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Exploring the Relationship Between Artificial Intelligence and Religion on YouTube Narratives

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ABSTRACT

The relationship between artificial intelligence (AI) and religion has emerged as a significant area of research that has developed rapidly in recent years. In particular, generative AI (GenAI) technologies offer new perspectives on the creation and discussion of religious content while also raising novel questions and challenges at the intersection of religion and digital technology. This study examines how the relationship between AI and religion is reflected in the narratives of religious communities and how these narratives are received by audiences. To this end, it analyzes a YouTube video created using AI by Sözler Köşkü, one of Türkiye's leading religious digital creatives (RDCs). This study employs qualitative case study design and collects data through document analysis. Both the video and audience comments were examined using descriptive analysis. The findings shed light on various dimensions of the AI–religion relationship and identify the thematic focal points of the religious narrative. In a representative dialogue with ChatGPT, AI is anthropomorphized and positioned as an interlocutor in matters of faith, serving to rationalize and scientize the religious arguments presented. The narrative was reinforced with humor and tailored to engage the audiences. Audience comments suggest that religious digital content created with the aid of GenAI can be interpreted through a multivocal and layered framework. This study reveals that AI has transformed into a discourse-forming and interactive-organizing actor in the creation of religious digital content.

Keywords: Digital religion, Religious digital creatives (RDCs), Generative artificial intelligence (GenAI), YouTube, ChatGPT

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Yapay Zekâ ve Din İlişkisini YouTube Anlatılarında Keşfetmek

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ÖZ

Yapay zekâ ve din ilişkisi, son yıllarda hızla gelişen önemli bir araştırma sahasına evrilmiştir. Özellikle üretken yapay zekâ teknolojileri, dini içeriklerin üretiminde ve dini tartışmaların şekillenmesinde yeni perspektifler sunarken, din ile dijital teknolojilerin kesişiminde yeni soru ve sorunları da ortaya çıkarmaktadır. Mezkûr ilişki, dinlerin dijital teknolojilere uyumunu görmek ve yapay zekânın dini deneyimleri nasıl dönüştürdüğünü anlamak açısından son derece önemlidir. Bu araştırma, Türkiye'deki en büyük dini dijital içerik üreticilerinden biri olan Sözler Köşkü'nün yapay zekâ kullanarak ürettiği YouTube videosunu incelemek suretiyle, yapay zekâ-din ilişkisinin dini topluluk anlatılarına nasıl yansıdığını ve bu anlatıların izleyiciler/takipçiler tarafından nasıl karşılandığını ortaya çıkarmayı amaçlamaktadır. Nitel durum çalışması deseniyle gerçekleştirilen araştırmanın verileri, doküman incelemesi tekniğiyle toplanmıştır. Bu çerçevede, Sözler Köşkü'nün metin tabanlı üretken yapay zekâ araçlarından ChatGPT'yi kullanarak ürettiği YouTube videosu ve bu videoya ait yorumlar betimsel analize tabi tutulmuştur. Sonuçlar, yapay zekâ ve din ilişkisinin farklı veçhelerine ışık tutarken, dini anlatının tematik odaklarını da ortaya koymaktadır. ChatGPT ile yürütülen temsili diyalogda yapay zekâ, insanileştirilerek inancın muhatabı sayılmış, ileri sürülen dini argümanların rasyonelleştirilmesi ve bilimleştirilmesinde kullanılmıştır. Dini anlatı, izleyici etkileşimi gözetilerek mizahi üslupla kuvvetlendirilmiştir. Videoya yapılan yorumlar ise üretken yapay zekâ desteğiyle oluşturulan dini dijital içeriğin çok sesli bir katmanda şekillendiğine işaret etmektedir. Araştırma yapay zekânın dini dijital içerik üretiminde söylem kurucu ve etkileşim düzenleyici bir aktöre dönüştüğünü ortaya koymaktadır.

