox, or Global South perspectives, thereby reinforcing existing theological asymmetries (Papakostas, 2025). Additionally, research on generative AI tools demonstrates their tendency to simplify religious discourse: AI often emphasizes plurality and respect but lacks depth, contextual nuance, or textual references, which may dilute the complexity of religious traditions (Campbell & Tsuria, 2021).

The development of AI technology has brought significant changes in various aspects of human life, including in the fields of communication, social, and culture. AI is now widely used in data processing, behavioral analysis, and the automation of various forms of human interaction, ultimately changing the way individuals and groups communicate (Floridi & Cowls, 2021; Kaplan & Haenlein, 2019). In an increasingly digitized world, AI serves not only as an auxiliary tool, but also as a mediator that facilitates and moderates conversations on a global scale. Its ability to process natural language allows AI to understand, respond, and even predict human communication needs with an ever-increasing degree of accuracy (Dwivedi & al., 2021). With this increasingly complex role, AI is not just a supporting technology but has become an integral part of shaping communication patterns, social dynamics, and cultural construction in the modern era (Jobin et al., 2019).

In the context of cross-cultural communication, artificial intelligence has become an instrument that plays a role in processing, disseminating, and moderating information on various digital platforms. This technology allows individuals from various cultural backgrounds to interact without geographical boundaries through automatic translation, content recommendation algorithms, as well as conversation-based intelligence systems such as chatbots and virtual assistants (Van Dijck et al., 2018). With AI, the process of cross-cultural communication becomes more efficient and inclusive, as this system is able to tailor messages to the preferences and cultural context of its users (Miller, 2019). However, on the other hand, the use of AI in cross-cultural communication also presents challenges, such as the possibility of distortion of meaning due to translation errors or algorithmic biases that can reinforce certain cultural stereotypes (Benjamin, 2019; Crawford, 2021). Therefore, while AI brings great opportunities in strengthening intercultural interactions, a more critical approach is needed to ensure that these technologies are used ethically and do not create communication gaps at a global level.

One of the aspects affected by the development of AI is religious communication, where this technology plays a role in the dissemination of teachings, the moderation of religious content, and the management of discussions between religious communities in the digital world. Various AI-based platforms, such as religious chatbots, religious learning apps, as well as algorithms that recommend specific faith-based content, have changed the way

individuals access and understand religious teachings. In addition, AI is also used to identify and filter out religion-based hate speech on social media, aiming to maintain a more inclusive and harmonious digital space.

While AI has great potential in strengthening interfaith dialogue and fostering global harmony, it also presents complex ethical challenges. One of the main challenges is the algorithmic bias that can affect the way AI interprets and disseminates religious information, which risks favoring certain narratives while ruling out other perspectives. In addition, the use of AI in religious communication also has the potential to face censorship issues against certain beliefs, especially if the algorithmic system is controlled by entities that have ideological or political interests. The homogenization of religious narratives due to AI is also a concern, where algorithms designed to provide recommendations based on user preferences can narrow the diversity of religious understandings and reduce openness to different perspectives. Therefore, an in-depth study is needed on how AI can be applied ethically in religious communication, so that it can be a tool that supports inclusivity without sacrificing cultural diversity and beliefs.

Therefore, this research will explore how cross-cultural religious communication is evolving in the age of AI, highlighting ethical challenges as well as opportunities that can be harnessed to create sustainable global harmony. This study examines the role of AI in shaping religious interactions in the digital space, including how this technology is used to disseminate teachings, moderate interfaith discussions, and manage differences of perspective in multicultural contexts. In addition, this study highlights the impact of algorithms and automation in building global harmony through religious communication based on cultural diversity. With a critical approach, this study aims to provide insight into strategies that can be applied so that AI can be used ethically in cross-cultural religious communication, so that it can be an instrument that supports a more inclusive and tolerant dialogue. The results of this research are expected to contribute to the development of policies and regulations related to the use of AI in the realm of religious communication, as well as offer solutions that have an impact on creating a more harmonious and sustainable world.

