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Mediatization of Religion in Cyberspace: A Case of Artificial Intelligence A Preliminary Study

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Abstract
Mediatization refers to how religious practices, beliefs, and institutions are shaped by media technologies, media logic, and the broader media landscape. Through AI technologies, people can access religious information conveniently, interactively, and personally, particularly through platforms such as ChatGPT. Although AI is fundamentally a technological field, its implications extend to various aspects of religious life. This development raises questions about the authenticity of religious experiences when technology mediates them. Therefore, applying AI in the religious domain requires careful consideration to ensure that religious values and objectives are preserved in the digital age. This study aims to analyze the mediatization of religion in cyberspace through artificial intelligence. It employs a qualitative library research design with a phenomenological approach. The study uses content analysis to examine religious mediatization and its relationship with artificial intelligence. The study also draws on Stig Hjarvard's theory of the mediatization of religion as its theoretical framework for understanding how religion is mediated in the digital sphere. The findings indicate that the mediatization of religion in the digital sphere refers to the process through which religious teachings, practices, and communication increasingly involve information and communication technologies, particularly the internet and digital platforms. AI plays a role in this process through various mechanisms that can influence how people understand, access, and share religion. Media technologies have transformed and reshaped the presentation of certain religious activities, such as scriptural recitation and prayer, through ChatGPT and contemporary media platforms. AI has become an increasingly pervasive form of mediatization, posing significant challenges to conventional understandings of religious traditions in the digital age. The findings further suggest that the mediatization of religion in the digital sphere may contribute to the emergence of banal religion, in which religious practices and expressions risk becoming superficial or detached from their deeper spiritual meanings.

Keywords: *Mediatization of Religion; Digital Sphere; Artificial Intelligence*

Abstrak
Mediatisasi merujuk pada bagaimana praktik, kepercayaan, dan institusi keagamaan dipengaruhi oleh teknologi media, logika media, dan lanskap media secara keseluruhan. Melalui teknologi AI informasi keagamaan dapat diperoleh secara praktis, interaktif, dan personal, salah satunya melalui ChatGPT. Meskipun AI pada dasarnya adalah bidang teknologi, implikasinya dapat memengaruhi sejumlah aspek dalam konteks keagamaan. Hal ini menimbulkan pertanyaan tentang keaslian pengalaman religius ketika dimediasi oleh teknologi. Oleh karena itu, penerapan teknologi AI di bidang agama perlu dipertimbangkan dengan cermat untuk memastikan nilai-nilai dan tujuan agama tetap terjaga di era digital. Adapun penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisa mediatisasi agama di cyberspace melalui penggunaan kecerdasan buatan. Penelitian ini merupakan penelitian pustaka (library research) yang bersifat kualitatif dengan menggunakan pendekatan fenomenologi. Dalam

mengumpulkan data terkait, penelitian ini menggunakan motode analisis konten untuk menganalisis mediatisasi agama serta kaitannya dengan AI. Selain itu, penelitian ini juga dikaitkan dengan teori mediatisasi agama Stig Hjarvard sebagai landasan teori untuk melihat mediatisasi agama dalam ranah digital. Hasil dari penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa, mediatisasi agama dalam ranah digital merujuk pada proses di mana ajaran, praktik, dan komunikasi keagamaan melibatkan penggunaan teknologi informasi dan komunikasi, terutama dalam konteks internet dan platform digital. Peran AI dalam mediatisasi agama di ranah digital dapat melibatkan beberapa aspek yang dapat memengaruhi cara agama dipahami, diakses, dan disebarluaskan. Media telah mendorong transformasi dan penyajian kegiatan keagamaan tertentu, seperti pembacaan kitab suci dan doa, melalui ChatGPT dan platform media kontemporer. Artificial Intelligence (AI) telah menjadi bentuk mediatisasi yang ada di mana-mana, menghadirkan tantangan signifikan terhadap perspektif konvensional tentang tradisi keagamaan di era digital. Penemuan menunjukkan bahwa mediatisasi agama dalam ranah digital merujuk pada agama yang banal atau dangkal.

