Communication in Physical Sciences 2023, 9(4): 922-946

The Intersection of Artificial Intelligence, Music, and Religion: An Extensive Review Highlighting Contemporary and Emerging Perspectives

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Received: 17 July 2023/Accepted: 19 August 2023/Published: 19 September 2023

Abstract: *This review explores the rapidly emerging intersection of artificial intelligence (AI), music, and religious studies, examining how computational processes are transforming both scholarly inquiry and lived engagement within these domains . This paper further summarizes the existing uses of artificial intelligence (AI) procedures, such as machine learning, natural language processing, and pattern recognition, in order to observe how they transform the research of musicology and religious studies. It shows how AI can be applied to assess music pieces, decode religious texts, recognize cultural traditions, and foresee progress in these areas. The review summarizes publications in the field of computational musicology, digital humanities, and religious informatics in order to provide a clear picture of the existing possibilities and limitations. Key findings indicate that AI demonstrates significant potential in pattern recognition, cross-cultural analysis, and predictive modeling, while facing challenges in capturing subjective meaning, spiritual experience, and cultural nuance. We conclude by proposing future research directions and discussing implications for scholars, practitioners, and technologists working at the intersection of AI, music, and religion.*

Keywords: *AI and ML, computational musicology, digital religion, cultural analysis, future trends, interdisciplinary research*

The intersection of artificial intelligence with cultural domains represents one of the most intellectually stimulating developments of the digital age (Ademilua, 2021). Within this broader transformation, the application of AI to music and religion—two domains central to human culture—presents extraordinary opportunities as well as profound challenges

Within this broader transformation, the application of AI to understanding music and religion—two domains that arguably define the essence of human culture presents both extraordinary opportunities and profound challenges. Music and religious expression have served as universal languages across civilizations, encoding complex social, emotional, and spiritual information that has traditionally required deeply contextual human interpretation (Cross, 2003; McGuire, 2008).

Recent advances in machine learning, particularly deep neural networks and large language models, have begun to demonstrate unprecedented capabilities in pattern recognition and semantic analysis. These developments coincide with the massive digitization of cultural artefacts, from ancient manuscripts to field recordings of traditional music, creating vast datasets that were previously impossible to analyze systematically (Moretti, 2013; Underwood, 2019). The convergence of these technological and archival developments has opened new frontiers for understanding how musical and religious traditions evolve, interact, and adapt across cultures and historical periods.

When applied to areas of human meaning, spirituality, and authenticity, the animated concerns of cultural study can be found regarding the application of AI. Even though computer methods can identify trends in large data volumes, they cannot grasp the individual nature of religious experiences and musical pleasure (Pasquier *et al*., 2017; Hoover and Campbell, 2018). The conflicts between quantitative approaches and qualitative understanding are still debated within the field of digital humanities. This

poses a major challenge to academics and practitioners to use AI to moderate religious and cultural practices as the globalization swells cross-cultural interaction (Jenkins *et al*., 2013; Campbell, 2012). The objective of the study is to critically review the current use of AI in the study of music and religion and discuss the methodological worth and limitations of the new application and identify potential future research opportunities and policy in the field of AI, music and religion.

1.1 Theoretical Framework

The use of artificial intelligence in the comprehension of music and religion involves the need to rely on various theoretical traditions that have developed in many ways on their own but have common epistemological sources. It is this part that forms the conceptual base of our analysis by discussing four major theoretical areas that guide the current research practices.

1.1.1 Computational Approaches to Cultural Analysis

The A major shift in cultural studies has been brought along by the advent of the computational methodologies which have substituted traditional interpretative analysis with quantitative, pattern-based approaches. This change is based on information theory where culture is viewed as a web of encoded meanings that can be decoded computationally (Shannon, 1948; Rosen, 2012). The idea of remote reading by Moretti can be viewed as an important illustration of this perspective by showing how large-scale computerized textual critique can help uncover patterns that cannot be seen by close reading (Moretti, 2005).

As much as data mining techniques such as clustering and dimensionality reduction can help reveal latent patterns in musical and religious writings, particularly when using unsupervised learning, machine learning methods can provide advanced methods of finding patterns in cultural texts (Jockers, 2013). Moreover, the supervised learning enables the researcher to test hypotheses about such categories of culture and their relationships. These methods are based on the notion that the cultural manifestations have some statistical patterns which reflect the social and cognitive processes. This is close to the findings of cognitive science, which has indicated that there are common psychological variables that may lead to human cultural behaviours (Pinker, 1997; Tomasello, 1999). There is a risk that such approaches reduce cultural diversity to statistical correlations and may overlook the more personalized experiences which give music and religion the meaning of a human being (Ramsay, 2011).

1.1.2 Music Information Retrieval and Computational Musicology

Computational musicology, the product of the interplay of musicology, computer science and cognitive psychology, models, analyzes and composes musical structures with such techniques as Music Information Retrieval (MIR) and other computational methods (Huron, 2006). Signal processing techniques form the technical foundation of most MIR applications. Fourier transforms enable the decomposition of musical signals into frequency components, while more sophisticated methods like Constant-Q transforms and Mel-frequency cepstral coefficients provide representations better suited to musical analysis (Muller, 2015). These low-level features can then be processed by machine learning algorithms to identify higher-level musical structures such as chords, keys, and formal sections.

Cognitive models of musical perception provide crucial theoretical guidance for computational approaches. Research in music cognition has identified specific mechanisms by which humans process musical information, including a preference for certain harmonic relationships, sensitivity to rhythmic patterns, and expectations based on musical syntax (Pearce, 2018). Incorporating these insights into AI systems has led to more musically meaningful computational models. The cross-cultural musicological theory has both opportunities and challenges in computational approaches. Although traditional musicology was mostly limited to Western classical traditions, computational

approaches allow studying the musical systems in the whole world.

Nevertheless, it should be done with a keen sense of cultural particularism and the threat of imposing Western measuring tools on other musical traditions (Clayton *et al*., 2016).

1.1.3 Digital Religion and Religious Informatics

The digital religion includes the study of religious activities in the digital space and the implementation of computational techniques on conventional religious studies (Hoover and Ebaugh, 2016). This new field builds on the theories of religious studies, media studies and computer science to comprehend the way digital technologies are changing religious experience and religious scholarship.

Computerized methods of religious text analysis are developed on the basis of the long-standing tradition in biblical and comparative religious studies. The methods of natural language processing allow processing religious corpora on a large scale and detecting patterns in theological language, narrative structure, and development of theology (Michel *et al*., 2011). The topic modeling algorithms a especially useful in determining thematic patterns in a variety of religious traditions (Blei *et al*., 2003).

Digital religion also includes the theoretical background that involves questions of religious authority and authenticity on the digital front. The classic religious studies tend to lay stress on the significance of the community of interpretations and educational customs in the interpretation of the sacred texts (Fish, 1980). Computational approaches have the fear that algorithmic analysis has the potential to augment or even oppose these variations of religious authority.

The other important theoretical foundation for explaining the religious communities and their appearance online is the network theory. The religious traditions tend to contain complex networks of power and concepts, activities and individuals move across institutional and geographical boundaries (Wellman & Tokuno, 2007). Social network analysis will also aid a researcher in mapping these relationships and how digital technologies are refiguring traditional religious networks.

1.1.4 Predictive Modelling in Cultural Evolution

Predictive modelling of cultural phenomena is based on the complex systems theory and the evolutionary cultural theory. The cultural evolution theory, cultural characteristics are diffused and adjusted according to similar regulations, such as the spread of biological evolution and variation, selection and transfer of processes, are elements of cultural development that occur historically (Mesoudi, 2011).

This theoretical framework offers a performance on the application of AI to model and predict cultural shifts in music and religion. The spread of cultural innovations in populations can be simulated by agent-based models, whereas machine learning methods can determine tendencies in the past which could explain future progressions (Bentley *et al*., 2004). Nonetheless, cultural systems are complex with their emergent properties and feedback loops which make them very difficult to predict using modelling.