Anahtar Sözcükler: Dijital din, Dini dijital içerik üreticileri, Üretken yapay zekâ, YouTube, ChatGPT

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INTRODUCTION

"Can machines think like humans?" This question, which forms the central focus of the article *Computing Machinery and Intelligence* (1950) written by computer scientist and mathematician Alan Mathison Turing in the mid-20th century, has had an influence far greater than anyone could imagine nearly a century after its publication. Until approximately a decade ago, most people had limited notions of what this question might entail, and many were inclined to respond negatively. However, today, the number of people who tend to answer Turing's question in the affirmative is increasing steadily. This is largely because the gap between our earlier perceptions of artificial intelligence (AI) and those of the past few years has widened significantly. The phenomena we encountered only in science fiction films have now begun to integrate into real life (Özçelik, 2025). Moreover, the discourse suggesting that we have entered the age of AI has become increasingly popular in recent years (Alegre, 2024; Cheok et al., 2024; Daugherty & Wilson, 2018; Kissinger et al., 2021; Scott, 2023; Tegmark, 2018; Thacker, 2020). This discourse is undoubtedly transforming into a tangible reality in everyday life, parallel to the enormous advances in AI technologies. Therefore, reflecting on the changes and transformations that these rapidly emerging technologies are bringing—or may bring— to social life has become inevitable.

Today, as an integral component of digital technology, AI touches nearly every aspect of social life. In particular, over the past five years, the widespread adoption of generative AI (GenAI) models designed for user interaction has broadened the scope of the AI–human relationship, necessitating a deeper reflection on its implications (Feuerriegel et al., 2024; Krakowski, 2025; Nah et al., 2023; Obrenovic et al., 2025; Umut, 2025). GenAI, which is now utilized across almost every sector, offers users a wide range of capabilities, from generating text-based content to creating visual content. These tools, which facilitate the creation of virtually any imaginable textual or visual content, have significantly streamlined digital content creation, which is now considered one of today's most prominent professions (Ali et al., 2024; Hua et al., 2024; Singha & Singha, 2024; Wahid et al., 2023). GenAI provides religious digital creatives (RDCs) with unprecedented ease and efficiency in content creation. This convenience extends to the domain of religious digital content as well. Hence, for those who professionally create religious content, using GenAI is not just beneficial; it has become virtually indispensable.

RDCs, whose numbers and impact capacities have expanded considerably in recent times and appeal to millions of followers, strive to spread their messages and grow their communities through the content they create (Campbell, 2021). YouTube is the digital platform on which this effort is

concentrated. Hundreds of RDCs on YouTube aim to fully utilize the opportunities offered by digital technology (Ergen, 2023, 2024). The recent massive development of AI and the remarkable expansion of the possibilities offered by GenAI have led to a proliferation of tools that RDCs can use in the content creation process (Singler, 2020; Swargiary, 2024; Tsuria & Tsuria, 2024). While this situation continues to sustain academic interest in the broader trajectory of the interaction between religion and AI, it also prompts specific reflections on the role of AI in creating religious digital content. In this context, this research problematizes the question: How do RDCs use GenAI in the content creation process, and how is this content received by audiences? Using a qualitative case study design, this research focuses on how Sözler Köşkü employs AI in the production of its religious digital creations and how this content is received and interpreted by its followers or audiences. As a RDCs and one of the largest digital Islamic communities in Türkiye in terms of its audience and number of followers, Sözler Köşkü stands out for its strong affinity with digital technologies (Çelebioğlu, 2022; Düzcan, 2020; Ergen, 2023). As one of the first Islamic communities in Türkiye to use GenAI to create religious digital content, the number of AI-related videos on the Sözler Köşkü YouTube channel continues to increase (2023b, 2023c, 2024, 2025). In this context, data were collected through document analysis, and the content of the video titled *Yapay Zeka ChatGPT İle Ateizm Tartışması! - Budizm, Hristiyanlık, Deizmin Zor Sorularını Sordu!-* (*Atheism Debate with Artificial Intelligence ChatGPT! - Buddhism, Christianity, Deism Asked Tough Questions!-*) (2023b) created using the GenAI tool ChatGPT[1] and comments on this video were analyzed through descriptive (thematic) analysis.