Kata Kunci : Mediatisasi Agama; Ranah Digital; dan Kecerdasan Buatan

1. Introduction

Communication and information technology has developed rapidly and become deeply embedded in people's everyday lives. This development is not only evident in the advancement of gadget products, but also in the expansion of media platforms. The cyberspace includes online platforms, social media, and digital technologies that have become an indispensable part of modern communication and interaction. This has provided new avenues for religious expression, community building, and engagement (Alexandra Tudor dkk., 2021). In response to the dynamics of the digital age, religion has increasingly sought to enter the media sphere as a means of dissemination (H. A. Campbell, 2013). This aims to invite religious goodness and become religious during digital disruption, which can be done through social media. Heidi A. Campbell describes how information technology and media influence how we relate to religion and how to find expression in the digital world. Not only external expressions of religion, but also influence religious practice, religious identity, community, ritual, even theological thought (H. A. Campbell, 2013).

Media logic not only penetrates the political sphere, but also extends into cultural institutions such as religion, family life, and education (H. A. Campbell, 2013). Religion in cyberspace has changed human views on religious doctrine and the construction that religion presents to society and culture. Through a process called mediatization, religion has been widely incorporated into the logic of media. The media shapes the religious imagination according to cultural genres and the popular environment so that it takes over many of the social functions of religion, providing moral and spiritual guidance, as well as a sense of community (H. A. Campbell, 2013).

Information and communication technology, especially the internet, has drastically changed the paradigm of communication and human interaction in an increasingly sophisticated digital society. It is becoming increasingly interesting to research the phenomenon of religious mediatization and religion in cyberspace. The process of translating religious culture, knowledge, and messages into a form accessible through various digital platforms is referred to as religious mediation and mediatization. In addition, advances in AI technology or artificial intelligence have

had a significant influence on various sides of human life, including in the field of religion (H. A. Campbell, 2013).

Artificial Intelligence (AI) refers to the development of computer systems that can perform tasks that typically require human intelligence, such as learning, problem solving, and decision making. About religion, AI can be used to analyze religious texts, personalize spiritual experiences, and facilitate religious education (H. A. Campbell, 2013). AI is transforming religious institutions and movements by enabling them to optimize technology to spread their teachings and improve faith practices. For example, religious organizations are developing apps for daily readings, prayer schedules, and chatbots to communicate religious concepts to a wider audience. AI technology makes religious practice more accessible to individuals who may not have had access before. For example, AI-powered devices and apps can provide personalized spiritual experiences, offer religious education, and facilitate virtual religious ceremonies.

As an AI-powered platform, ChatGPT lets users ask questions and receive responses or suggestions, including on basic religious matters (Fui-Hoon Nah dkk., 2023) Beyond conversational AI, other applications of AI-related technologies have also emerged in religious settings. These developments raise important questions about who controls these technologies, how AI systems are programmed, and whose religious values and interpretations are embedded in their design and implementation.

This study focuses on the mediatization of religion through generative artificial intelligence (AI)-based chatbots, with particular attention to ChatGPT. ChatGPT was selected because of its distinctive characteristics as an AI-powered conversational system that enables users to interact directly by asking questions and receiving responses tailored to the context of the conversation (Menon & Shilpa. K, 2023). In religious contexts, this interactive pattern creates new opportunities for people to use chatbots as a convenient means of obtaining information and understanding various religious issues, ranging from questions about religious texts and teachings to matters of worship, morality, and everyday life. Unlike digital media that primarily provide and distribute religious content in visual or audio formats, ChatGPT facilitates interactive, personalized, and dialogical communication, potentially reshaping how individuals access, interpret, and engage with religious knowledge.

Users do not merely receive pre-existing information; they can ask follow-up questions, request further explanations, seek clarification, and sustain conversations. These characteristics make ChatGPT a compelling subject for examining emerging forms of religious mediation. In this context, technology functions not merely as a channel for transmitting religious messages but also as an intermediary in how religious knowledge is sought, generated, and interpreted. This interactive dynamic provides an important basis for investigating how generative AI may reshape the ways individuals access and construct understandings of religion in digital environments.