Several previous studies have shown that AI can be an effective tool in facilitating interfaith communication and fostering cross-cultural understanding. For example, a study conducted by Campbell & Tsuria (Campbell & Tsuria, 2021). In Digital Religion: Understanding Religious Practice in Digital Media highlights how digital technologies, including AI, have changed the way individuals access religious teachings as well as interact within religious communities. In addition, research by Cheong et al. (Cheong, 2021). In AI and Religious Communication: The Ethical Dilemmas of Algorithmic Mediation, it is revealed that while AI can help filter hate speech and moderate interfaith discussions, it also risks reinforcing algorithmic biases that can hinder diversity of religious views. Although these studies have addressed various aspects of the use of AI in religious communication, there is still a gap in the study of how AI can be used ethically to create global harmony in interfaith communication based on cultural diversity. With the increasing reliance on technology in various aspects of life, including in religious interactions, this study is becoming increasingly important in ensuring that AI is used responsibly in shaping inclusive and sustainable communication spaces.

2. Methods

This research is a qualitative study with a library research and critical analysis approach. This method was chosen to deeply understand the phenomenon of transcultural religious communication in the AI era, as well as to examine the ethical challenges arising from the transformation of digital technology to interfaith interactions (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Flick, 2018). This paper is compiled based on data from secondary sources obtained through a systematic search of literature (literature studies), including journal articles, conference proceedings, and online media sources. The authors establish the literature selection criteria based on three main considerations: a) the topic's relevance to religious

communication, AI, and transculturality; b) the credibility of the source; and c) publication up-to-date, with priority work for the last five years (2020–2025) to maintain relevance to the latest developments and to ensure that reference articles support the titles developed in this article (Snyder, 2019).

The data collection technique is carried out through an in-depth literature review using the snowball method, where one main reference will lead to other relevant sources (Wohlin, 2014). This process includes thematic recording, identification of key concepts, and grouping of issues related to the transformation of religious communication in the digital space. Data analysis uses a content analysis approach to identify patterns, themes, and trends in the literature studied (Krippendorff, 2019). In addition, critical interpretation based on hermeneutics is used to understand the construction of the meaning of religious communication across cultures, paying attention to the social, cultural, and political dynamics that influence religious digital narratives (Bleicher, 2017). This analysis is carried out in a reflective, critical, and layered manner to capture the complexity of transcultural interactions in the AI era.

Within an analytical framework, this study adopts a transdisciplinary approach that integrates cross-cultural communication theory, the study of technological ethics, and the theory of transculturality (Pohl et al., 2021). This approach is used to examine how AI shapes, moderates, and influences the diversity of religious communication amid the challenges of globalization and digital disruption. Based on the existing phenomenon, the author tries to relate various issues into a written work that has novelty value and has values that can create new discourse that can be used for readers. Therefore, this scientific manuscript can contribute to the development of knowledge, especially related to the development of artificial intelligence and its influence on the joints of life between religious people. To maintain validity, source triangulation is carried out, which is comparing findings from various types of literature and analyzing their consistency in discussing the issues of algorithmic bias, cultural homogenization, and ethical opportunities in the use of AI in the realm of religious communication (Noble, 2018; Patton, 2015). In addition, critical analysis is carried out in layers by involving diverse theoretical frameworks to enrich interpretive perspectives.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 The concept of transcultural religious communication

There are at least three key concepts to be examined: religious communication, transculturality, and transcultural religious communication. This section discusses each of these concepts in order to provide readers with a clearer understanding. Such clarification is necessary to prevent misinterpretations and to ensure a more accurate comprehension of the discussion.

3.1.1 Religious communication

Religious communication refers to the process of conveying, exchanging, and internalizing religious meanings, both verbal (lectures, scriptures, theological discussions) and non-verbal (rituals, symbols, religious practices) (Handayani, 2017; Nahr, 2019). In this context, religion is not only understood as a belief system, but also as a communication system that shapes the way individuals and groups view the world, others, and their spiritual relationships. Religious communication encompasses three main dimensions. First, the transmission of values and teachings from generation to generation. The transmission of values and teachings from generation to generation is the main foundation in religious communication. This process not only transfers religious information textually, but also includes the internalization of meaning, the formation of spiritual identity, and the preservation of traditions that live in the daily practices of the people. Through lectures, scripture readings, exemplary stories, and ritual practices, the older generation conveys the

core values of the religion such as compassion, justice, and forgiveness to the younger generation. This transmission is performative it occurs not only through words, but also through exemplary actions, symbols, and religious lifestyles.