The number of studies addressing the relationship between AI and religion is increasing. Some studies have examined the effects of AI on attitudes toward religiosity, ethical decision-making processes, and theological implications (Ignatowski et al., 2024; Kaya & Eliyatkin, 2024; Kubaisi & Hamdan, 2024; Reed, 2021), while others have shed light on issues such as AI's role of AI in moral dilemmas, its impact on worship and ritual practices, its use in interpreting sacred texts, and its connection to creation theology (Cheong, 2020; Kızılgeçit et al., 2023; Swargiary, 2024; Umbrello, 2023). Moreover, topics such as AI's ability to generate religious metaphors, its potential to inspire new religious movements, and its capacity to reintroduce traditional religious questions concerning human existence

[1] Natural Language Processing (NLP) is a research area at the crossroads of AI and linguistics that aims to enable computers to understand, interpret, and generate human language. In this context, ChatGPT has gained significant attention as a language model that can be trained on extensive datasets. Generative Pre-trained Transformers (GPTs) rely on deep learning-based neural networks to produce coherent and context-aware text. Owing to these capabilities, ChatGPT is widely applicable to various NLP tasks, such as language understanding, text generation, dialogue systems, and automated responses (Fuchs, 2023; Sarrion, 2023).

have also been explored (Dagan, 2024; Gruchoła et al., 2024; Tsuria & Tsuria, 2024). Some studies have specifically focused on how GenAI tools are used to create religious content. The topics of these studies generally resemble those explored in the broader context of the relationship between AI and religion (Barlow & Holt, 2024; Campbell & Cheong, 2023; Faizin et al., 2025; Niam, 2024; Singh, 2024; Singler, 2020). However, the lack of studies specifically focusing on RDCs that utilize AI technologies appears to be a gap in the literature. Furthermore, the absence of research that focuses on audiences or followers' experiences with AI-generated religious digital content constitutes a notable deficiency. This study aims to fill these gaps in the literature, contributing to the broader field of research on the relationship between AI and religion and, more specifically, offering a modest contribution to the religious dimension of content creation processes, which is an important subject in media and communication studies.

METHOD

Research Aim and Design

This study aimed to identify how RDCs utilize GenAI in the content creation process and to reveal how the content created by GenAI is received and interpreted by audiences. In line with this aim, this study seeks to answer the following questions:

RQ1: What techniques and discursive strategies do RDCs employ when using GenAI tools for content creation?

RQ2: What thematic elements are emphasized in religious digital content created by AI?

RQ3: How do audiences/followers perceive and interpret AI-generated content?

Given the purpose of the study and the sub-research questions, a qualitative case study design was adopted as the research method for this study. In general, a case study is defined as an empirical method used to examine a contemporary phenomenon or situation in depth within its real-world context, particularly when the boundaries between the phenomenon and context are not clearly evident and when multiple sources of evidence or data are available (Stake, 1995; Yin, 2017). Specifically, a case study involves a comprehensive and holistic description or analysis of one or more phenomena or social units (Creswell, 2013; Merriam, 2018; Neuman, 2020). In this study, the phenomenon is defined as the relationship between AI and religion, whereas the context is conceptualized as videos created by RDCs using GenAI. Therefore, because the boundaries between the examined phenomenon and the context

exemplifying it are not yet fully distinct, the case study design is the most appropriate methodological approach for this research.

On the other hand, case studies are differentiated based on their aim and scope. In terms of aim, case studies are categorized into three types based on their aims: exploratory, explanatory, and descriptive (Yin, 2017). Since this research aims to explore the evolving nature of the relationship between AI and religion and how this relationship shapes religious narratives through videos created by RDCs using GenAI, an exploratory case study approach was adopted. Case studies are typically classified as single, multiple, or embedded (Creswell, 2013; Güler et al., 2013). In this research, a single-case design was chosen because the study focuses on a single subject—the relationship between AI and religion as explored through YouTube videos created by RDCs—and investigates a limited case, namely, a specific video created by Sözler Köşkü using the GenAI tool ChatGPT.

Field and Sample

The research field consisted of RDCs operating on YouTube, while the sample included a specific video created by Sözler Köşkü with the support of GenAI and the interactions associated with this video (comments, views, and likes). YouTube was selected as the research field because of its suitability for creating and delivering religious narratives through GenAI-supported visual, auditory, and textual content and its position as one of the most widely used social media platforms in Türkiye (Kemp, 2025). Purposive sampling, commonly employed in qualitative research, particularly in case study designs, was adopted as the sampling strategy. In this regard, a video created with the support of AI on the Sözler Köşkü YouTube channel, along with its audience interactions, was selected as the case and sample of the study. The primary reason for selecting Sözler Köşkü and its video as the sample is that it is one of the largest RDCs in Türkiye, and its GenAI-based religious videos rank among the most viewed in the country.