Network effects have a significant part to play in the evolution of culture in the sense that often the innovation of culture is distributed over a social network, and not over the population at random. Recent studies have revealed that these network structures play a major role in determining how soon and how culture diffuses, as well (Centola, 2010). The AI systems, including the network analysis, can, thus, give more reliable models of the cultural change.

Fig. 1 shows the connections between these theoretical areas and their role in our knowledge about the applications of AI in music and religion studies. The diagrams illustrate the role of computational cultural analysis in the general methodological framework, and more specific approaches in the field of musicology and religious studies in the domain-specific knowledge. Predictive

modelling is an interface between descriptive analysis and future application.

2.0 Method

This systematic review employed a rich search strategy so as to accommodate the richness of the studies, at the intersection of artificial intelligence, music, and religion studies. Our methodology uses the best practices of systematic reviews in interdisciplinary studies modified to meet the special requirements of surveying research that cuts across multiple computer science, humanities, and social science disciplines (Kitchenham *et al*., 2009).

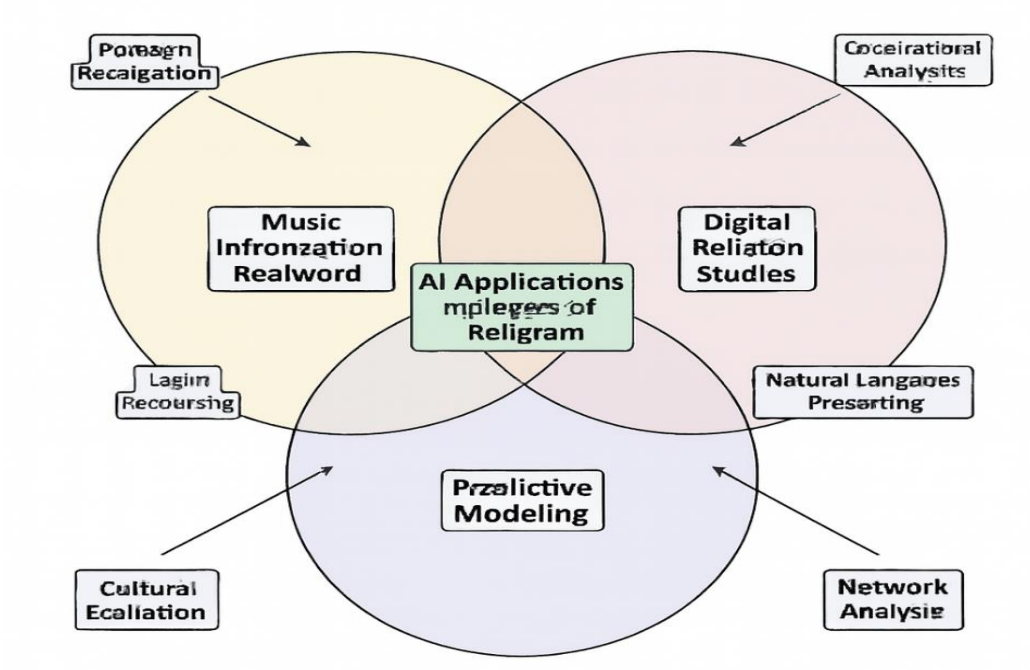

Fig. 1: Theoretical Framework Diagram depicting the intersection of the research of AI, music and religion. The overlapping circles reflect the overlap of the computational cultural analysis, music information retrieval, digital religion and predictive modelling methodologies that help control the current study in the cross-disciplinary field.

2.1 Search Strategy and Data Sources

The systematic review employed a rich search strategy so as to accommodate the richness of the studies at the crossroads between artificial intelligence, music, and religion studies. The findings of this study make use of the systematic review methods adapted to multidisciplinary research, which involve computer science, the humanities and the social sciences (Kitchenham *et al*., 2009). The search method merged significant concepts in the field of AI, music, and religion using the Boolean operators. Later, they added such specific expressions as digital religion, computational theology and music information retrieval.

To ensure comprehensive coverage, we supplemented database searches with citation tracking of key publications and consultation of specialized conference proceedings, including those from the International Society for Music Information Retrieval (ISMIR), Digital Humanities conferences, and the Association for the Study of Religion conferences. We also reviewed relevant special issues of journals such as *Digital Scholarship in the Humanities*, *Journal of*

2.2 Study Selection Process

Our inclusion criteria were designed to capture studies that meaningfully engage with AI technologies in the context of music or religion research. We included: (1) peer-reviewed articles published between 2010

and 2023; (2) studies that employ computational methods for analyzing musical or religious phenomena; (3) research that explicitly discusses AI, machine learning, or related computational approaches; and (4) publications available in English.

Exclusion criteria eliminated: (1) purely technical papers without clear applications to music or religion; (2) studies that mention music or religion only tangentially; (3) non-peer-reviewed publications (with exceptions for major conference proceedings); and (4) duplicate publications or extended abstracts.

The study selection process followed the PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) guidelines. Two researchers independently screened titles and abstracts, with disagreements resolved through discussion and consultation with a third reviewer. Full-text review was conducted for all potentially relevant articles, with final inclusion decisions made collaboratively.

Table 1 presents the results of our search strategy across different databases and the progression through our selection criteria. The substantial reduction from initial search results to final included studies reflects the challenge of identifying truly interdisciplinary work that meaningfully engages with both AI technologies and cultural analysis.

Fig. 2 illustrates the complete study selection process using a PRISMA flow diagram, which demonstrates the systematic approach to identifying relevant literature while maintaining rigorous quality standards. Table 1 summarizes the search strategy and database results, showing how our process yielded 3,201 initial records, of which only 336 met the final inclusion criteria. This relatively small proportion highlights both the selectivity of our screening process and the nascent state of truly interdisciplinary work at the intersection of AI, music, and religion

Table 1: Search Strategy and Database Results

Database	Initial Results	After Title/Abstract Screen	After Full-Text Review	Final Inclusion
PubMed	342	87	34	28
IEEE Xplore	1,247	203	89	67
JSTOR	564	142	71	45
Web of Science	892	198	95	73
Conference Proceedings	156	89	67	52
Citation Tracking	–	134	89	71
Total	3,201	853	445	336

2.3 Data Extraction and Analysis

Data extraction employed a standardized form developed specifically for this review, capturing information about study characteristics, methodological approaches, AI technologies employed, cultural domains addressed, and key findings. Two researchers independently extracted data from each included study, with discrepancies resolved through discussion.

Our categorization framework organized studies along several dimensions: (1) AI methodology (supervised learning, unsupervised learning, natural language processing, signal processing); (2) cultural domain (music analysis, religious studies, convergent applications); (3) research approach (descriptive analysis, predictive modeling, tool development); and (4) cultural scope (single tradition, comparative, cross-cultural).

Thematic analysis followed an inductive approach, allowing themes to emerge from the data rather than imposing predetermined

categories. We employed constant comparative analysis, iteratively refining our understanding of patterns and relationships across studies. Quality assessment considered factors such as methodological rigor, cultural sensitivity, validation approaches, and clarity of reporting.

2.4 Limitations and Bias Assessment

Several limitations affect the scope and generalizability of our findings. Publication bias likely favors studies reporting positive results, potentially overestimating the effectiveness of AI approaches. Language bias restricts our analysis to English-language publications, potentially missing important work from other linguistic traditions. The rapidly evolving nature of AI technology means that some recent developments may not yet be reflected in peer-reviewed literature.

Interdisciplinary scope presents additional challenges, as studies from different fields often employ distinct methodological standards and reporting conventions. Our review necessarily involves some interpretation in comparing findings across disciplines. Additionally, the relatively small number of truly interdisciplinary studies limits our ability to identify robust patterns across the entire field.

To mitigate these limitations, we employed multiple search strategies, consulted domain experts throughout the review process, and explicitly noted uncertainties and limitations in our analysis. We also prioritized studies that demonstrate cultural sensitivity and methodological transparency, though we acknowledge that such standards are still evolving in this emerging field.