In the context of a transcultural society and the era of artificial intelligence, the transmission of religious values has experienced new dynamics. Digital technology, especially AI-based platforms, allows the delivery of religious teachings to be carried out across space and time. Sermon videos, religious learning applications and spiritual chatbots are now new channels that expand the reach of religious communication. However, this ease of access also brings challenges, namely the potential fragmentation of meaning and the loss of cultural context that usually accompanies oral traditions and local rituals. Thus, the success of transmission depends not only on the content of the teachings, but also on the ability to maintain authenticity, historical context, and cultural sensitivity in its delivery.

Second, dialogue between religious communities to build mutual understanding. The dimension of dialogue between religious communities is a crucial aspect in religious communication, especially in the midst of the reality of an increasingly plural and interconnected world. Interfaith dialogue is not intended to unite doctrines or seek a theological common ground, but to build mutual understanding, mutual respect for differences, and strengthen social cohesion in the midst of diversity of beliefs. In this process of dialogue, each religion is treated as an equal subject, with an open space to convey its values, spiritual experiences, and ethical views in a reflective and participatory manner. This dialogue demands an empathetic attitude, humility, and an openness to listen without prejudice. In the transcultural context, interreligious dialogue also serves as a bridge that connects spiritual values with global humanitarian challenges. Through dialogue, religious people can formulate a joint commitment to respond to issues such as climate change, poverty, intolerance, and social conflict. Spirituality in interfaith dialogue is no longer limited by geographical boundaries or exclusive affiliations but rather transformed into a collective force that unites humanity in a spirit of love, justice, and peace. Thus, religious communication through dialogue not only builds understanding, but also gives birth to moral solidarity across cultural and belief boundaries.

Third, negotiating meaning in an ever-changing social context. The negotiation dimension of meaning highlights that religious communication is not a static process but rather takes place dynamically in the interaction between texts, contexts, and social interpretations. Religious meanings are not only derived from theological authority but are also reshaped through the life experiences of the people in responding to the ever-evolving social, cultural, political, and technological challenges. In this context, religious people are actively reinterpreting religious values to remain relevant to contemporary situations, such as issues of gender justice, the environment, digital technology, and cultural pluralism. This process demands a hermeneutical openness that respects the complexity of social realities as well as an awareness that religious meaning is contextual and historical.

In a transcultural society, the negotiation of meaning becomes more complex due to the interaction between cultural and religious identities. The meaning of a religious symbol or practice can be interpreted differently by different communities. In this situation, religious communication must be able to navigate differences in meaning tactfully, maintaining a balance between tradition and innovation, between the sanctity of the text and contextual needs. An inclusive, participatory, and reflective approach in negotiating meaning is key to maintaining social cohesion, avoiding interpretive conflicts, and building an adaptive and effective spirituality in the face of the changing times.

3.1.2 The concept of transculturality

The term "transculturality" was introduced by Wolfgang Welsch to describe a contemporary reality in which cultures are no longer separate, but rather intersect, mix, and form a hybrid identity (Welsch, 1999, 2001). In the context of religion, transculturality allows for the exchange of meanings, symbolic adaptations, and new understandings of religious practices in cross-cultural contexts. This concept is particularly relevant in the era

of globalization and digitalization, when religious people no longer live in cultural isolation, but in a complex network of global relationships.

3.1.3 Transcultural religious communication

Transcultural religious communication refers to the practice of religious communication that occurs in the context of cross-cultural and cross-geographical relations (Ilyas & Maknun, 2023; Rahmawati et al., 2024; Ridwan, 2022). In this case, religion is an active cultural actor in establishing interaction with the identities and values of other cultures. The main characteristics of transcultural religious communication are that it is interactive and reflective rather than one-way, prioritizes cross-identity empathy and recognition of differences, serves as a space for dialogue, not conversion, and is strengthened by digital media that removes physical boundaries, allowing religious people from different countries to discuss directly.

