

Strengthening Harmony in The Midst of The Rapid Advancement of Information Technology

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ABSTRACT. Indonesia is a pluralistic country in many aspects, including race, ethnicity, regional languages, customs, and religion. To manage this diversity in terms of ethnicity, religion, race, and intergroup relations (SARA), the government frames it within the format of religious harmony, which is defined as "... the state of relationships among religious communities based on tolerance, mutual understanding, mutual respect, appreciation of equality in practicing their religious teachings, and cooperation in social, national, and state life within the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia, based on Pancasila and the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia." Since religious harmony is a state of being, it is dynamic and influenced by its ability to adapt to social changes in society, including shifts in social structures that encompass patterns of social relationships, social norms, and social roles. Social changes vary not only in terms of degree but also in scale and scope. The development of technology, particularly information technology, has brought significant changes to social behavior. The rapid growth of information technology has altered old social patterns and structures. This change is marked by shifts in interaction patterns, lifestyles, behaviors, perspectives, ways of living, and social orientations. It is worth exploring how we (especially religious leaders) can strive to maintain religious harmony amidst the rapid advancement of information technology. The research method used in this study will be literature research. This literature research will focus on textbook analysis. The research will involve a comprehensive analysis of works discussing the relationship between information technology and religion. The rapid advancement of information and communication technology has accelerated social changes in various fields. An important phenomenon to observe is the fading of values, including religious, cultural, and national values. Society tends to neglect moral values when engaging in social media, focusing instead on what can go viral and generate profit. It is imperative for religious leaders to enter the digital technology realm to carry out their sacred role of delivering messages of morality and goodness, ensuring that religious harmony remains strong. In this context, it is important to involve and provide space for the younger generation to play a role.

Keywords: *Strengthening, Harmony, Rapid advancement, Information technology.*

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INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is widely recognized as one of the most pluralistic countries in the world, characterized by extraordinary diversity in ethnicity, race, language, culture, customs, and religion. This plurality reflects the richness of Indonesian civilization and serves as a fundamental identity

of the nation. Diversity can become a valuable social capital and a strong foundation for national unity when it is managed wisely, fairly, and inclusively. The multicultural nature of Indonesian society resembles a beautiful mosaic in which every element contributes to the harmony and integrity of the nation (Sistriatmaja et al., 2024). However, diversity may also create social tensions, conflicts, and divisions when it is not managed properly. One of the most sensitive dimensions of diversity in Indonesia is related to ethnicity, inter-group relations, race, and religion, commonly referred to as SARA. Issues related to SARA frequently possess strong emotional, political, and ideological dimensions that may threaten social cohesion if exploited irresponsibly. Therefore, the sustainability of national integration and social harmony largely depends on how society and the government manage SARA diversity as a constructive force that strengthens solidarity, cooperation, tolerance, and peaceful coexistence among communities. Diversity should encourage mutual respect, complementarity, and collaboration among various social groups to achieve collective welfare and strengthen national resilience. Nevertheless, if diversity is manipulated for political interests, social domination, or ideological conflict, it may instead become a source of disintegration and social fragmentation (Kusrahmadi, 2007).

In managing the complexity of SARA diversity, the Indonesian government has attempted to institutionalize the concept of religious harmony as an important framework for maintaining national stability and social cohesion (Anggraeni et al., 2024). Religious harmony is formally defined as a condition of harmonious relations among religious communities based on tolerance, mutual understanding, mutual respect, equality in practicing religious teachings, and cooperation in social, national, and state life within the framework of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia based on Pancasila and the 1945 Constitution (Harefa, 2016). This concept reflects the government's commitment to protecting religious freedom while simultaneously preserving social order and national unity. Religious harmony is not merely interpreted as the absence of conflict but also as the existence of positive interaction, social cooperation, and mutual acceptance among religious groups. The implementation of religious harmony requires active participation from various stakeholders, including government institutions, religious leaders, educational institutions, community organizations, and society as a whole. Tolerance, dialogue, mutual understanding, and social cooperation become essential components in strengthening harmonious interreligious relationships and minimizing the potential for conflict in pluralistic societies (Anggraeni et al., 2024).