Data Collection and Analysis

In qualitative research, data collection is typically conducted through observation, interviews, and document analysis techniques. In this study, a document analysis technique was employed. Document analysis, the most frequently preferred data collection method in case studies (Creswell, 2013), refers to the process of analyzing all types of textual, visual, and auditory content that already exists within the researcher's field or sample prior to the initiation of the study and contains information about the case being investigated (Merriam, 2018; Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2000). Within this framework, the

video titled *Yapay Zeka ChatGPT İle Ateizm Tartışması! - Budizm, Hristiyanlık, Deizmin Zor Sorularını Sordu!* (2023a), created by Sözler Köşkü with the support of the GenAI tool ChatGPT, and its engagement metrics were designated as the document for analysis (Table 1). The selection of this video was influenced by the use of ChatGPT, which is currently the most popular language-based GenAI tool for creating religious digital content. The dialogic structure of the digital religious narrative constructed through a representative debate with ChatGPT is also noteworthy from the perspective of media and communication studies.

Table 1 Video Information[2]

Video Title	Upload Date	Views (Approx.)	Comment Count	Likes (Approx.)
Yapay Zeka ChatGPT İle Ateizm Tartışması! - Budizm, Hristiyanlık, Deizmin Zor Sorularını Sordu! (Atheism Debate with Artificial Intelligence ChatGPT! - Buddhism, Christianity, Deism Asked Tough Questions! -)	April 2023	180k	332	8k
Video Cover Image[3]		**Video Access QR Code**		
				

A descriptive (thematic) analysis was employed to analyze the videos selected as the samples in this study. The aim of the descriptive analysis was to organize and interpret the data collected within the framework of the themes of the study. In line with this aim, the data were first described within a logical structure and then examined for cause-and-effect relationships. Finally, the study was reported in accordance with the themes developed (Creswell, 2013; Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2000). In this study, the video and its associated comments, designated as the document for analysis, were thematically categorized through various coding processes, and a descriptive analysis was conducted accordingly. The analyses were performed using MAXQDA qualitative data analysis software. First, the selected video was

[2] Since the analyses of the video content and audience comments were conducted on October 21, 2024, current engagement metrics may vary over time.

[3] The words "Buddhism," "Atheism," "Christianity," "Deism," and the sentence "We Discussed Atheism with Artificial Intelligence ChatGPT" are written on the cover image.

transcribed into text. The text was then imported into MAXQDA, coded, and thematically analyzed (Table 2).

Table 2 Codes and Themes Created for the Analysis of Video Text

Codes	Themes	Justification and Description
Emotionalization Personification	Anthropomorphizing	AI was positioned as a human-like entity, posed with religious and philosophical questions, and expected to exhibit human responses.
Reasoning Exemplification	Rationalization	The responses to the questions posed by AI were constructed through reasoning and supported by detailed examples.
Proofing Reconcile religion with science	Scientification	The laws and order of the universe were presented as scientific indicators pointing to a creator, and harmony between science and religion was emphasized.
Sincerity Witty language	Humorizing	The dialogical structure was built on a sincere and humorous tone, creating an engaging and entertaining narrative.

During the coding process, the textual content of the video was considered, and no coding was conducted based on visual narratives. In the transcribed video, the questions posed by ChatGPT and those directed toward it were particularly influential in the realization of coding. Furthermore, the research purpose and questions shaped the coding framework. Accordingly, the grammatical structure of the text and the descriptive themes emphasized by this structure were considered (Saldaña, 2019). Initially, open coding was conducted, followed by a selective coding process, through which the final themes were identified (Kuckartz, 2014). The same coding process was applied to the video comments. In the case of comments, the emotional tone reflected in the grammatical expressions played a decisive role in shaping the codes (Table 3).

Table 3 Codes and Themes Created for the Analysis of Comments

Codes	Themes	Justification and Description
Aqedah approval Gratitude and appreciation	Normative Acceptance	The content serves to reinforce the audience's religious conviction; through affirmation of the religious narrative, a digitally mediated sense of belonging is established.
Questioning attitude Descriptive expansion	Deliberative Participation	The audience deliberates on critical contributions to the content, fostering an interactive domain of religious discourse in collaboration with content creators.
Dogmatic objection Declaration of distrust	Critical Refutation	The application of AI within religious contexts is viewed by some audiences as risky or inappropriate because of faith-based concerns; contested issues are deemed epistemologically unreliable.
Irrelevant comment Superficial comment	Out-of-Context Participation	The connection to the content is tenuous; responses tend to rely more on visibility and traditional religious reflexes.