Digital transformation accelerates the process of transculturalization. For example, Muslims in Indonesia can follow recitations from scholars in the UK via YouTube; Christians in various countries can participate in online masses from the Vatican. The space for religious communication now transcends national and ethnic boundaries. However, this openness also brings challenges: there is a potential for value shocks, tensions of interpretation, and confusion of religious identity, especially when local traditions intersect with different global values.

3.2 AI's ethical challenge to create sustainable global harmony

The development of AI technology has brought a fundamental transformation in the practice of cross-cultural religious communication (Alamsyah et al., 2024; Andzani, 2023; Susanto, 2024). AI not only serves as a technical tool, but also as a mediation actor that is able to facilitate interfaith dialogue, spread religious teachings globally, and create spaces for spiritual interaction that transcend geographical and cultural boundaries. For example, apps like Sefaria (for Jewish studies), Muslim Pro App (for Muslims), or Abide (for Christian spiritual reflection), have leveraged AI technology to deliver religious content that is personalized, multilingual, and adaptive to the user's background. Automated translation technology and chatbots based on Natural Language Processing (NLP) also enable the exchange of teachings across languages and cultures in a more inclusive and efficient manner.

Behind these huge opportunities, AI-based religious communication also faces serious ethical challenges (Bahram, 2023; Hasan et al., 2023). One of the main challenges is algorithmic bias, where artificial intelligence systems can unconsciously prioritize certain religious narratives, while ignoring or marginalizing the diversity of interpretations that exist (Cahyono & Mukaromah, 2023; Masrichah, 2023). In a transcultural context, this has the potential to create a homogenization of meaning and disrupt the balance of religious representation in the digital space. In addition, there is also the risk of commodification of religious values, when religious content is adapted to market logic and popularity algorithms, thus sacrificing spiritual depth for the sake of affordability and fame. The phenomenon of religious clickbait or the virality of sermon pieces that are cut out of context becomes concrete examples that show how the meaning of religion can be reduced to mere visual consumption.

On the other hand, AI also brings strategic opportunities to build sustainable global harmony through more open, participatory, and targeted interfaith communication (Batubara, 2024; Mustikaningsih & Fahrudin, 2024). This technology can be used to filter hate speech, develop culturally adaptive cross-faith curricula, and create a neutral and safe virtual dialogue space. For example, several global initiatives such as the Interfaith AI Dialogue Platform have developed algorithms to facilitate interfaith discussions in an inclusive manner, with automated moderation based on communication ethics. By integrating AI into efforts to improve religious digital literacy, religious people can be

encouraged to not only understand their own religion more deeply but also open themselves to other religious perspectives that enrich dialogue and humanitarian solidarity.

Cross-cultural religious communication in the age of AI, as such, requires ethical awareness and a continuous reflective approach. Technology should not be the sole determinant of the direction of religious meaning but rather positioned as a means of supporting to build spiritual bridges between humanity. If managed wisely, AI can be a strategic instrument for nurturing diversity, facilitating interfaith empathy, and creating a more peaceful, inclusive, and civilized global order.

Tabel 1. Ethical challenges and opportunities of AI in transcultural religious communication

Dimension	Ethical Challenges	Opportunities
Algorithmic Governance	Bias in content moderation; reinforcement of dominant perspectives	Inclusive and transparent algorithms for diverse religious voices
Cultural Diversity	Homogenization of cultural and religious values	AI-assisted personalization to preserve pluralism
Religious Plurality	Misrepresentation of beliefs; spread of disinformation	Facilitating interfaith dialogue and religious literacy
Global Social Harmony	Polarization, hate speech, conflict escalation	Enhancing empathy, global solidarity, and intercultural understanding through AI moderation tools

3.3 The role of AI in shaping religious interactions in the digital space

In Indonesia, AI is increasingly playing an important role in shaping patterns of religious interaction in the digital space (Campbell & Tsuria, 2021). As a country with religious diversity and a very large population of internet users, Indonesia is a dynamic field for the integration of digital technology, including AI, in religious life. AI is used in a variety of applications and platforms to disseminate religious teachings, facilitate religious discussions, and moderate content related to spiritual and interfaith issues. One concrete form of the role of AI in Indonesia can be seen in the use of religious chatbots in instant messaging applications such as WhatsApp and Telegram, which offer automated question-and-answer services about fiqh, daily prayers, and explanations of Qur'anic verses (Campbell, 2020). For example, several Islamic boarding schools and da'wah organizations have developed AI-based chatbots that are able to answer basic questions of the ummah about worship procedures, fasting, zakat, or contemporary religious problems. Among Christians, the SABDA app provides digital Bible reading and interpretation with automatic search and personalization features based on the user's spiritual needs (Campbell, 2020). Technology like this allows religious people to access religious information quickly and relevantly, anytime and anywhere.