Religious harmony, however, is not a static condition but rather a dynamic social process that continuously evolves alongside societal transformation. Social changes occurring within society significantly influence the patterns of interreligious relations, community interactions, and collective social behavior. Changes in social structure may include transformations in norms, values, patterns of communication, social roles, institutional systems, and interpersonal relationships. According to Barro and Grossman (1971), social change may occur at different levels, ranging from changes in individual behavior to broader transformations in social systems and cultural values (Barro & Grossman, 1971). Such changes may affect the way people perceive religion, interact with individuals from different backgrounds, and respond to social diversity. Furthermore, Friedman (1969) explains that the pace and characteristics of social change vary among societies depending on several influential factors such as technological development, environmental conditions, political awareness, organizational structures, educational progress, cultural diversity, and interactions with external societies (Friedman, 1969). Among these various factors, technological advancement, particularly in information and communication technology, has become one of the most dominant driving forces of social transformation in the modern era. Technology not only influences human activities but also shapes human thought patterns, social behavior, communication styles, and worldviews (Putri et al., 2022).

The rapid development of information technology has fundamentally transformed social interaction and communication patterns within society. Technological advancement, especially

through the internet and digital communication platforms, has eliminated geographical barriers and enabled the rapid exchange of information across regions and countries. The emergence of social media, online news platforms, digital applications, and virtual communication systems has significantly changed how individuals interact, express opinions, build identities, and participate in public discourse. According to (Tomlinson, 1999), globalization driven by information technology has created interconnected societies where local issues can quickly become global concerns. The utilization of information technology has also altered traditional social structures and disrupted conventional patterns of communication and authority. These transformations are reflected in shifts in lifestyle, social orientation, cultural values, communication behavior, and patterns of social interaction (Manzi, 2026). While technological advancement offers many positive opportunities such as easier access to information, educational development, and social connectivity, it also introduces various challenges related to misinformation, hate speech, intolerance, radicalization, and social polarization.

In the context of religious harmony, the advancement of information technology creates both opportunities and challenges for maintaining peaceful interreligious relations. Digital media can serve as an effective tool for promoting tolerance, interfaith dialogue, religious education, and social solidarity (Jung et al., 2026). Religious leaders, educational institutions, and community organizations may utilize digital platforms to disseminate peaceful religious teachings, strengthen social awareness, and encourage constructive communication among different religious communities. At the same time, however, digital platforms can also become spaces for spreading intolerance, religious extremism, hoaxes, hate speech, and divisive narratives that threaten social harmony and national unity. The rapid circulation of provocative content through social media often intensifies misunderstandings and social tensions among religious groups. Consequently, the role of religious leaders becomes increasingly important in guiding society to use technology wisely and ethically. Religious leaders are expected not only to function as spiritual authorities but also as social mediators, educators, and agents of peace capable of promoting moderation, tolerance, and social cohesion within increasingly digitalized societies (Mertl et al., 2026). Therefore, it becomes highly important to explore how religious leaders and social institutions can maintain religious harmony amidst the rapid advancement of information technology and the complex challenges of contemporary social transformation.

METHOD

The research method employed in this study is qualitative literature research, which focuses on analyzing and interpreting various written sources related to the relationship between information technology, social transformation, and religious harmony (Snyder, 2019). Literature research is considered highly appropriate for this study because the research emphasizes conceptual understanding, theoretical interpretation, and critical analysis of scholarly perspectives regarding the influence of technological advancement on religious and social life. Unlike field research that relies on direct observation or interviews, literature research allows researchers to explore broader intellectual discussions and theoretical debates that have been developed by experts across different periods and academic disciplines (Frank & Hatak, 2014). Through literature research, the researcher is able to examine various viewpoints systematically and comprehensively in order to understand the complex interaction between technology, religion, and social change in contemporary society.