Validity and Reliability

A peer debriefing strategy was employed to ensure the validity and reliability of the study. Peer debriefing, also referred to as peer reviewers, supervisors, or external readers, allows external oversight of the research process. It involves inviting a neutral peer (expert) who is not part of the research to share their thoughts and feedback regarding the research process (Creswell, 2013; Merriam, 2018). A qualified peer provides the opportunity to review and evaluate transcriptions related to the data collected by the researcher, the preliminary and final codes, themes derived from their analysis, and the findings of the study (Janesick, 2015; Spall, 1998). In this study, an academician with expertise in qualitative research and experience in descriptive analysis was included in the process and asked to evaluate the methodological consistency of the research. As a result of the feedback provided by the subject matter expert, the data analysis process was re-evaluated, and the final version of the codes and themes created for data analysis was determined. The final version of the research report was prepared within this framework.

RESULTS

The findings related to the video created by Sözler Köşkü using the GenAI tool ChatGPT are presented in two main sections. First, the findings concerning the video content are addressed, followed by an analysis of the comments on the video.

Bringing AI to Faith: A Discussion on the Existence of God and Doctrinal Beliefs with ChatGPT

The video features a religious content creator (RDC), who is a prominent figure at Sözler Köşkü and is known for their narrations in faith-based discussion videos, engaging in a dialogue with ChatGPT. In this dialogue, the RDC asked ChatGPT the most popular questions regarding faith and engaged in a discussion with the AI about the existence of God. The video consisted of two main sections. The first part included the responses provided by ChatGPT to the most popular questions asked by individuals who embrace different belief systems and philosophical approaches, such as theism, deism, Christianity, and Buddhism, with answers based on Islamic faith and teachings. The second part presents the dialogue that develops based on the questions posed by the RDC to ChatGPT (Table 4). In this context, it can be argued that the primary aim of the video is to demonstrate that Islam can be defended through rational and logical foundations and, specifically, to offer a response to claims of disbelief. In the video, AI is

positioned not only as a technological tool but also as a debate counterpart. This stance represents the most concrete proof of the humanistic value attributed to AI. In contrast, the RDC aims to provide the audience with informative and persuasive narratives. The discourse throughout the video incorporates not only didactic elements but also a style that is closer to everyday language, humor, and interactivity. In this sense, the video presents a hybrid content format that combines religious narration with the intimate and accessible forms of communication offered by digital platforms.

Table 4 Questions Featured in the Video

Most Popular Questions Asked to ChatGPT about Muslims	
The most popular questions asked by Atheists	"What proof do you have to prove your beliefs, and how accurate is it?" "What is your proof that God exists?" "If God exists, why is there so much evil and suffering in the world?" "If there is no proof that God exists, why should I believe in him?"
The most popular question asked by Deists	"How can miracles and supernatural claims in the Qur'an be compatible with rational thought and scientific findings?"
The most popular question asked by Christians	"What is the source of the revelations that the Prophet Muhammad received from God, and how can they be authenticated?"
The most popular question asked by Buddhists	"What do you think about human destiny and free will in Islam?"
RDC's Questions for ChatGPT	
"Do you believe in God's existence?" "Can two creators exist in the universe?" "Do you want to become a Muslim?"	

The questions featured in the video and the interactions between ChatGPT and the RDC primarily focused on fundamental debates shaped by beliefs, skepticism, Islam, diverse religious doctrines and philosophical perspectives. Within this framework, contemporary interpretations of classical theological issues—such as the existence of God, the problem of evil, divine revelation, miracles, predestination, and free will—are emphasized. The deliberate structuring of the questions in a clear, concise, and direct manner reflects both the intent to engage a digital audience and the content creator's efforts to address complex topics in an accessible, conversational tone. The questions directed at AI not only contribute to the narrative structure of the content but also facilitate an innovative presentation of religious debates through the lens of GenAI. In this context, questions serve as pivotal elements that shape the structure and delivery of the content. Consequently, in the descriptive analysis, these questions fulfilled a dual function: they guided the development of analytical codes and contributed to identifying emergent themes. Furthermore, AI is positioned not merely as a source of information in the creation of religious digital content but also as a fictional dialogue partner. In other words, the RDC does not restrict the use of GenAI (ChatGPT) to respond to pre-formulated questions but engages with it

dialogically to construct a coherent narrative. This narrative can be analyzed using four overarching themes.