Building on the issues outlined above, this study focuses on the mediatization of religion through generative AI-based chatbots, particularly ChatGPT. It examines

how AI mediates religion in cyberspace, with particular emphasis on how interactions with AI chatbots shape access to, interpretation of, and communication about religious knowledge in digital environments. By exploring these interactions, the study seeks to deepen understanding of the evolving presence of religion in cyberspace, including the potential benefits and challenges associated with the use of AI in religious contexts. Given the ethical implications of integrating AI into religious life, this study also highlights the importance of critical reflection among researchers, technology developers, and religious leaders regarding the design, use, and broader consequences of these technologies.

2. Method

This article employs a qualitative research design based on library research and adopts a phenomenological approach. The phenomenological approach explores how the presence of artificial intelligence (AI), particularly ChatGPT, is experienced and understood in the context of religious practices in digital environments. The study draws on two types of data sources: primary and secondary sources. Primary sources consist of original materials directly relevant to the research subject, while secondary sources include scholarly articles, books, and other publications that provide supporting information and theoretical perspectives. The data are drawn from academic journals, books, relevant documentation, and selected digital content related to the mediatization of religion through AI.

Data collection involves identifying, reading, and selecting materials relevant to the research objectives. To examine these materials systematically, the study employs content analysis as its principal analytical method, supported by relevant scholarly literature (Arifuddin, 2016). Content analysis examines texts and communicative messages systematically, with attention to their content, meanings, and patterns. Specifically, the analysis focuses on how AI is used to communicate religious teachings, facilitate religious practices, and mediate religious communication, as well as how these uses may influence the ways religion is understood and represented in digital environments.

3. Result and Discussion

3.1. Definition of Mediatization of Religion

Mediatization of religion refers to a socio-cultural process through which religious beliefs, practices, and institutions are increasingly shaped by media logic. Within this framework, religion does not simply adapt to media environments; instead, media actively reorganize religious authority, rituals, and modes of engagement. Conceptually, mediatization differs from the notions of *media* and *mediation*. As Endang argues, mediatization reflects a condition in which individuals and institutions become increasingly dependent on media, leading to fundamental transformations in social relations and cultural meaning making. Applied to religion, mediatization highlights how religious life is no longer confined to traditional institutional settings but increasingly reconfigured within media environments (Endang, 2016, hlm. 2).

Mediation refers to the process through which communication is transmitted from one actor to another via technological or symbolic means. At this level, mediation primarily concerns the technical and semiotic aspects of communication, focusing on how messages are conveyed and made intelligible to audiences without necessarily addressing broader social or cultural consequences (Silverstone, 2005). As such, mediation can be understood as a relatively neutral process of message transmission that does not inherently imply structural change in social institutions or cultural practices. In contrast, mediatization denotes a broader social process in which media become deeply integrated into everyday life and institutional structures, significantly shaping patterns of interaction, communication, and meaning-making. Scholars such as Hjarvard emphasize that mediatization involves the penetration of media logic into non-media institutions, including religion, politics, and education, resulting in long-term transformations of social practices and cultural frameworks (Hjarvard, 2013).

Stig Hjarvard conceptualizes media as agents of religious change in his article *The Mediatization of Religion: A Theory of the Media as Agents of Religious Change*. He argues that the mediatization of religion occurs as religious life becomes increasingly shaped by media logic. Media function not only as channels for disseminating religious ideas but also as important sources of religious knowledge and experience. Furthermore, media shape religious imagination through their languages and genres, while also providing social and cultural environments that assume some of the functions traditionally performed by religious institutions (Hjarvard, 2008).

According to Stig Hjarvard, the mediatization of religion refers to a social process through which religious beliefs, practices, and institutions are increasingly shaped by media logic rather than solely by internal religious authorities. In modern societies, media do not merely transmit religious content; they also function as relatively independent institutions that influence how religion is represented, practiced, and understood in everyday life. Consequently, religion in contemporary society is increasingly shaped by the structures, formats, and norms of media environments (Hjarvard, 2013). This perspective is also reflected in Indonesian scholarship, which highlights the growing dependence of religious practices on media environments. Religious life in contemporary society is increasingly influenced by the logic of new media, as religious expression and communication increasingly take place through the internet and online platforms (Arifuddin, 2017, hlm. 18). These developments illustrate how media have become important spaces for the communication and expression of religious beliefs and practices. To further explain the various roles of media in this process, Hjarvard proposes three metaphors: media as conduits, media as languages, and media as environments.