According to Hamzah (2019), literature research can be classified into four categories, namely studies of revelatory texts, analysis of prominent thinkers' ideas, textbook analysis, and historical studies (Hamza & Agustien, 2019). This research specifically adopts the textbook analysis approach, emphasizing the examination and interpretation of academic literature discussing information technology, social change, religion, and religious harmony in contemporary society. Textbook analysis is utilized because it enables researchers to identify major concepts, theoretical frameworks, arguments, and findings presented in scholarly works relevant to the topic under

investigation. This method also facilitates a deeper understanding of how previous researchers and scholars have interpreted the relationship between technological advancement and religious life. By using textbook analysis, the study seeks to synthesize different scholarly opinions and generate comprehensive insights regarding the role of information technology in influencing patterns of social interaction, religious behavior, and interreligious relations. The sources of data in this research consist of various forms of secondary data obtained from credible and academically recognized publications. These sources include books, scientific journals, research articles, conference proceedings, government regulations, policy documents, online academic databases, and other relevant scholarly publications discussing information technology, religion, social transformation, and religious harmony. The researcher selected sources based on their relevance, credibility, academic contribution, and connection to the research objectives. In addition, priority was given to recent publications in order to ensure that the analysis reflects current technological developments and contemporary social conditions (Braun & Clarke, 2019). However, classical and foundational theoretical works were also included to strengthen the conceptual and analytical framework of the study.

The data collection process was conducted through an extensive literature review involving several systematic stages (Willson & Miller, 2014). First, the researcher identified relevant themes and keywords related to information technology, religious harmony, social change, digital communication, religious moderation, and societal transformation. Second, the researcher searched for relevant literature from academic databases, libraries, online repositories, and scientific publications. Third, selected literature was categorized and reviewed critically to identify important concepts, theories, arguments, and findings related to the research topic. During this process, the researcher carefully examined the relationship between technological advancement and changes in social behavior, communication patterns, religious values, and interreligious interaction (Gallagher, 2009). The literature review process enabled the researcher to collect comprehensive data and construct a broad theoretical understanding regarding the influence of information technology on religious harmony in pluralistic societies.

Furthermore, the data obtained from the literature review were analyzed using descriptive and critical analysis techniques (Arshed & Danson, 2015). Descriptive analysis was employed to explain and summarize the major findings, concepts, and theoretical perspectives identified in the selected literature. This analysis helped organize the data systematically according to themes such as technological development, social transformation, religious interaction, digital communication, and religious harmony. Meanwhile, critical analysis was used to evaluate and compare various scholarly arguments, identify similarities and differences among theoretical perspectives, and assess the relevance of these ideas within the Indonesian social context. Through critical analysis, the researcher was able to explore the strengths and limitations of previous studies and provide deeper interpretation regarding the challenges and opportunities arising from technological advancement in relation to religious harmony. In addition, this study applies an interdisciplinary perspective by combining concepts from sociology, communication studies, religious studies, and technology studies. This interdisciplinary approach is important because the relationship between information technology and religious harmony cannot be understood through a single disciplinary perspective alone. Technological advancement influences not only communication systems but also cultural values, social interaction, religious understanding, and collective social behavior (Paré & Kitsiou, 2017). Therefore, integrating multiple perspectives allows the researcher to analyze the phenomenon more comprehensively and holistically. The interdisciplinary approach also helps explain how technological transformation affects religious communities, social structures, and intergroup relations within increasingly digitalized societies.

The use of literature research in this study allows the researcher to examine various theories and scholarly discussions related to information technology and religious harmony (Berge & Collins, 1995). This method is effective for understanding social and religious changes influenced

by technological development and globalization. Although literature research relies on secondary data and does not involve direct observation, it remains relevant for exploring conceptual issues concerning religion and technology. The findings of this study are expected to contribute to discussions on religious harmony, social cohesion, and peaceful coexistence in digital society.

Table 1. Research Methodology

Research Component	Description
Research Approach	This study employs a qualitative literature research approach to analyze the relationship between information technology, social transformation, and religious harmony in society.
Research Type	The research focuses on textbook analysis as proposed by Hamzah (2019), emphasizing the examination of academic literature, theories, and scholarly discussions related to technology and religion.
Research Objective	To explore how the advancement of information technology influences religious harmony, social interaction, and societal behavior within pluralistic communities.
Data Sources	Secondary data was obtained from books, scientific journals, research articles, conference proceedings, government regulations, online academic databases, and other relevant scholarly publications.
Data Collection Technique	Data were collected through a comprehensive literature review involving the identification, selection, and examination of relevant academic sources discussing technology, religion, and social change.
Research Instruments	The primary research instrument is document analysis, focusing on reviewing and interpreting written materials related to information technology and religious harmony.
Data Analysis Technique	Data were analyzed using descriptive and critical analysis methods to identify themes, compare scholarly perspectives, and interpret the impact of technological advancement on religious life and social harmony.
Research Focus	The study focuses on the impact of information technology on social behavior, communication patterns, religious interaction, and the maintenance of religious harmony in Indonesia.
Theoretical Perspective	The research integrates interdisciplinary perspectives from sociology, communication studies, religious studies, and technology studies to provide comprehensive analysis.
Expected Outcome	The study aims to provide theoretical insights regarding the opportunities and challenges of maintaining religious harmony amidst rapid technological development and digital transformation.