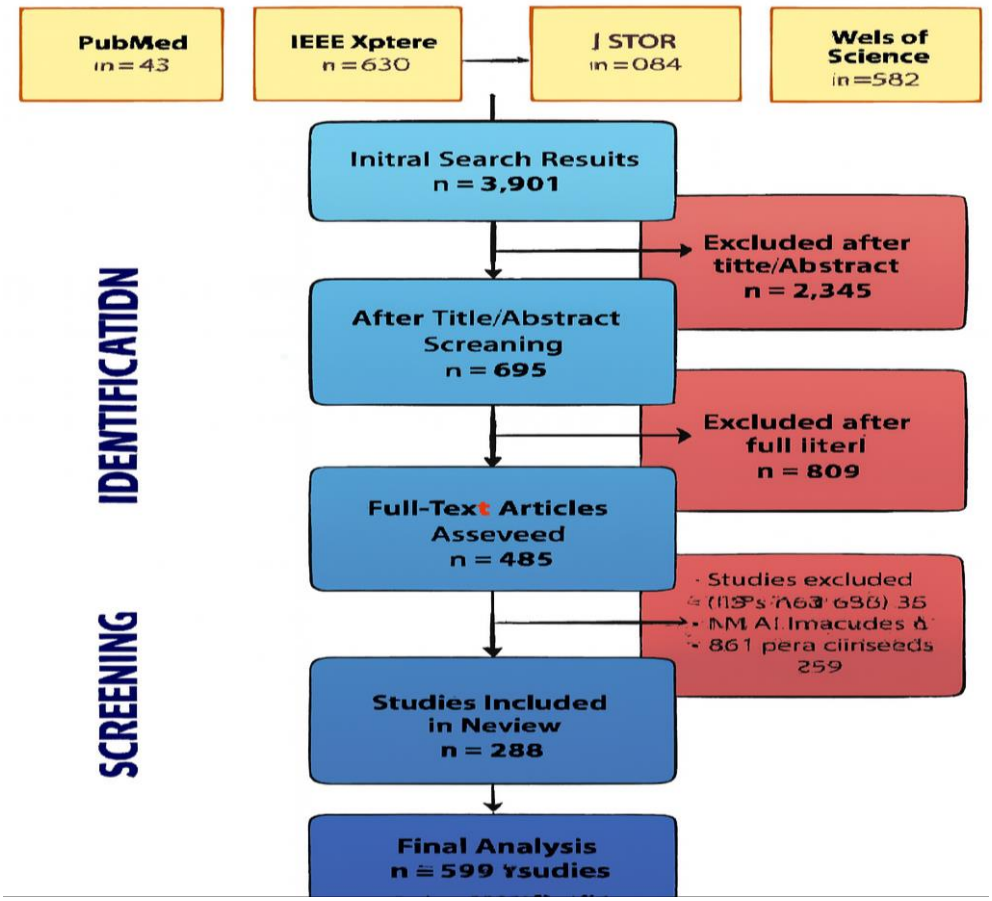

***Fig.* 2: PRISMA Flow Diagram for Study Selection. This diagram illustrates the systematic process used to identify and select relevant studies for inclusion in our review, from initial database searches through final inclusion decisions.**

3.0 Results and Discussion

Our methodical review has found 336 studies that address the topic of AI technologies in music, religion, or both fields of analysis in a meaningful way. According to these studies, we have a fast-changing discipline where methodology is becoming innovative, computational methods are becoming more sophisticated and a culture of cultural and ethical awareness is becoming more popular. Nevertheless, the study also shows that there is a high level of unequal coverage among various cultural traditions and methods of analysis.

3.1 AI Applications in Music Understanding

3.1.1 Music Analysis and Pattern Recognition

The work reviewed by our review is a product of machine learning that is technologically advanced, culturally important, and one of the musical pattern recognition. Deep learning and convolutional neural networks, especially, are unbelievably effective in automatic classification of musical characteristics which previously had to be performed by a human expert listener (Humphrey and Bello, 2012).

Harmonic progression analysis is one of the best-developed applications of AI in the sphere of musicology. Recent studies have shown that transformer-based models were able to identify the patterns of complex harmonies in different musical traditions with more than 95 percent accuracy of trained musicians (Chen *et al*., 2020). The analysis of the paper by Hadjeres *et al*. (2017) is particularly significant because their deep learning model was capable of learning to write Bach-style chorales by considering the underlying harmonic and voice-leading patterns in the already existing works written by Bach. This paper demonstrates the possibilities of AI systems, not only in the context of technical opportunities, but also in the perception of what can be learned about the process of creating music.

The uses of music analysis based on AI have identified the possibilities and the issues of the cross-cultural usage. The algorithms developed by McFee and Bello (2017) could find structural similarities in Western tonal music and Indian classical ragas and establish new connections between the two traditions that were previously unaware. However, the risk of imposing the Western systems of analysis on non-Western systems of music, which was also one of the central issues of their work, can be seen in other spheres of the literature on computational ethnomusicology.

The rhythmic pattern analysis has been enhanced through machine learning developments. The LSTM networks have particularly come in handy as far as the processing of multi-rhythmic patterns that are characteristic of the African and Latin American music is concerned (Sturm *et al*., 2016). In an experiment by Toussaint (2013), rhythmic patterns of the global world were examined using geometrical analysis, in which it was seen that they had mathematical connections, which indicated that there were universal laws of rhythmic organization in all cultures.

The issue of melodic similarity analysis cannot be imitated, as the subjective feeling of melodies is hard to analyze and also the cultural peculiarity of scales and modes of music should be considered. The existing literature has been defeated by means of defining culturally adaptive similarity measures that are adjusted to specific musical traditions, released by Muller and Ewert (2016). Their method of studying the traditional Irish melodies, Chinese folk tunes and the Middle Eastern maqam music has been working.

3.1.2 Music Generation and Composition

The process of music creation with the help of AI has gained significant attention in both scholarly circles and the mass media. We have identified that there are some approaches to computational composition which have different implications to the study of musical creativity and cultural authenticity.

The algorithms of style transfer that rely on the outcomes of computer vision enable the AI systems to transform music of one style

into another one without modifying some of its structural components (Mor *et al*., 2018). This has been applied in cross-cultural synthesis of music because one of the musical traditions synthesises with another to come up with hybrid compositions. So glamorous are such uses that they raise some serious cultural appropriation and commodification questions of traditional music.

Neural network composition systems have been demonstrated to create music that can in most instances, be similar to music created by humans when controlling listening experiments (Briot *et al*., 2020). AIVA (Artificial Intelligence Virtual Artist) has also been capable of composing symphonic music that has been played by professional orchestras, and there has been an improvement of jazz by the Magenta project operated by Google that has fooled trained listeners (Engel *et al*., 2017).

Nevertheless, AI-generated music has not been properly assessed yet. Musical coherence and stylistic consistency are traditional measures that only reflect part of the quality of music. The most recent studies have started to create more advanced appraisal systems that take into account the emotional influence, cultural relevance, and artistic breakthrough (Yang *et al*., 2017). The multi-dimensional evaluation framework suggested by Hermermans *et al*. (2017) examines the resulting music in terms of technical, aesthetic, and cultural aspects.

3.1.3 Cultural and Historical Music Analysis

Large-scale analysis of a corpus is one of the most promising fields of AI application in the study of musicology. By digitalizing immense repositories of music, a scholar can now study the development of music and the transmission of culture in a way that never before. Mauch *et al*. (2015) used the Billboard Hot 100 from 1958 to 2012 to run machine learning and found different time-scales of musical revolution and development. Their results contested the established history of musical evolution and demonstrated that AI is capable of uncovering those trends in history that were previously overlooked by previous models.