Within the broader theoretical framework of mediatization, Stig Hjarvard's develops mediatization theory as an approach to understanding the role of media in transforming society and culture. He emphasizes that media do not merely transmit information, but actively shape how individuals perceive, interpret, and understand the world by embedding media logic into social institutions, including religion.

Extending this discussion into digital and virtual environments, Heidi A. Campbell contributes to the understanding of mediatization in the context of cyber religion. According to Campbell, mediatization in cyber religion refers to the model that describes the types of religious communities and rituals that are elaborated through the Internet and virtual environments in cyberspace. Cyber religion is independent of conventional religion in the real world and can grow and evolve through its use of technology (H. Campbell, 2012, hlm. 3). Højsgaard supports the view that religious mediatization involves a scientific conversation between the virtual and real worlds, encompassing religious practices and communities in cyberspace, as well as spiritual information uploaded by community members (Højsgaard & Warburg, 2005, hlm. 50).

Through the process of mediatization, religion is increasingly subsumed under the logic of the media. As channels of communication, the media have become the primary source of religious ideas, especially in the form of banal religion. As a language, the media shape the religious imagination according to the genres of popular culture, as a cultural environment, the media have taken over many social functions of institutionalized religions, providing both moral and spiritual guidance and a sense of community (Hjarvard, 2008). Taken together, the mediatization of religion highlights a fundamental shift in how religious communication is produced, circulated, and interpreted in contemporary society. As religious life becomes increasingly subsumed under media logic, media function not only as channels of communication but also as symbolic languages and cultural environments that reshape religious imagination, authority, and community formation. This article argues that mediatization should be understood as an ongoing and dynamic process through which religion is continuously reconfigured across mediated spaces. This theoretical framework provides a critical foundation for examining the role of digital environments and emerging technologies particularly AI in further transforming religious communication and experience in the digital sphere.

3.2. The Concept of Mediatization of Religion in the Cyberspace

Stig Hjarvard, a prominent scholar in media and communication studies and one of the key theorists of mediatization, characterizes mediatization by describing media development on two fronts. Firstly, the media has grown as a separate and independent social institution. Secondly, the media becomes increasingly integrated into the operations of other social organizations as it gains more prominence as a separate entity in society. This indicates that over time, the media has become integrated into various aspects of everyday life, such as politics, family, education, and religion (Hjarvard, 2011, hlm. 122). This dual process explains how religion in contemporary society cannot be separated from media environments, as religious communication, authority, and practice are increasingly embedded within mediated structures.

Within this framework, Hjarvard argues that religion often occupies a passive position in relation to media, as religious institutions adapt to media logic in order to remain visible and relevant in public discourse. From this perspective, mediatization

does not merely involve the transmission of religious messages through media, but rather a transformation of how religion is represented, practiced, and understood. Religious media explores the interplay between religion and media, with religion often taking a passive subject position as the media assumes a more active role. The accommodation of media logic by religion means that it can manifest in various forms of communication. Hjarvard's analysis identifies three types of mediatized religion: (1) religious media, (2) journalism on religion, and (3) banal religion. (Hjarvard, 2011, hlm. 122) These typologies illustrate different ways in which religion is reshaped through mediated communication.

According to him, due to the mediatization of religion, "Religious media" refers to any form of media related to religion or religious activities. The term encompasses various forms of media, ranging from religious writing, religious radio and television, religious websites, to apps and social media platforms used by religious communities. The presence of cyberspace helps religious organizations to communicate directly with their followers and the wider community. However, religious organizations usually manipulate with a high level of editing in controlling media content. This leads to a pluralization of religious voices on the Internet, which not only challenges religious authority, but also changes the shape of religious communication practices (Hjarvard & Lövheim, 2012, hlm. 30).