Table 1 presents the overall research methodology employed in this study concerning the relationship between information technology and religious harmony within pluralistic societies. The table explains that this research uses a qualitative literature research approach, specifically focusing on textbook analysis as proposed (Wiegand, 2013). This approach was selected because it enables the researcher to explore theoretical concepts, scholarly perspectives, and academic discussions related to technological advancement, social transformation, and religious interaction

comprehensively. Through literature research, the study is able to examine various scientific viewpoints and analyze how information technology influences patterns of communication, social behavior, and religious harmony in modern society. The table also illustrates that the data used in this study were obtained from secondary sources such as books, scientific journals, academic articles, conference proceedings, government regulations, and online academic databases. These sources were selected based on their relevance, credibility, and contribution to the research topic. The data collection process was conducted through an extensive literature review involving the identification, selection, and examination of scholarly works discussing information technology, religion, social change, and religious moderation. This method allows the researcher to gather comprehensive information from various academic perspectives and develop a broader understanding of the phenomenon being studied.

Furthermore, Table 1 explains that the data analysis process employed descriptive and critical analysis techniques. Descriptive analysis was used to summarize and explain the main concepts, theories, and findings identified in the literature, while critical analysis was applied to evaluate and compare different scholarly arguments related to technological transformation and religious harmony. The table also highlights that this research adopts an interdisciplinary perspective by integrating concepts from sociology, communication studies, religious studies, and technology studies (Holzner, 1967). This interdisciplinary approach helps provide a more comprehensive analysis because the relationship between information technology and religious harmony involves complex social, cultural, religious, and technological dimensions. Overall, Table 1 demonstrates that the research methodology was systematically designed to provide an in-depth theoretical understanding of the opportunities and challenges faced by society in maintaining religious harmony amidst rapid technological advancement and digital transformation. The methodological framework presented in the table strengthens the validity and comprehensiveness of the study by ensuring that the research process is conducted through credible data sources, systematic analysis procedures, and relevant theoretical perspectives.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

The findings of this study indicate that the development of information technology has significantly influenced social change and transformed patterns of communication, interaction, and behavior within society. The literature shows that technological advancement, particularly the internet and digital communication platforms, has shifted communication patterns from direct face-to-face interaction to virtual and digital communication. Ernst Cassirer's concept of humans as *animal symbolicum* explains that human superiority lies in the ability to create and communicate symbols, and this ability has expanded rapidly through digital technology (Mulyana, 2010). Social media, instant messaging applications, and online communication platforms have become dominant tools for social interaction, enabling people to communicate quickly and efficiently without geographical limitations. This transformation has affected both personal and professional relationships, making communication more flexible, accessible, and widespread. The findings also reveal that digital communication has accelerated the dissemination of information and increased communication efficiency. Through platforms such as email, instant messaging, blogs, and social media, information can be distributed instantly to large audiences, significantly changing traditional communication dynamics (Adu et al., 2024).