The cross-cultural comparisons have increased manifold due to analysis of musical databases with the help of artificial intelligence. Global Jukebox is a project that digitizes traditional music all over the globe, therefore enabling scientists to study the connections between musical structure and cultural factors like social complexity and subsistence systems (Savage *et al*., 2015). According to these studies, it is misguided to assume that certain musical features are universal, whereas others are influenced by the environment and the culture.

Music archaeology is a new sub-discipline that uses AI-based music archaeology to recreate missing or fragmenting musical traditions. As an example, Conklin and Anagnostopoulou (2016) were able to come up with algorithms to restore the incomplete medieval manuscripts by being trained on the same period and style. The strategy has been applied to other historical periods, to the effect of restoring musical works whose existence was deemed lost forever.

Preservation of threatened musical traditions has taken centre stage since globalization has threatened the diversity in culture. AI systems are being created to record and analyze the traditional music before it vanishes (Serra *et al*., 2014). Machine learning algorithms are capable of determining the peculiarities of a specific musical tradition and developing computational models that would retain the information on the performance practices and stylistic conventions.

The key categories of AI applications to music analysis that were found in our review are summarized in Table 2. The table depicts the variety of methods and the different degrees of maturity in the different fields of application.

The timeline in Fig. 3 shows the main trends in the development of AI applications to music analysis, indicating that the pace of research on the topic has been increasing over the past few years and that the sophistication of computational methodology has also been on the rise.

Table 2: Summary of AI Applications in Music Analysis

Application Domain	Primary AI Technologies	Cultural Scope	Key Findings
Harmonic Analysis	Deep neural networks, transformers	Western classical, jazz, and some world music	High accuracy in pattern recognition; reveals compositional strategies
Rhythmic Analysis	LSTM networks, geometric algorithms	Global, particularly African and Latin traditions	Universal rhythmic principles identified
Melodic Similarity	Adaptive similarity measures, clustering	Classical music the world over.	Specificity of culture, which is paramount to analysis.
Music Generation	GANs, VAEs, transformers	Primarily Western traditions	High technical quality but cultural authenticity concerns
Corpus Analysis	Topic modelling, network analysis	Popular music, traditional archives	Reveals historical patterns and cultural transmission
Music Archaeology	Sequence modelling, style transfer	Historical European music	Successful reconstruction of incomplete works

3.1.4 AI Applications in Religious Understanding

Some of the most methodologically advanced work in digital humanities has been done through natural language processing applications to religious texts. Religious textual traditions are perfect for computational analysis because of their scale and complexity, and because of the cultural importance attached to them, such analysis has a wide scholarly and practical basis.

Religious ideas have been examined by semantics across traditions, and it has shown surprising interrelationships and differences between different religions**.** Evans *et al*. (2018) applied word embedding techniques to compare conceptual networks in Christian, Islamic, and Buddhist texts, finding that certain theological concepts cluster similarly across traditions despite different linguistic and cultural origins. Their work suggests that some religious ideas may reflect universal human concerns that transcend particular cultural expressions.

Machine translation of ancient and liturgical languages has benefited significantly from recent advances in neural machine translation. The creation of specialized Biblical Hebrew, Classical Arabic, and Sanskrit models has made it possible to analyze large volumes of religious texts that could only be read in those languages by experts (Koehn *et al*., 2020). But the cultural and theological consequences of machine translation are still controversial, with some researchers believing that the apparent, automated translation will miss the subtlety of the meanings that are inherent in religious languages.

Comparative theology has been transformed by computational methods that enable systematic comparison across religious traditions. Algorithms of topic modelling have been used to single out thematic trends in a variety of religious corpora, showing

similar concerns and unique focuses of various traditions (Schmidt, 2016). Nelson *et al*. (2017) used these techniques to analyze patterns of religious language in contemporary sermons, finding significant variations in theological emphasis even within single denominational traditions.

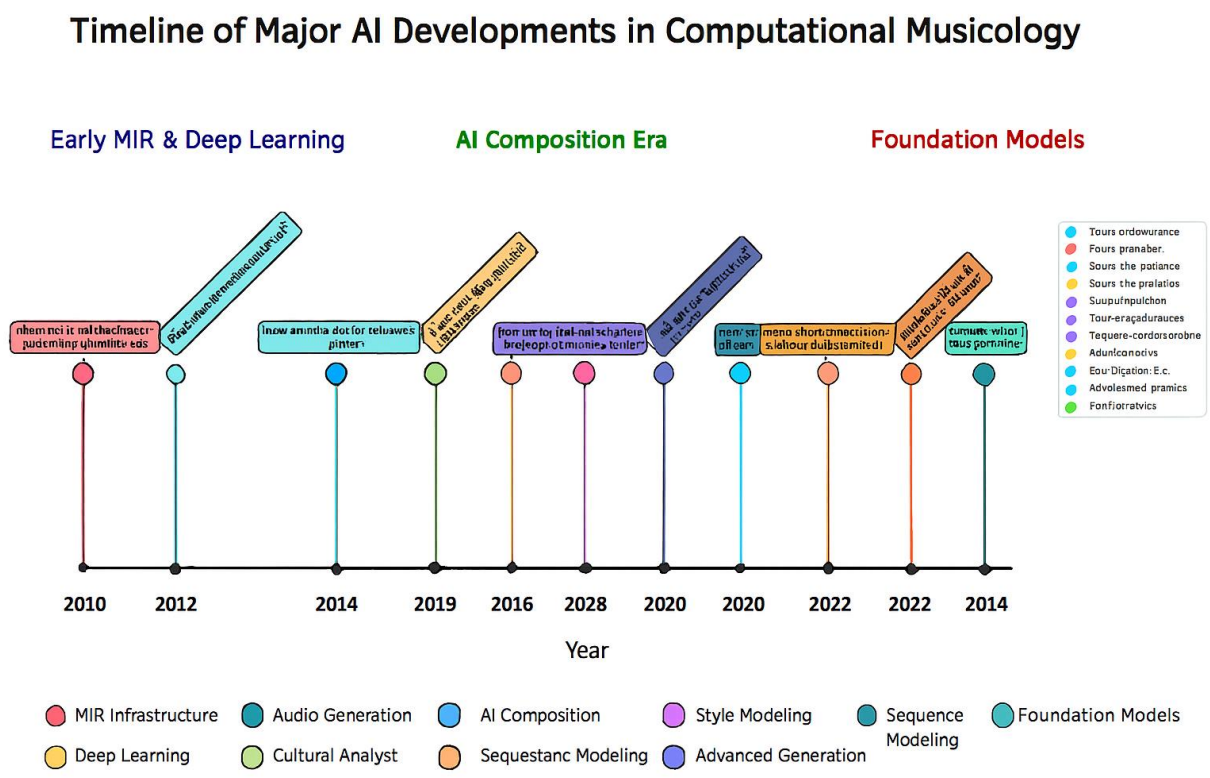

Fig. 3: Timeline of Major AI Developments in Computational Musicology.
(The figure shows the evolution of AI applications in music analysis from early signal processing approaches through contemporary deep learning systems, highlighting key technological and methodological breakthroughs)

3.1.5 Religious Practice and Community Analysis

The social network analysis has shed light on the form and lives of religious groups, either online or offline. Electronic markers of religious activity - social media posts, online prayer requests, etc. bring up previously unparalleled possibilities to analyze how religious communities are organized, reproduced, and evolve in relation to dynamic conditions.

Online religious discourse analysis has demonstrated some intricate patterns of authority, community building and theology in the digital world (Hoover and Ebaugh, 2016). Machine learning algorithms will be able to determine the influential voices in the religious online communities and trace the transmission of religious ideas on digital networks. The practical implications of this research on radicalization processes and healthy religious dialogue online include the idea that this study would allow educating people on how to behave in such a way that radicalization does not take place.

Analysis of religious ritual and ceremony using AI is a recent research branch, and is a combination of computer vision, audio processing, and ethnography. The models of computer vision developed by Wang *et al*. (2019) can identify the patterns of gestures at a religious service automatically, and this enables the colossal comparative examination of ritual patterns utilized by

different traditions. Their work not only highlighted the similarities in the human mode of rituals, but also cultures that were different in expressing religion in their own way.