In addition, AI is also involved in the process of moderating religious content on social media (Chen et al., 2023; Gillespie, 2018; Gorwa et al., 2020). Using hate speech detection algorithms, platforms such as YouTube, Facebook, and TikTok work with governments and civil society to filter out content that has the potential to cause conflicts between religious communities. For example, after an increase in social tension due to certain religious issues such as blasphemy cases or provocations based on religious symbols, AI algorithms are used to detect and take down provocative content that spreads massively. This technology, although not yet perfect, has become part of efforts to mitigate conflict and create a safer and more inclusive digital space.

However, AI not only functions as a technical tool, but also helps shape the spiritual experience of society which is increasingly digitized (Hoover & Echchaibi, 2021). Religious activities such as online recitation, virtual masses, and digital meditations are now mostly carried out through platforms assisted by AI technology, both in terms of material preparation, simultaneous translation, and interactivity with the audience. During the month of Ramadan, for example, many religious institutions use content recommendation algorithms to present lectures, prayers, and studies according to user preferences—a form

of religious personalization that answers the spiritual needs of fast-paced urban communities.

Thus, the role of AI in religious interaction in Indonesia is not only technological, but also cultural and spiritual. AI opens up new opportunities to revive religious values in a contextual, accessible, and cross-cultural format. Although caution is still needed so that there is no narrowing of meaning or dominance of a single interpretation, AI has the potential to be a strategic partner in building religious communication that is more open, inclusive, and adaptive to the times.

3.4 The impact of algorithms and automation in building global harmony through cultural diversity-based religious communication

In Indonesia, the impact of algorithms and automation in religious communication can be seen clearly through various rapidly growing religious digital events, especially on social media and AI-based online platforms. For example, during the month of Ramadan, YouTube and TikTok's algorithms automatically recommend content on religious lectures, Islamic studies, and spiritual motivational videos tailored to the user's viewing history. Popular ustaz such as Ustaz Abdul Somad, Gus Baha, or Buya Yahya have thousands of hours of content that are automatically distributed by the recommendation system to millions of users, not only in Indonesia but also in the Muslim diaspora community abroad.

A similar phenomenon also occurs in the Indonesian Christian community. Major churches such as GBI or HKBP developed YouTube channels and spiritual podcasts that featured weekly worship and daily devotionals (Boiliu et al., 2024; Tarihoran, 2022). The algorithms of platforms such as Spotify and YouTube Music help spread hymns across denominations, expanding the reach between cultures and even between languages, thus encouraging people across regions to get to know each other's different expressions of faith. Automation in the form of regular live-streaming of worship also creates a "virtual community" that is not limited by geography, allowing people from Papua to Aceh to feel spiritual connectedness simultaneously. Another example can be seen on the Umma.id platforma Muslim application from Indonesia that uses AI to provide notifications of prayer times, daily verse interpretation, and a question and answer feature to ustaz online. The app features a system that can customize religious content based on user preferences, such as sects, locations, or frequently searched themes. This automation helps users deepen their spirituality personally, while building a diverse yet digitally connected community.

However, some cases also show the critical side of the algorithm. At certain times, such as in the run-up to elections or during conflicts, social media algorithms actually reinforce echo chambers that magnify sectarian sentiments. Provocative content that contains religious elements often gets a wider reach because of its high interaction, without considering its impact on social cohesion. This suggests that without ethical design and adequate oversight, algorithms can reinforce polarization and undermine the harmony that has been built. Therefore, Indonesia, as a multicultural and multi-religious country, has a strategic interest in ensuring that the use of AI in religious communication not only supports the dissemination of religious values, but also serves as a tool to facilitate healthy interfaith dialogue, promote tolerance, and nurture cultural diversity. Collaboration between the government, religious institutions, technology developers, and academics is crucial in shaping an inclusive and ethical religious digital ecosystem.