The Second type, Journalism on religion is one of the most prominent forms of mediatized religion. "Journalism about religion" refers to journalistic practices that focus on coverage of topics or issues related to religion. Increased coverage of religion has changed how society defines and frames religion. Journalism is an institution that functions as a spokesperson to the public, but the norms and practices are often different. This is often exploited by some powerful religious social institutions to bring religion into the public sphere through public accountability, while the concept of journalism should provide an objective and impartial idea. (Hjarvard & Lövheim, 2012, hlm. 31–33) Journalism on religion and banal religion may stimulate criticism of the church, as well as encourage individualized and more bricolage-like forms of religion. It is important to maintain objectivity and avoid biased language when discussing religion (Hjarvard & Lövheim, 2012, hlm. 12).

The third type, Mediatized religion can also appear in the form of banal religion, a typology that showcases the media's ability to present several symbols and actions that implicitly strengthen religion's presence in culture and society, but in a different manner. "Banal religion" refers to an understanding of religion that focuses more on those aspects of religion in everyday life that can be considered common or ordinary. This concept contrasts with the traditional view of religion, which is often associated with formal religious practices within religious institutions. The idea of banal religion is often associated with scholars of religious studies who emphasize religious practices that involve everyday life and take place outside the formal context of a church or temple (Hjarvard, 2008).

From a broader conceptual perspective, mediatization can thus be understood as a process that fosters a structural interdependence between religion and media. As religion is framed and represented within commercially driven and popular media

environments, sacred meanings may be recontextualized, negotiated, or even commodified. Mediatization is particularly visible in cyberspace, where conventional religious institutions develop digital presences that enable interactive forms of religious engagement and participation. In this sense, religion is not only communicated through media but is actively reshaped by mediated environments (Aulia, 2017).

While Hjarvard's approach emphasizes media logic and institutional transformation, Heidi A. Campbell offers a complementary yet distinct perspective on the mediatization of religion in digital environments. Campbell focuses on how digital media, especially the internet and social media, reconfigure religious communities, practices, and identities. In her analysis of cyber religion, Campbell highlights how religious rituals and communities can emerge and develop within virtual spaces, sometimes independently of traditional offline institutions. Rather than positioning religion as merely passive, Campbell emphasizes the agency of religious actors in negotiating, appropriating, and shaping digital technologies according to their religious values and goals (H. Campbell, 2012, hlm. 3).

Comparatively, both Hjarvard and Campbell acknowledge that media play a crucial role in transforming contemporary religious life. However, their emphases differ. Hjarvard foregrounds the dominance of media logic and the institutional consequences of mediatization, particularly through concepts such as banal religion and journalistic framing. Campbell, by contrast, focuses more on lived religious experience, online community formation, and the ways digital media enable new forms of religious participation. Together, these perspectives provide a more comprehensive understanding of mediatization of religion in cyberspace, revealing it as both a structural transformation driven by media logic and a dynamic process shaped by religious actors within digital environments.

3.3. Utilization of Artificial Intelligence in Presenting Religious Content

When scholars first examined the interaction between the internet and religious studies, they viewed online and offline contexts as distinct entities. Certain religions have expressed apprehension regarding the internet's influence, considering it a potential threat to conventional offline religious practices. In theory, religious practices and discussions in cyberspace are accounted for by the idea of cyber-religion or digital religion, which can be subdivided into "online religion" and "religion online." Online authority, on the other hand, is typified by the rise of new figures with authority in the online world, which typically causes strain with traditional religious figures and institutions in the offline world (Syihabudin, 2022).

According to experts, the development of AI will continue to be developed quickly and have a major impact on various aspects of life including business, transportation, health and religion (Pongtambing dkk., 2023, hlm. 24). The presence of AI in the field of religion facilitates the community with the form of chatbots for spiritual guidance that have the ability to analyze religious texts, become mentors virtually, provide ritual and prayer reminder applications, and even create virtual worlds for worship (Reed, 2022). This can be seen from the use of AI in mediating

religion in cyberspace.

The integration of multimedia applications into websites that enable the delivery of religious sermons from remote locations can impact a person's religiosity. Individual believers access their scriptures in digital form, and the internet presents diverse dialogues about religion. Mosques and churches are increasingly using the internet and social media to communicate with their congregations. The presence of scripture in digital form on smartphones affects how scripture is interpreted. People are lulled by the easy access to religious activities so fewer and fewer people carry out religious obligations as they should. Religion becomes a personalized experience and social media becomes a force that changes the face of religion (ALIMI, 2018, hlm. 15).