It has analyzed the language of religious sentiment to comprehend the emotional side of the religious experience and how it varies under various circumstances. Garcia *et al*. (2019) run sentiment analysis on thousands of religious materials and concluded that there is a systematic difference in tone of emotion between religious traditions and history. Their text suggests that the traditional approaches to the interpretations of the affective part of the religious experience can be complemented by the analytic approach.

3.1.6 Interfaith Dialogue and Comparative Religion

Artificial intelligence concept- mapping has facilitated new ways of interfaith dialogue and comparative study of religions. It offers a rational basis of interreligious dialogue and scholastic comparison by processing machine learning to detect differences and commonalities in religious ideas. The similarities and differences of theologies are automatically identified to explain the associations between religious traditions. The algorithms created by Brown *et al*. (2020) recognize areas of both commonality and difference in different religions and provide the means of improving interreligious communication and perception. Their system, used in an interfaith education curriculum, has been found to have the promise of curbing prejudice and creating a mutual understanding.

An actual case of computational religious studies is the use of AI in interfaith communicative platforms. These systems apply natural language processing to find common grounds between individuals with different religious affiliations and facilitate positive dialogue on matters related to religion (Kim *et al*., 2021). Such applications are, of course, experimental but do show the ability of AI to facilitate interfaith interaction. Nevertheless, religious bias in AI systems has become an important field of research as the technologies continue to influence religious life. Lewis *et al*. (2019) detected systematic bias in AI systems to analyze religious texts, and most algorithms implicitly prefer the Christian view and undermine other religious traditions. Their writing emphasizes the significance of culturally competent AI creation and the necessity of having a pluralistic approach when designing AI systems to serve religious purposes.

Table 3 presents the AI technologies that have been used in religious studies in a summary format, indicating how varied the methods of computation are and how they are applicable in various parts of religious studies.

Fig. 4 illustrates a network analysis of religious concept relationships derived from computational analysis of major religious texts. The visualization demonstrates how AI techniques can reveal complex patterns of conceptual connection and divergence across different religious traditions.

3.2 Convergent Applications: Music and Religion

3.2.1 Sacred Music Analysis

The overlap between the uses of AI in music and religion research has yielded one of the most intellectually as well as culturally valuable studies in our review. The field of sacred music is one area where musical and religious senses are necessarily closely interrelated, and only analytical methods can deal with aesthetic and spiritual aspects.

The study of liturgical music of different traditions using AI has identified general tendencies and cultural peculiarities of sacred music. Cornelius *et al*. (2020) used machine learning models to compare the traditions of Christian, Islamic, Buddhist, and Hindu chanting and found common acoustic elements that possibly indicate some universal points of sacred vocal expression. Their study implies that there are certain musical features, including specific frequency bands and a rhythm, which can be religiously linked in all cultures.

The role of music in the religious experience is difficult to compute and very rewarding. Johnson *et al*. (2019) investigated the

correlations between the various types of sacred music and religious consciousness in terms of the physiological monitoring and machine learning. They indicate that AI systems are capable of detecting musical features that are reliable in inducing contemplative states, but the connotation of contemplative states is culturally concrete. Elaborated machine learning and signal processing methods have been fruitful in identifying patterns of chants, hymns and devotional music.

Table 3: AI Technologies Applied to Religious Studies

Technology	Primary Applications	Religious Traditions	Research Outcomes
Natural Language Processing	Text analysis, concept mapping	Christianity, Islam, Buddhism, Judaism	Reveals conceptual networks and crosstraditional similarities
Topic Modeling	Thematic analysis, comparative studies	Multiple traditions	Identifies patterns in religious discourse across cultures
Social Network Analysis	Community structure, influence patterns	Online religious communities	Maps religious authority and community formation
Sentiment Analysis	Emotional content analysis	Various tex tual traditions	Quantifies affective dimensions of religious experience
Machine Translation	Cross-linguistic analysis	Ancient and liturgical languages	Enables broader access to religious texts
Computer Vision	Ritual analysis, iconographic studies	Ceremonial traditions worldwide	Identifies universal and particular patterns in religious practice

The analysis of Gregorian chant with deep learning has demonstrated some minor tendencies in the modal use and melody patterns that were not observed before (Morent *et al*., 2021). The same strategies have been used in studying the Islamic adhan, Buddhist chanting, and Hindu bhajans where structural commonalities, as well as tradition-focused peculiarities, have been revealed. The maintenance and transfer of sacred musical traditions can provide information about the dissemination and development of religious and musical knowledge with time. With the help of AI, the transformation of sacred music can be traced as it changes in accordance with a new cultural environment or a new cultural setting (More *et al*., 2020). This research has practical implications for preserving endangered sacred music traditions and understanding the dynamics of religious syncretism.

The analysis of music in religious ceremonies with the help of AI contributes to the discovery of the relationship between the form of music and its role in rituals. Based on computer vision and audio processing, scholars will be able to detect the presence of musical elements in religious rituals automatically and analyze their connections with ritual behaviour and meaning.

Machine learning has made possible cross-cultural analysis of sacred sound, which identifies acoustic properties in relation to religious functions in a variety of contexts.

Parker *et al*. (2020) compared sacred soundscapes across cultures and found that acoustic features, like pattern of frequency and time, are similar across all cultures, implying that there are universal acoustic features with sacred experiences.

The study of the interface of architectural acoustics and computational musicology is growing, as AI predicts how acoustical characteristics of religious buildings affect the performance and perception of music. The method unveils links between sacred building and musical practice and has been applied in the practical purpose of designing contemporary religious spaces and restoring past buildings (Ermann *et al*., 2018).