3.5 Actionable strategies for AI to be used ethically in cross-cultural religious communication

In order for AI to be ethically used in cross-cultural religious communication, a series of strategies are needed that are not only technical, but also philosophical, social, and cultural (Alim & Syahrul, 2021; Batubara, 2024; Sugiharta, 2025; Wahyudi, 2023). This strategy must integrate the ethical principles of communication, respect for religious plurality, and sensitivity to cultural diversity inherent in every spiritual expression. The first strategy is to ensure that the algorithms used in religious platforms are structured with the

principles of inclusivity and transparency in mind. This means that the content recommendation system must be able to recognize and present a variety of religious perspectives, not just based on popularity or the highest engagement. For instance, YouTube or TikTok apps can give users the option to set religious and cultural preferences so that the content reflects diversity and does not lock users into one perspective, such as providing lectures from Gus Mus (Islam), Father Benny Susetyo (Catholic), or Pastor Gilbert Lumoindong (Christianity).

Strengthening religious digital literacy is equally important so that people do not become passive consumers of algorithmic content but are able to filter, assess, and use information critically. This literacy can be developed through workshops, religious teacher training, and community-based programs in mosques, churches, monasteries, or religious institutions. For example, a madrasah in Yogyakarta held a class entitled Bijak Bermedia: Filtering Da'wah in the Digital Era to train students to recognize religious content that contains hoaxes, hate speech, or AI-generated material without verification. Such training develops critical thinking skills to evaluate religious content that may appear authentic but actually reflects algorithmic bias.

Another important step is cross-field collaboration between technology developers, religious leaders, academics, and local communities. This cooperation ensures that AI systems are not only technically reliable but also sensitive to spiritual values and cultural norms. For example, in the development of the Umma.id application, developers worked with Muslim scholars to create features such as daily tafsir and automatic prayer schedules. This collaboration guarantees that the AI system does not simply display verses or hadiths, but also considers context, sect diversity, and local customs.

Periodic audits of religious AI content are also essential to avoid unintentional dissemination of discriminatory or intolerant narratives. Independent cross-faith institutions may conduct these audits to assess whether algorithms spread harmful content. For example, an Islamic streaming platform in Indonesia discovered during an audit that videos about "infidels," "great sins," and "apocalypse" gained higher reach during the pandemic due to search trends. After evaluation, the curation strategy was revised to emphasize compassion, ukhuwah, and social solidarity.

Finally, AI should be developed within local cultural and ethical contexts. This can be achieved by embedding local narratives, languages, and symbols in spiritual content delivered by AI. For instance, a digital prayer app in Bali provides interfaith prayers in regional languages such as Javanese and Sundanese, accompanied by gamelan or ethnic music, while also personalizing prayer reminders based on user traditions and geographic location. By integrating such strategies, AI can become a collective spiritual agent that strengthens intercultural ties, promotes tolerance, and fosters peaceful narratives in global religious communication. In the Indonesian context, these approaches are crucial to maintain a balance between Bhinneka Tunggal Ika and the unstoppable wave of technological advancement.

3.6 Social and cultural implications

The emergence of artificial intelligence-based transcultural religious communication has had a significant impact on the social and cultural dynamics of global society. On the one hand, AI contributes to the creation of more open and egalitarian interfaith dialogue spaces, which sociologically strengthens social inclusion and minimizes the potential for identity conflicts based on differences in beliefs. Digital platforms supported by intelligent algorithms have the potential to foster social cohesion, by providing wider access to religious narratives that are moderate and friendly to cultural diversity. This phenomenon can strengthen a culture of peace, tolerance, and mutual understanding in a multicultural society.