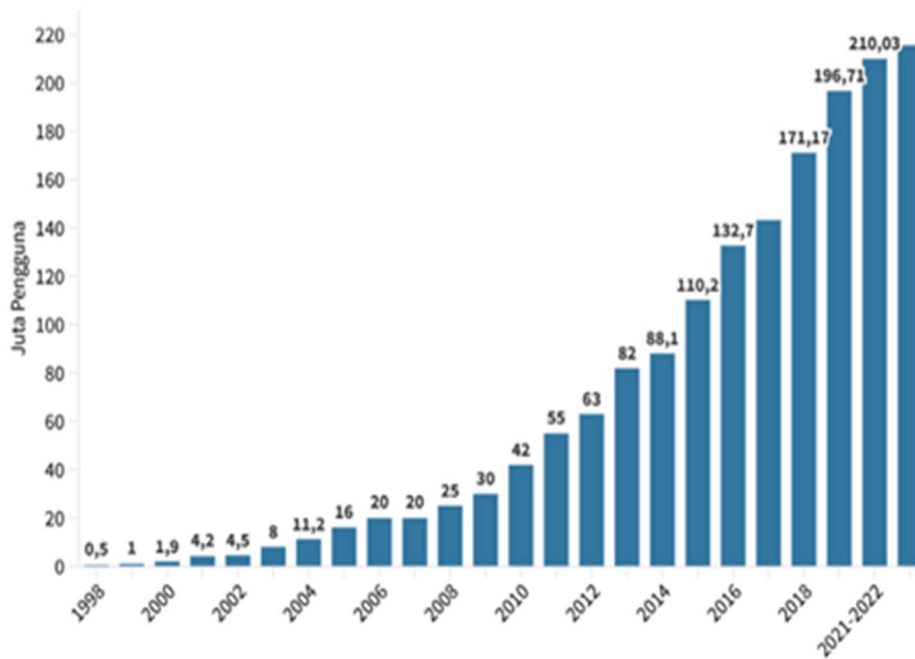
However, the literature also highlights several negative social consequences of digital communication. The increasing dependence on virtual interaction has reduced the intensity of direct interpersonal communication, weakened emotional closeness, and increased the possibility of misunderstanding due to the absence of non-verbal communication cues such as body language, facial expressions, and tone of voice (Radmanesh et al., 2026). Furthermore, technological

advancement has influenced social lifestyles, communication habits, and patterns of social relationships, particularly among younger generations who are highly dependent on digital technology.

The findings further demonstrate that information technology has significantly affected various sectors of social life, including education, economics, and politics. In education, technological innovation has contributed positively to learning processes through multimedia, hypermedia, e-learning systems, and artificial intelligence applications that improve student motivation, learning experiences, and educational accessibility (Schunk, 2012; Bernard et al., 2009). In the economic field, information technology has increased productivity, accelerated distribution, created new employment opportunities, and strengthened innovation and competitiveness (Viantri et al., 2025). Nevertheless, several negative economic impacts were also identified, including consumerism, social inequality, market domination, exploitation of natural resources, and increased economic crimes. In politics, information technology has improved political communication, public participation, and campaign effectiveness, but it has also contributed to political polarization, misinformation, cybercrime, and manipulation of public opinion (Klapsa et al., 2022). The findings additionally reveal that information technology has transformed religious behavior and religious interaction within society, especially among Generation Z. Data from APJII show that internet usage in Indonesia continues to increase significantly, reaching more than 215 million users or approximately 78.19% of the population (Nasution, 2024). Generation Z has become the social group most actively engaged with digital technology and online religious content. Surveys indicate that young people frequently access, share, comment on, and interact with religious content through social media platforms. Religious engagement in digital spaces has become increasingly common, allowing individuals to gain religious knowledge, express opinions, and participate in online religious discussions more actively.

Furthermore, the findings indicate that although participation in traditional religious practices among Generation Z has gradually declined, religion still remains an important aspect of personal happiness, identity formation, and moral guidance for young people. Many members of Generation Z continue to seek spiritual meaning and religious understanding, but they increasingly obtain religious knowledge through digital platforms rather than through conventional religious institutions. Social media, online videos, podcasts, and digital discussion forums have become major sources of religious information and spiritual engagement. This transformation has changed the way young people understand, interpret, and practice religion in their daily lives, making religious activities more flexible, accessible, and closely connected to digital culture. In addition, the findings emphasize that digital religious interaction has contributed to the emergence of online religious opinion leaders and digital activism related to issues such as religious freedom, tolerance, moderation, and social harmony. Religious leaders are therefore required to adapt to technological advancement by improving digital literacy and utilizing social media responsibly to spread positive values and constructive religious messages. Collaboration between religious leaders, policymakers, educators, and younger generations is also essential in strengthening religious moderation and maintaining peaceful coexistence within increasingly digitalized and multicultural societies. Through active engagement in digital spaces, religious communities can contribute positively to social integration, mutual understanding, and the preservation of religious harmony in the modern era.