Social media and the Internet utilize AI in their operations. The presence of algorithms and hashtags (#) on social media is one example of the use of AI in social media and the Internet. The use of internet browsers can record a person's browsing history and this is one example of an algorithm. Algorithms are the basic techniques used to get the job done. When we give orders to the media about what to do that is where the algorithm works. Algorithms can sophisticatedly read and present posts and organize them according to how likely users will interact with the content. In simple terms, algorithms are a set of carefully planned instructions that follow a specific sequence. Their goal is to personalize the user experience by providing information that matches their consumption behavior, rather than simply what the user wants (ALIMI, 2018, hlm. 41–43).

Some of the potentials utilized are the process of preparing material where AI-based applications can be used. Various applications are developed over time, such as the use of applications by AI, namely ChatGPT, which is chatbot-based, able to help dig up information on da'wah material and then present da'wah material to be more interesting (Sucipto et al., 2023). AI has become more accessible and visible to the average user due to OpenAI, ChatGPT, and other post-AI tools (Tsuria, 2023, hlm. 31). The use of ChatGPT extends beyond accessing information presented through public media, as users can seek clarification by asking follow-up questions, comparing different perspectives, and exploring how religious teachings may be interpreted in everyday life. These characteristics suggest a shift in the consumption of religious information within the process of mediatization, from predominantly one-way communication toward more interactive and personalized exchanges. Rather than passively receiving religious content, users can actively engage with the system to explore questions and develop their understanding of religious matters.

For example, users can ask ChatGPT about the proper way to perform *ṣalāh* (Islamic prayer), the meanings of supplications recited during prayer, or ethical conduct among Muslims without having to wait for a scheduled religious lecture or study session. ChatGPT can generate a response within seconds, making religious information readily accessible and convenient to consult. Such responses may help users understand religious concepts that they have previously found difficult to comprehend. However, a critical question remains: does this simplification preserve the accuracy and contextual richness of religious knowledge, or might it omit

important nuances necessary for a comprehensive understanding of a particular issue? Users may respond to AI-generated answers in different ways: some may find them helpful, others may remain uncertain about their reliability, while still others may seek verification from religious scholars or consult more authoritative and contextually appropriate sources. These examples illustrate possible patterns of user engagement with AI, particularly ChatGPT, in religious learning and understanding.

Building on this phenomenon, Hjarvard's concept of mediatization provides a useful theoretical framework for understanding the role of ChatGPT in contemporary religious life. From this perspective, media should not be understood merely as neutral channels for transmitting information; rather, they can function as relatively autonomous institutions and social forces that shape religious understanding and contribute to religious change. The mediatization of religion refers to a process through which media become increasingly integrated into social life and religious institutions while simultaneously influencing how religion is practiced, represented, and understood by society. Applied to the context of generative AI, this perspective invites further examination of how ChatGPT may influence the ways users access religious knowledge, interpret religious teachings, and develop their understanding of religion in everyday life.

AI has the potential to generate more reliable predictions than traditional methods by filtering information and presenting complex contexts in a logical and visualized manner. This presents an opportunity for religious communities to make concrete plans for their future by collecting and evaluating data in their own location, which can be developed constructively with volunteers (Nord, 2023). Muslims in various regions are adept at utilizing the internet to achieve religious and other objectives, showcasing their innovation and technological prowess. This contradicts stereotypes prevalent among some that Islam and Muslims are outdated or remain stuck in a medieval phase of development (R. Bunt, 2018). This illustrates the impact when two dominant factors shaping 21st century life, Islam and the Internet, merge. It is debatable whether their combination leads to an explosion or only minor ripples.

The virtual sphere is witnessing a continuous development in religious practices. Various religious practices are now being easily applied, such as video-recorded ceremonies, interfaith gatherings, and congregational webpages, where spiritual elements are intertwined in this new millennium (Brasher, 2001). Digitizing religion can be viewed as an extension or bridge that expands religious practices and spaces, connecting them both online and offline. The offline context remains integral to online religious activities, and vice versa. In this context, religious mediation enables immediate interaction. This social aspect gives members the chance to participate in prayer processions, worship, and other religious practices. The integration of modern technology in teaching religion becomes a useful tool for religious leaders to efficiently organize, educate and mobilize their followers.