The adoption of AI in the realm of religious communication also has cultural consequences that need to be critically monitored. The dominance of algorithms designed by global corporations risks perpetuating cultural biases or hegemonization of certain

values, thus potentially reducing the richness of local meaning and spiritual wisdom of traditional religious communities. In this context, there are concerns that AI could blur the boundaries of the authenticity of religious teachings by presenting content that is automatically curated based on popularity alone, rather than theological depth or historical context. In addition, people's dependence on digital religious information can also shift the pattern of religious social interaction that has been rooted in direct relationships and shared spiritual experiences, into an instant and individualistic consumption of knowledge.

Another implication is the birth of hybrid religious identities, where people shape their religious understanding through interaction with various digital narratives that are transnational. This identity reflects the integration of religious values with global cultural experiences mediated by technology and creates more flexible and contextual forms of expression of faith. Although it opens up a space for innovation in spiritual appreciation, this transformation also requires the critical ability of the community to filter information and maintain the authenticity of teachings in the midst of a massive and rapid flow of content. Therefore, the active involvement of religious communities, academics, and policymakers is crucial to ensure that AI-based transcultural religious communication remains in line with the principles of social ethics and local cultural wisdom.

3.7 Ethical recommendations and implementation strategies

In order to optimize the role of artificial intelligence in transcultural religious communication, a number of ethical recommendations and implementation strategies need to be formulated as normative and operational foundations. First, there needs to be a global ethical framework that explicitly regulates the principles of the use of AI in a religious context, such as the principles of non-discrimination, respect for religious pluralism, algorithm transparency, and accountability of technology providers. This framework should be developed collaboratively by religious institutions, academic institutions, civil society organizations, as well as international bodies focused on technological ethics and human rights. Second, it is important to develop an audit and evaluation system for religious content produced or disseminated by AI. This step aims to identify potential distortions of meaning, the spread of intolerant narratives, or the manipulation of religious symbols for certain political or economic interests. In this case, strengthening digital literacy based on religious values is crucial to equip the community to deal with the flow of spiritual information that is massive, fast, and often unverified.

Third, the implementation strategy must also pay attention to the local context, by prioritizing the participation of religious communities in the technology design process. This can be realized through the development of community-based AI, which not only reflects the diversity of religious interpretations and practices but also upholds local wisdom and the spiritual needs of local communities. In the long term, this model can strengthen the social legitimacy of the use of AI and avoid the dominance of certain homogeneous and hegemonic religious narratives. The success of AI-based transcultural religious communication relies heavily on a shared commitment across sectors to make technology an instrument of dialogue, not domination; as a space for spiritual reflection, not just the distribution of information; and as a bridge of empathy between them, not a tool for identity fragmentation. Therefore, public policy development and technology design need to always be aligned with the values of justice, humanity, and global peace.

4. Conclusions

The era of artificial intelligence has opened a new chapter in the practice of religious communication that is no longer bound by geographical or local cultural boundaries. In a transcultural context, religious communication faces complex ethical challenges, ranging from algorithmic bias, reduction of spiritual meaning, to the commodification of religious symbols in the digital space. These challenges demand high vigilance and digital literacy

from religious people as well as the active involvement of religious leaders and policy makers in overseeing technological ethics.

Behind this complexity lies a great opportunity to build global harmony. Artificial intelligence technology, when managed ethically and inclusively, can be a strategic medium to strengthen interfaith dialogue, elaborate universal human values, and create bridges of communication that transcend identity barriers. Participatory, narrative, and reflective models of religious communication can be used to promote social cohesion and enrich intercultural understanding in an increasingly digitalized world.

Therefore, the future direction of transcultural religious communication needs to be supported by the integration of technological innovation and the principles of religious ethics that respect plurality. Collaboration between religious communities, academics, and AI developers is crucial to ensure that this digital transformation not only brings communication efficiency but also strengthens spiritual values that are capable of leading humanity towards a more peaceful, just, and civilized global life.

Author Contribution
A.R., contributed to the conceptualization and design of the study, conducted the literature review, and carried out the reflective and hermeneutical analysis. He was responsible for the collection and organization of secondary data, the thematic and critical interpretation, as well as the drafting of the manuscript. The author also revised and refined the article through critical review and editing. All aspects of the work, including theoretical framing, validation of sources, and interpretation of findings, were carried out by A.R. The author has read and approved the final version of the manuscript and agrees to be accountable for all aspects of the work.

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