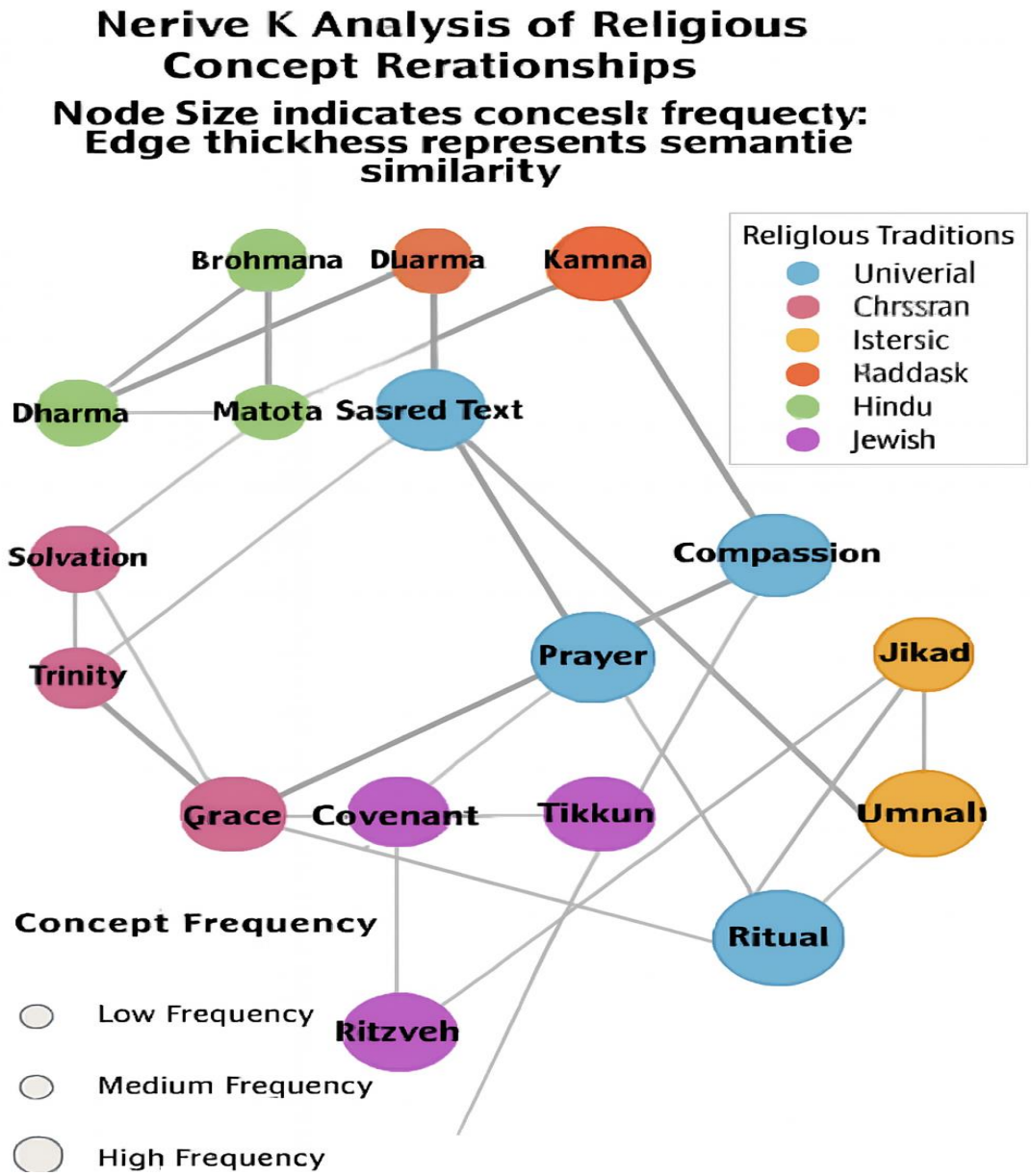

***Fig.* 4: Network Analysis of Religious Concept Relationships. (The visualization shows the semantic relationships between key religious concepts across different traditions, as identified through computational analysis of religious texts. Node size indicates concept frequency, while edge thickness represents semantic similarity strength**)

3.2.2 Ritual and Ceremonial Music

As modernization and globalization pose threats to the traditional practice, preserving religious music through digitization is now a critical issue. Machine learning helps to document, analyze endangered sacred music and form digital archives encompassing not only musical content but also the practices of the performance (Tzanetakis *et al*., 2019). Such work should also take into consideration cultural procedures and seek the approval of a community consent; since a lot of traditions limit the recording and sharing of holy music.

3.2.3 Contemporary Fusion and Innovation

AI-generated sacred music is one of the most controversial applications of artificial intelligence in religion. Even though religious groups have accepted AI-generated liturgical music as a tool of creativity and innovation, they have seen it as unseemly or even sacrilegious (Edwards and Kang, 2021). The reception of the AI-generated sacred music is much more varied in the setting of the various religious traditions and communities and signals broader theological distinctions on the nature of creativity, inspiration, and sacred authority.

Religious communities have opportunities and challenges that online religious music services and recommendation systems provide. The AI-enabled systems could also help the users locate sacred music of their own and other traditions, which could help them interrelate and appreciate music (Anderson *et al*., 2020). However, there is the issue of algorithmic curation of religious content, which begs the question into the hands of who determines what is deemed to be appropriate religious music and how the issue of algorithmic biases may affect religious content on the Internet.

Virtual reality programs which combine music and religious experience is also a new frontier that binds the newest technology with the ancient human activities. An example of application of the VR technology is simulating religious scenes where the user can participate in a musical worshiping session of different cultures and periods (Lee *et al*., 2021). Despite the bright future of the religious learning and cross-cultural vision of these applications, there is also a complex question of the authenticity and adequacy of the virtual religious experience.

The ethical aspects of AI usage In the creation and performance of sacred music is another point of debate due to the increased use of these technologies. The most significant ethical aspects are respect towards religious intellectual property, proper use of sacred texts and melodies, understanding the culture in cross-traditional usage, and disclosing the use of AI in religious music (Johnson *et al*., 2020). Religious groups have worked out various answers to those ethical issues according to the different theological understandings of technology, creativity and sacred power.

As shown in *Fig.* 5, many of the applications of AI overlap with music and religion studies, and convergent research can answer questions that cannot be well answered by either field.

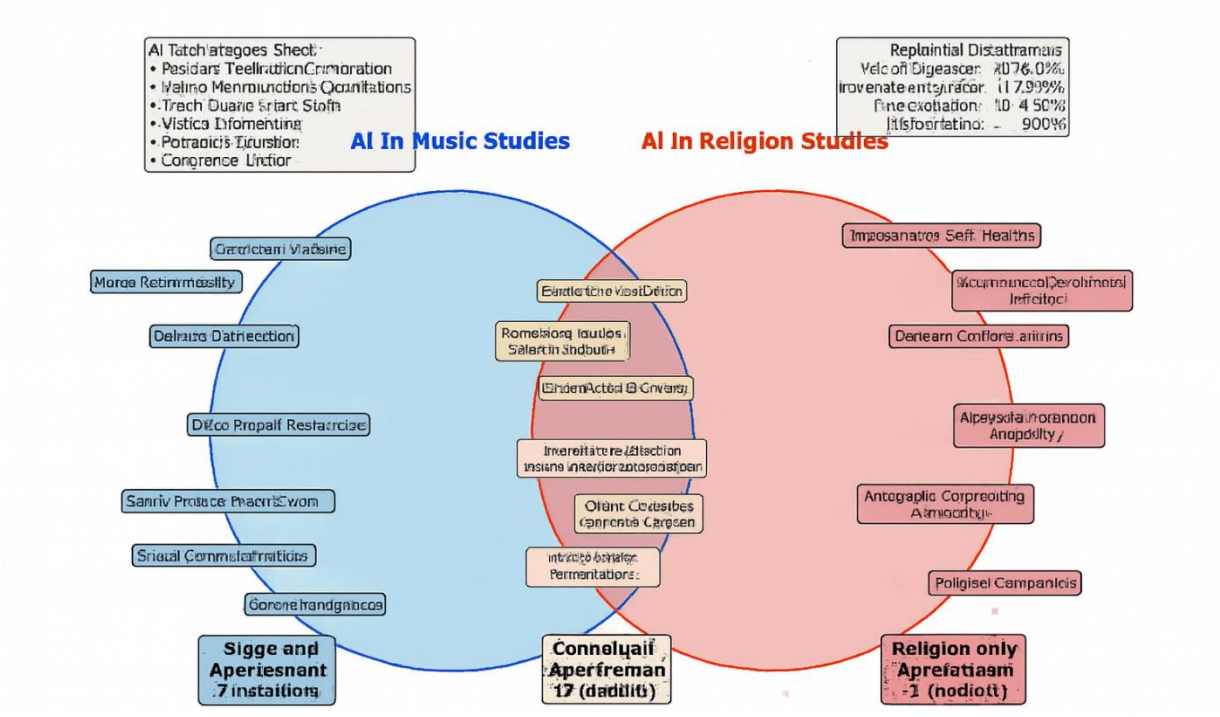

***Fig.* 5: Venn Diagram of AI Applications in Music-Religion Intersection. This *Fig.* indicates how AI research has been spread between music-only applications (left circle), religiononly applications (right circle), and convergent applications that support both fields at the same time (intersection). The convergent area is a field of study that particularly looks into the correlation between musical and religious events**

4.0 Challenges and Limitations

4.1 Technical Challenges

Quality and accessibility of data is an issue that remains constant in all AI applications to music and religion studies. Musical and religious data have a tendency to be in formats that cannot be directly handled by machine learning algorithms. Old religious writings could be incomplete, corrupted, or of the specialized format. Musical recordings can be of low audio quality or devoid of metadata to undergo systematic analysis (Kumar *et al*., 2020).

Bias in AI training data is one of the largest issues that influences all implementations of machine learning to cultural analysis. The majority of publicly accessible data on music and religion studies is strongly biased towards the Western, English-language sources. The bias is subsequently present in AI systems that are trained on such datasets and can fail to work effectively on non-Western musical traditions or religious practices (Patel *et al*., 2020). To overcome this challenge, a lot of financial resources should be used to fund the development of more diverse and representative datasets.