3.4. Analysis of Religious Mediatization in the cyberspace with Artificial Intelligence

The Internet has facilitated a transformation in religious practices, education, and

observance for a multitude of faiths. The Internet has facilitated a transformation in religious practices, education, and observance for a multitude of faiths. While some communities have leveraged the web to enhance and cultivate their faith, others have implemented novel, online-only practices to attract new worshippers (Christopher Helland, 2016). Scholars of digital religion highlight the Internet's crucial role in the contemporary religious landscape. Artificial intelligence (AI) has the potential to revolutionize many aspects of the Internet, and is already doing so on social media, in search results, online shopping, among other areas. However, the rapid emergence of AI has resulted in a delay in its consideration of the implications on religious understanding (Ashraf, 2022). Mediatization of religion in cyberspace can build and create religious practices that cross geographical boundaries. This has created a transformation in the way religious practice is conducted and understood by modern society (Syihabudin, 2022).

AI as an agent of change in spreading religion can be said to be effective and personalizable because it can present information about religion, answer basic questions, and lead to credible information (Nawi, dkk, t.t., hlm. 3). However, it is undeniable that religious activities require a touch of direct interaction between the conveyor of religious messages to the recipients of religious messages so that religious messages will be conveyed properly (Marwantika, 2022).

Deep Emotional context and emotional connection, humans have the ability to express emotions so that they are able to play an important role in religious and cultural practices (Rainie, 2018). Compassion, love, forms of devotion, possessed by humans cannot be replaced by AI whereas these aspects have an important role in shaping one's religious experience. Although AI is designed to understand and respond logically to emotional data, it has the inability to feel emotions authentically like humans. The presence of humans such as religious ministers, preachers, or religious leaders provides interactions in the form of interpersonal relationships, empathic responses, and emotional resonances that AI considers unequalable.

The challenges of introducing AI in the context of religion involve several critical aspects, including ethics, emotional expression, data security, and broader social impacts. Ethical concerns arise regarding the use of AI in interpreting sacred texts, delivering religious guidance, and potentially replacing human religious authority. In addition, limitations in emotional intelligence raise questions about the ability of AI to adequately represent empathy, spirituality, and moral sensitivity, which are central to religious life. Data security and privacy also become significant issues, particularly when digital systems process religious data and personal spiritual information. However, the integration of AI into religious contexts requires careful and continuous scholarly examination to understand how such technologies may reshape religious practices, social relations, authority structures, and other fundamental aspects of religious life (Amegbeha, 2023, hlm. 27).

From the perspective of Stig Hjarvard’s theory of the mediatization of religion, the emergence of AI, particularly ChatGPT, reflects an evolving relationship between media and religion. This development can be observed in how media technologies function not merely as channels for transmitting religious messages but also as

systems that shape how religious knowledge is presented, how users interact with it, and how it is understood in everyday life. This phenomenon illustrates how media logic, characterized by ease and speed of access, flexibility, and personalization, has become increasingly relevant to the process of seeking religious understanding. However, these conveniences also raise critical concerns. When chatbots provide concise and seemingly authoritative answers, users may overlook the complexity of religious interpretation, differences among Islamic schools of thought, and the importance of verifying religious sources. As a result, users may regard AI-generated responses as valid or authoritative without sufficiently examining their accuracy, context, or religious legitimacy.

Furthermore, drawing on Stig Hjarvard's theory of the mediatization of religion, the characteristics of religion mediated through AI in cyberspace can be examined in relation to the concept of *banal religion*. In this context, banalization refers to the process through which religious symbols, meanings, and practices may be simplified, detached from their original contexts, or rendered less complex when incorporated into media environments. Banal religion concerns the presence and circulation of religious symbols and practices in media, where they may be combined, rearticulated, and placed within new contexts, thereby generating new forms of religious meaning. In the context of ChatGPT, users can access explanations of religious matters at any time, including personal questions that they may find difficult to raise directly with religious authorities. On the one hand, this accessibility expands opportunities for religious learning and brings religious knowledge closer to a wider audience. On the other hand, the simplification of religious explanations may reduce the depth of religious understanding if users accept AI-generated responses without critical examination or verification against reliable religious sources. The central issue, therefore, is not simply whether ChatGPT facilitates access to religious knowledge, but how users interpret, trust, and verify the information provided by the chatbot, and how their engagement with this technology may reshape their relationships with established sources of religious knowledge and authority. In this process, religious symbols and meanings may also be adapted to communicate new interpretations within the changing cultural contexts of contemporary media environments.