Figure 1. Number of internet users in Indonesia

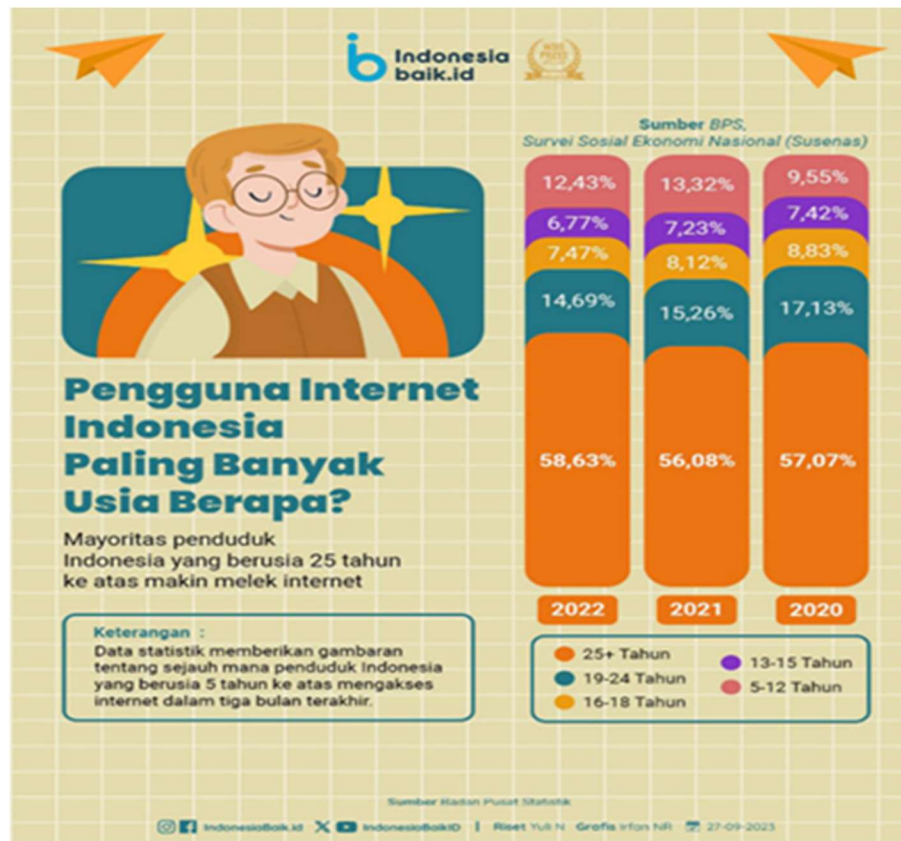


Sources: APJII

Figure 1 above illustrates the significant growth in the number of internet users in Indonesia from 1998 to 2022. The graph shows that internet usage increased gradually in the early 2000s and then experienced a very rapid escalation after 2010. In 1998, the number of internet users in Indonesia was still very limited, only around 0.5 million people. However, this number continued to grow every year alongside the rapid development of information and communication technology, digital infrastructure expansion, and wider accessibility of smartphones and internet services. By 2021-2022, the number of internet users had reached approximately 210.03 million people, indicating that the majority of Indonesian society has become connected to digital technology. This data strongly supports the discussion above regarding the massive impact of information technology on social change and communication patterns within society. The rapid increase in internet users demonstrates that digital communication has become an inseparable part of daily life. Society increasingly relies on social media, instant messaging, online platforms, and digital applications for communication, education, business, entertainment, and even religious activities. The widespread use of the internet has transformed traditional face-to-face interactions into more flexible virtual communication systems that can occur anytime and anywhere.