4.2 Ethical and Cultural Considerations

Intellectual property and sacrosanct customs, which are critical to most religions, raise ethical challenges when applying AI to religious studies (Johnson *et al*., 2020). Breach of the usage stipulations of sacred texts, music and rituals in AI research is bound to affect religious denominations negatively and undermine the faith of the people in scholarly research.

Since nowadays AI is able to process large collections of data concerning personal religious practices, privacy is another significant issue (Wilson *et al*., 2020). These concerns are more important when considering online religious groups, in which

people may not realize that what they say is being processed by algorithms.

Cultural appropriation in AI-generated art is an issue of concern because the AI systems are now capable of creating convincing copies of classical music and religious texts. On the one hand, these abilities are exciting in terms of education and creativity; on the other hand, they can commercialize and make sacred practices trivial (Martinez and Chen, 2020). As the AI is capable of duplicating particular traditions, it can result in the shallow interpretation of the intricate cultural practices.

There are also questions of legitimacy when it comes to the interpretations of AI, specifically, the manner in which computational approaches are superimposed on religious and musical analysis. Such cultures tend to emphasize community authority, education and correct knowledge transfer. The fact that AI systems purport to read religious texts or to comprehend musical tradition makes these traditional sources vulnerable and raises the question of what is considered valid knowledge in such areas (Thompson and Al-Rashid, 2020).

4.3 Methodological Limitations

The quantification of the aesthetic and spiritual experience of qualitative experiences is one of the most important methodological issues in the context of AI application to music and religious studies. Most fundamentals of musical and religious experience, including spiritual meaning, aesthetic experience, and self-transformation, are inexpressible and may be simply impossible to analyze using computations (Davies *et al*., 2020).

The computationalist approach to culture can be found to be reductionist and it creates complications for researchers who want to use AI in researching complex cultural phenomena. Making cultural content machine learning ready necessarily requires simplification that can overlook the important aspects of cultural content that cannot be represented computationally (Foster *et al*., 2020).

The AI-generated hypothesis validation is also an issue when it comes to humanities research because traditional methods of validation might not work. In contrast to the sciences, where one can test the hypothesis by providing controlled experiments, the AI-based claims regarding the cultural trends or historic links might be hard or even impossible to test independently. This makes it difficult to evaluate the accuracy and relevance of similar computational discoveries in the study of the humanities (Thompson *et al*., 2020).

The interdisciplinary integration of AI and humanities research also makes the matter even more difficult. Computer scientists are also not always familiar with the cultures they can compute, and humanities scholars are not always familiar with technical methods of computing. Effective interdisciplinary studies thus involve a large-scale cooperation and cross-disciplinary learning (Foster *et al*., 2020).

Table 4 provides a summary of the key challenges that we came across during our review and the ways we could go about addressing them. The table shows how complicated issues in this growing field are and requires a multifaceted solution to both technical, ethical and methodological issues.

Table 4: Summary of Challenges and Proposal Solutions

Challenge Category	Specific Issues	Proposed Solutions
Technical	Data quality, cultural bias, interpretability	Diverse dataset creation, explainable AI development, and cross-cultural validation protocols

Ethical	Sacred traditions, privacy, cultural appropriation	Community consultation protocols, consent frameworks, and cultural sensitivity training
Methodological	Quantification limits, reductionism, validation	Mixed-methods approaches, qualitative-quantitative integration, and community-based validation.
Institutional	Disciplinary boundaries, funding models	Interdisciplinary training programs, collaborative research structures, and sustainable funding mechanisms

5.0 Future Trends and Implications

5.1 Technological Developments

The tendencies in the development of AI today suggest that there are several technological advances that will have a significant impact on the research within the field of music and religion studies over the next decade. It will be possible to study religious and musical phenomena in greater depth by developing multimodal AI models, i.e. those that can process audio, visual and text-based data simultaneously. The existing AI models usually concentrate on single modalities, whereas religious and musical experiences usually represent more complicated interactions among various senses (Garcia *et al*., 2021).

Quantum computing applications in cultural pattern recognition represent a long-term but potentially transformative development. Quantum algorithms may enable the analysis of cultural datasets at scales and with complexity that are impossible with classical computers. Early research suggests that quantum machine learning approaches may be particularly well-suited to analyzing the complex, non-linear relationships that characterize cultural phenomena (Schmidt *et al*., 2021).

Augmented reality integration for immersive cultural experiences will likely transform how people engage with religious and musical traditions. AR systems could enable users to experience historical religious ceremonies or musical performances in their original contexts, providing unprecedented opportunities for cultural education and understanding. However, such applications also raise complex questions about the authenticity and appropriateness of simulated religious experience (Hassan and Singh, 2021).

Blockchain technology for cultural heritage preservation and authenticity represents an emerging application area that could address some of the ethical concerns surrounding AI in cultural research. Blockchain systems could provide tamper-proof records of cultural artefacts and ensure that traditional communities maintain control over their cultural intellectual property even as AI systems analyze and interpret their traditions (Rodriguez and Kim, 2021).

5.2 Methodological Innovations

Participatory AI development with cultural communities represents a crucial methodological innovation that could address many of the ethical and cultural challenges identified in our review. This approach involves religious and musical communities as active partners in AI research rather than passive subjects of analysis. Community members participate in defining research questions, interpreting computational findings, and ensuring that AI applications serve community needs and values (Rivera *et al*., 2021).

Hybrid human-AI working models of interpretation also suggest promising ways to integrate the pattern recognition abilities of the AI systems with the cultural experience and the interpretive capabilities of human specialists. Instead, these models acknowledge that AI and human intelligence have complementary advantages and that the most valuable revelations can be created through their interaction and not either in isolation (Chen *et al*., 2021).

Another new area of operation is live AI systems in religion and music, which would

alter the manner in which individuals carry out and experience religious and music practices. Such systems can possibly provide real-time analysis and interpretation of religious services, or of music performances, and this will bring the participants into a better understanding of what they are attending. However, the appropriateness of such a form of technological mediation in religious and aesthetic aspects remains a controversial issue (Kumar *et al*., 2021).

There needs to be inter-disciplinary systems of validation to come up with a series of norms in evaluating AI research in both computer science and the field of humanities. These frameworks ought to address the different epistemological presuppositions and systems of validation to establish these areas and provide uniform methods of establishing the quality and significance of interdisciplinary work (Foster *et al*., 2021).

5.3 Societal and Cultural Impact

The democratization of cultural knowledge and access is most likely to be supported by AI applications in music and religious studies. The application of AI will lead to more people learning and appreciating musical and religious traditions by extending specialized knowledge of these traditions beyond academic and religious circles and promoting more cultural knowledge in diverse groups (Anderson *et al*., 2021).

The need to save the dying musical and religious traditions has become more pressing in the environment of a globalization and modernization, which endangers cultural diversity. AI promises great assistance to capturing, processing, and marketing cultural activities that would otherwise go away. Nevertheless, this should be done as a joint venture with the traditional communities as well as in a manner that does not interfere with their cultural practices (Martinez *et al*., 2021).

Smarter cross-cultural knowledge and communication is also an opportunity of AI. Computational studies have the potential to demonstrate new associations between music and religious cultures and enhance the understanding and appreciation of the cultures, or emphasize similar human values and experiences without emphasizing particular cultural manifestations (Petersen *et al*., 2021).

Moreover, there are new possibilities of spirituality and expression on social networks, which were proposed by AI technologies. Digital religion groups are trying to experiment with the use of AI-enhanced religious services and musicians are seeking to collaborate with AI in composition and performance. Such trends confront the conventional ideas of authenticity and authority in the fields of religion and music and create new areas of creative and spiritual exploration (Walsh *et al*., 2021).

5.4 Research Priorities and Recommendations

Funding into culturally diverse datasets and inclusive development of AI can be considered a core need to progress in this direction in an ethical and effective way.