Modern society is more in need of short messages that they consider meaningful to life so that everyone can talk about religion even if they are not experts. As a result, false fatwas may emerge that are not based on adequate religious knowledge. The emergence of the ease of new translators online does not make religion more open but more closed. Thus, banal clerics emerge where clerics are asked to be clerics even though they do not have the capacity of clerics. Banal religion not only makes implicit references to religion but also challenges existing religious authority by distancing the meaning of religion in its original context and attributing it to a new context. It is a mixture of constituents drawn from various sources brought into a new context and serves a purpose other than that of religious institutions. Simply put, banal religion provides a relaxed and creative cultural background to the religious imagination. The banal concept in question does not

mean less important but rather refers to the continuous presence in daily life that is part of the daily routine.

The concept of banal religion emphasizes religious elements that are not only present in religious ceremonies or religious practices but also lead to modern and popular culture through the media, thus creating a form of religion that is common and common in modern life. Artificial Intelligence can facilitate various needs in religious matters but should be in accordance with ethical principles where when its use must be fulfilled responsibility, respect privacy and avoid negative impacts on the environment and society as well as on religious reality itself (Pongtambing et al, 2022, p. 24).

4. Conclusion

In the religious context, mediatization concerns how religious practices, beliefs, and institutions are shaped by media technologies, media logic, and the broader media landscape. Stig Hjarvard's contribution offers a useful typology of three dominant forms of mediated religion that emerge in this context: (1) religious media, (2) journalism about religion, and (3) banal religion. Technology facilitates the wider dissemination of religious teachings, connects people across geographical boundaries, and provides spaces for discussion and deeper reflection. Modern technologies have transformed how people engage with religion and spirituality in the digital age. The internet has changed how individuals access religious texts, participate in online religious communities, and use digital applications or platforms for personal spiritual practices. Within this context, artificial intelligence, particularly ChatGPT, enables more interactive, immediate, and seemingly dialogical forms of religious communication.

From Stig Hjarvard's perspective, media logic can shape both how religious content is presented and how media users receive and interpret it. When using ChatGPT, religious answers are often delivered quickly, concisely, and in an accessible manner, although their theological depth and interpretive complexity may vary. This phenomenon relates to the concept of banal religion, in which religious symbols, practices, and meanings become embedded in everyday life through media and may shift in context or be simplified. Consequently, religious content can become more accessible to broader audiences, while its theological complexity may not always be fully conveyed.

Nevertheless, the potential risks of AI-mediated religious communication must also be considered, including oversimplification of religious teachings, neglect of cultural nuances and interpretive differences, dissemination of inaccurate information, and marginalization of human and spiritual dimensions. The diversity of religious traditions and the differences among religious interpretations may also be insufficiently represented. The concept of the mediatization of religion helps explain how religion is transformed in cyberspace through the influence of modern media technologies. Hjarvard emphasizes how media logic and digital practices shape the communication and interpretation of religious teachings. This perspective illustrates how technology can influence the presentation and interpretation of religion, creating

opportunities for innovation while also introducing the risk of *banalization*. In this context, banalization refers to reducing the complexity, depth, or significance of religious beliefs and practices to forms that may appear simplified, superficial, or detached from their underlying meanings. Such a process may obscure the philosophical and theological complexities that underpin many religious traditions.

Therefore, applying AI in the religious domain requires careful consideration to ensure that religious values and objectives are preserved in the digital age. Furthermore, future research should address the limitations of the present discussion by examining the ethical dimensions of AI use in religious contexts, particularly issues concerning the accuracy of religious information, the legitimacy of AI-mediated religious authority, interpretive responsibility, and the preservation of theological and cultural diversity.

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