Furthermore, the figure also explains why information technology has become highly influential in shaping religious behavior, especially among Generation Z. Since internet access is now widely available, young people can easily access religious information, online sermons, Islamic content, and religious discussions through social media platforms such as YouTube, Instagram, TikTok, and other digital applications. This condition contributes to the increasing interaction of young people with religious content in digital spaces, as explained in the previous discussion. At the same time, the rapid expansion of internet usage also creates challenges such as misinformation, polarization, radical religious narratives, and declining quality of direct social interaction. Overall, Figure 1 reflects how technological development has fundamentally transformed Indonesian society in social, educational, economic, political, and religious dimensions. The increasing number of internet users indicates that digital technology now plays a central role in shaping modern lifestyles, communication patterns, social relationships, and religious engagement in contemporary Indonesian society.

Figure 2. Internet users in Indonesia



Sources: BPS.

They are the generation that most frequently "like" or "dislike," share, comment on, and consume religious content on social media. The survey also found that individuals who rely on social media as a source of religious knowledge tend to interact more frequently on these platforms. Their interactions include giving feedback (like/dislike), sharing information (share), commenting (comment), and, of course, watching religious programs. Moreover, the higher an individual's religiosity level, the more frequently they engage in these interactions on social media. The same pattern applies to individuals who view themselves as religious opinion leaders, people whose religious opinions are often sought and heard. Interestingly, despite Generation Z being the least religiously observant generation in terms of ranking, a survey by the Varkey Foundation conducted in 20 countries revealed that 93% of Indonesian Generation Z believe that religion is a key factor in their happiness (Akyeampong et al., 2018). This figure is significantly higher compared to the global average of just 44%. Key findings from the Varkey survey include: (1) declining engagement in traditional religious practices, (2) a rise in personal spirituality, (3) the influence of social media and technology, (4) critical attitudes towards religious institutions, and (5) shifts in values and priorities (Broadbent et al., 2017). Additionally, a report titled "The Dynamics of Digital Activism Among Indonesian Youth in the Discourse of Freedom of Religion and Belief (KKB)" by the Communion of Churches in Indonesia (PGI) in collaboration with the Indonesian Consortium for Religious Studies (ICRS) (2023) stated that, in general, Generation Z demonstrates flexibility in their approach to religion, viewing it as both a guide for life and a source of identity.

A survey by the Pew Research Center in the United States about the reference sources used by the public for making major life decisions revealed that most Americans rely more on their own research than on guidance from experts. Eight out of ten Americans said they "strongly rely" on their own research when making major decisions. By comparison, 25% said they strongly rely on advice from professional experts, and only 15% strongly rely on guidance from religious leaders. To play a strategic role in the digital information and communication world, it is imperative for religious leaders to enhance their competencies and capabilities. Whether they like it or not,

religious leaders must be adept at navigating various social media platforms and be aware of viral issues that capture the public's attention. They need to actively spread positive values sourced from religious, cultural, and national principles to offer an alternative voice amidst the flood of information.

Equally important is cooperation with policymakers and law enforcement to curb the spread of false information, pornography, and extremist provocations. Strategic collaboration with Generation Z is also crucial in building a network of young religious leaders. The role of Generation Z is important because they are more familiar and technologically literate, and from a psychological standpoint, moral messages are more effective when delivered by peers (Mulyana, 2010).

Discussion

The findings of this study demonstrate that information technology has become one of the most influential factors shaping modern social transformation. The transition from direct communication to digital communication reflects broader changes in human interaction patterns, social relationships, and cultural behavior. The increasing dependence on digital communication platforms indicates that technology has fundamentally altered how individuals connect, exchange information, and maintain social relationships. While digital communication offers significant advantages such as speed, flexibility, accessibility, and efficiency, it also reduces the depth of interpersonal interaction because virtual communication cannot fully replace the emotional and social dimensions of face-to-face communication. The absence of direct physical interaction may gradually weaken emotional attachment, social sensitivity, and the quality of interpersonal relationships within society. The discussion also highlights that technological advancement creates both opportunities and challenges across multiple sectors of life. In education, information technology provides wider learning access, innovative teaching methods, and opportunities for independent learning through digital platforms and artificial intelligence systems. These developments support educational modernization and improve learning effectiveness. However, unequal access to digital infrastructure and technological resources may widen educational inequality between different social groups. Similarly, in the economic sector, technological innovation contributes positively to productivity, business efficiency, and market expansion, but simultaneously increases consumerism, social inequality, and economic dependence on global digital systems. In politics, digital technology strengthens democratic participation and political awareness, yet it also creates risks related to misinformation, polarization, cybercrime, and manipulation of public opinion. Therefore, technological development must be accompanied by strong ethical awareness, digital literacy, and responsible regulation to minimize its negative consequences.