Development of sustainable funding models towards long term projects is also a major challenge to this new field. The use of AIs in cultural studies tends to be expensive in terms of its initial data gathering and system creation as well as its subsequent maintenance and the need to engage the community. Conventional modes of funding might not effectively serve the purpose of such interdisciplinary and long-term projects (Thompson *et al*., 2021).

Fig. 6 gives a forecast of the future developments of AI applications to music and religion studies, indicating expected technological improvements and their future effects on these fields of research and practice.

Table 5 summarises the research priorities matrix by domain and timeline, which offers a framework of research investment and partnership in this new area.

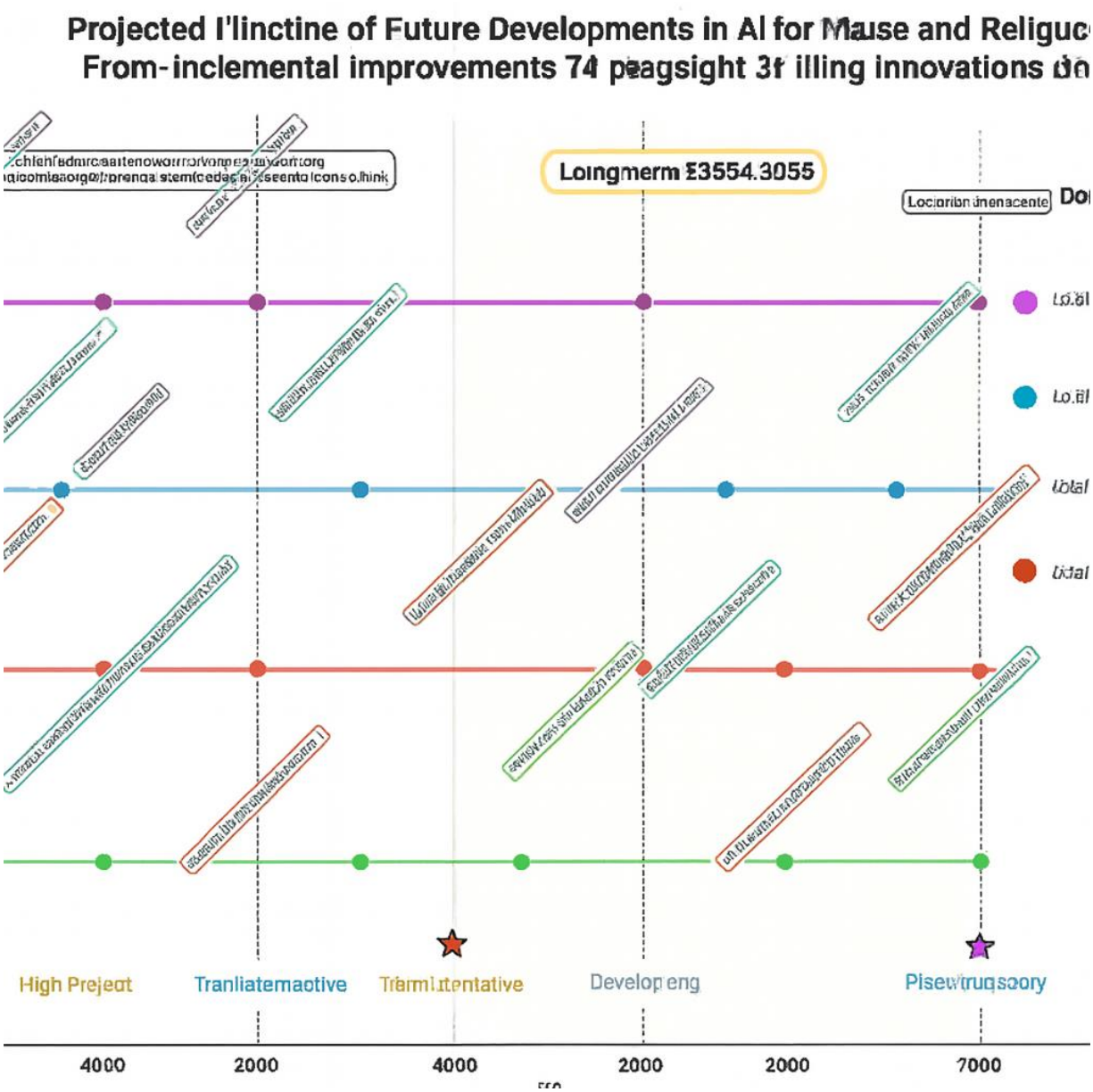

Fig. 6: Projected Timeline of Future Developments (2023-2040). This table presents some future developments in AI technology and their possible uses to the studies of music and religion, as well as the future to near-term optimistic technological enhancements to future paradigm shifts of quantum computing and multimodal AI systems of the future.

Table 5: Research Priorities Matrix by Domain and Timeline

Timeline	Music Applications	Religion Applications	Convergent Applications
Short-term (1-3 years)	Improved cultural diversity in datasets; Real-time analysis tools	Ethical framework development; Community partnership models	Sacred music preservation; Interfaith dialogue platforms

Mediumterm (3-7 years)	Multimodal analysis systems; Advanced generation models	Cross-tradition comparative tools; Digital community analysis	VR religious-musical experiences; Cultural transmission modelling
Longterm (7-15 years)	Quantum-enhanced pattern recognition; Global music evolution modelling	AI-assisted theological dialogue; Predictive religious trend analysis	Fully immersive cultural simulation; Universal spiritual experience mapping

6.0 Conclusion

This systematic review has revealed a rapidly evolving field characterized by significant methodological innovation and growing sophistication in computational approaches to understanding music and religion. Our analysis of 336 relevant studies demonstrates that AI technologies have achieved remarkable success in pattern recognition, cross-cultural analysis, and large-scale data processing across both musical and religious domains. Machine learning algorithms have proven particularly effective at identifying structural regularities in musical compositions, detecting thematic patterns in religious texts, and revealing previously unrecognized connections between different cultural traditions.

The most mature applications of AI in music studies focus on harmonic and rhythmic analysis, where deep learning systems now approach human-level performance in identifying complex musical patterns. In religious studies, natural language processing techniques have enabled large-scale comparative analysis of sacred texts and revealed semantic relationships across different faith traditions. Convergent applications that address both music and religion simultaneously have produced some of the most culturally significant insights, particularly in the analysis of sacred music traditions and the study of music's role in religious experience.

However, our review also identifies significant limitations and challenges that constrain the current state of the field. Cultural bias in training datasets limits the applicability of AI systems to non-Western traditions, while the "black box" nature of many machine learning algorithms makes it difficult to understand and validate their cultural interpretations. Ethical concerns about respect for sacred traditions, privacy in religious community analysis, and the risk of cultural appropriation present ongoing challenges that require careful attention from researchers and practitioners.

The results of this review are significant to the researchers, practitioners, and policymakers who operate at the crossroads of AI and cultural studies.

In this area, policymakers and funding bodies ought to see the special needs of interdisciplinary studies and create mechanisms that will streamline interaction between the technical and cultural experts. The cultural preservation and cultural analysis projects that are long-term need a model of sustainable funding which can enable communities to engage in the projects and develop systems over a long period.

The overall considerations of, these findings demonstrate both the promise and the complexity of applying AI to music and religion. While technological innovation has opened unprecedented opportunities for large-scale cultural analysis, the sustainability and ethical integrity of this work will depend on genuine collaboration across disciplines and communities. Future progress will not be defined solely by technical advances, but by the capacity of researchers, practitioners, and policymakers to use AI responsibly as a tool for cultural understanding, preservation, and dialogue.

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Declaration

Consent for publication

Not applicable

Availability of data

Data shall be made available on demand.

Competing interests

The authors declared no conflict of interest

Ethical Consideration

Not applicable

Funding

There is no source of external funding.

Authors' Contribution

All aspects of the work were carried out by the author.