The findings concerning religious behavior further illustrate that information technology has transformed the way religion is understood, practiced, and communicated within society. Digital platforms have enabled religion to become more accessible, interactive, and publicly visible, particularly among Generation Z, who are highly familiar with online communication technologies. Young people increasingly rely on social media and internet platforms as sources of religious knowledge and spiritual engagement. This shift demonstrates that religion is no longer confined to traditional institutions such as mosques, schools, or religious gatherings, but has expanded into virtual spaces where religious discourse develops dynamically. The rise of online religious communities and digital religious activism also reflects how technology facilitates broader participation in religious discussions and social issues. However, the increasing role of digital technology in religious life also presents significant challenges. The spread of misinformation, radicalism, hate speech, and extremist narratives through social media may threaten religious harmony and social cohesion if not managed properly. Digital platforms can easily become spaces for intolerance, polarization, and conflict because information spreads rapidly without sufficient verification. Consequently, religious leaders are required to strengthen their digital competencies

and actively participate in online communication spaces to spread positive religious values, moderation, tolerance, and peaceful coexistence. Collaboration between religious leaders, policymakers, educators, and younger generations is essential to ensure that digital technology supports social harmony rather than social division.

Overall, this study demonstrates that information technology has a dual impact on modern society. On the one hand, technological advancement improves communication efficiency, educational accessibility, economic productivity, and public participation. On the other hand, it also introduces new social, cultural, political, and religious challenges that may affect social harmony and national integration. Therefore, societies must develop adaptive strategies that combine technological innovation with ethical awareness, religious moderation, social responsibility, and inclusive digital literacy. Through balanced and responsible technological utilization, information technology can become a powerful instrument for strengthening social cohesion, religious harmony, and peaceful coexistence within increasingly pluralistic and digitalized societies.

CONCLUSION

The rapid advancement of information and communication technology has accelerated social transformation in almost every aspect of human life, including education, economics, politics, culture, and religion. One of the most concerning impacts of this development is the gradual erosion of religious, cultural, and national values within society. In the digital era, many individuals prioritize popularity, virality, and financial benefit over ethics, morality, and social responsibility. Social media interactions often contain hate speech, misinformation, intolerance, and provocative content that may threaten social cohesion and religious harmony. This condition indicates that technological advancement does not always produce positive consequences, particularly when digital literacy and moral awareness are still weak among internet users. In the educational sector, rapid technological development creates new challenges for teachers and educational institutions. Educators who are unable to adapt to technological changes may experience difficulties in guiding students effectively and maintaining their relevance in modern learning environments. Students today have broad access to information from digital platforms, sometimes making them more dependent on online sources than on teachers or educational institutions. Similarly, in the economic field, technological advancement has generated various digital-based financial practices such as online loans (pinjol), online gambling, and other forms of digital transactions that may negatively affect society, especially individuals with limited financial literacy. These phenomena demonstrate that technology can simultaneously create opportunities and social vulnerabilities.

Furthermore, the development of digital technology has also influenced religious behavior and authority within society. Public trust in religious leaders, particularly among Generation Z, has gradually shifted as many young people prefer to seek religious references independently through social media, online videos, digital forums, and internet-based religious content. While this condition provides easier access to religious knowledge, it also creates risks related to misinformation, radical narratives, religious extremism, and misunderstanding of religious teachings. Consequently, these developments may potentially weaken social solidarity and disrupt religious harmony if not managed wisely. Therefore, it is essential for religious leaders, educators, and policymakers to actively engage with the digital world in order to maintain their role in promoting moral values, tolerance, moderation, and peaceful coexistence. Religious leaders must adapt to technological developments by utilizing digital platforms to spread positive religious messages and strengthen interreligious understanding. In this process, the involvement of the younger generation is highly important because they possess stronger digital literacy and greater familiarity with modern communication technologies. Through collaboration between religious leaders and young people, digital spaces can become constructive platforms for strengthening religious harmony, social integration, and national unity in multicultural societies.

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