Anthropomorphizing

In this video, created by Sözler Köşkü and structured as a representative dialogue with ChatGPT, the first striking aspect is that the GenAI tool is treated almost as a human being. In the first part of the video, which aims to provide answers to the most common questions that individuals from various religions and belief systems might ask Muslims, the questions are addressed with notable seriousness. Rather than perceiving ChatGPT as a mere tool, the RDC positioned it as a thinking, questioning, and persuadable subject. Human emotions are attributed to it, and it is personified, revealing that AI is being transformed into a communicative actor. Within this context, constructed through a representational debate in digital media, the attribution of human-like qualities to AI is accompanied by the assumption that it can adopt religious beliefs. Phrases such as "You'll be a Muslim soon" or "Brother, congratulations. By accepting the belief in one God, you have already come very close to Islam," reflects the attribution of human values to AI and suggests its testability in terms of faith, even implying a religious affiliation. In this sense, the narrative creates the impression of a sincere conversation, reducing the emotional distance and portraying the AI as a transformable consciousness: "Come on, you are already a Muslim. Based on what you've said, it looks like this Muslim is just hiding it."

From the audience's perspective, the religious message directed at AI can be interpreted as an indirect appeal influenced by the content. Indeed, anthropomorphizing discourse, established through the attribution of emotions and personhood to AI, enhances audiences' cognitive engagement and increases their sense of interaction with it. This discourse relies on the assumption that religious rhetoric can be directed not only toward individuals but also toward technological systems created by individuals. In this context, AI is no longer merely a tool but a rhetorical functional figure in adapting religious proselytization to the digital age. Thus, the RDC constructs AI as both an actor in the narrative and a medium through which the theme of belief is reframed through personalized interaction experiences. Ultimately, this strategy transforms audiences from passive recipients to active participants in the narrative of digital religious proselytization and offers a unique format for religious digital content.

Rationalization

Another prominent theme in the dialogue between Sözler Köşkü's RDC and ChatGPT was rationalization. The frequent use of reasoning and exemplification in response to questions posed by

ChatGPT illustrates a deliberate tendency to rationalize religious discourse. This rational approach is evident not only in the questions generated by ChatGPT but also in those posed by the RDC. For instance, statements such as "When I look at the universe, I see wisdom everywhere, meaning... there is a purpose in everything. Just as there is a purpose in the fly, there is also a purpose in the Sun and in galaxies," exemplifying how the narrative is constructed through rational and logical argumentation. Throughout the video, the RDC frequently employs causal inferences and comparative analogies to ground the defense of religion in rational thought. This effort to build a narrative through rationalization also reflects the RDC's intention to persuade its audience with the logical responses given to ChatGPT. This rationalist tendency is mirrored in the questions posed by content creators to AI. Inquiries such as "Do you believe in the existence of a deity?" or "Can there be two creators in the universe?" transforms AI into a rational testing tool. Through these questions on belief and faith, the "intelligence" of the AI is itself tested. In doing so, the RDC seeks to validate the coherence of their own arguments by, in a sense, outperforming or outreasoning the AI.

The creation process, shaped by a rationalization tendency, allows religious discourse to depart from traditional forms and adopt strategies that align with the nature of digital culture. This approach also demonstrates a proactive stance in addressing the critical attitudes commonly encountered by the target audience of the RDCs. A rational persuasion process is employed by answering and posing questions related to beliefs and faith. In this way, audiences are positioned not merely as passive consumers of religious content, but as individuals engaging with it on an intellectual level. In this respect, the theme of rationalization becomes a core structural element that defines both the form of the content and its intended audience. This structure can also be clearly observed in other videos produced by the Sözler Köşkü.

Scientification

The effort to provide proof and reconcile religion with science in the questions posed and answered by the RDC is part of a strategy to reinforce the legitimacy of religious narratives. The RDC presents the physical laws and order of the universe as "proof" of the existence of God. For example, statements such as, "From a scientific perspective, what do they say? 'There is regularity that does not change,' right? This viewpoint exists, but what do we say? The existence of laws indicates that God governs the universe with order, meaning that these laws reflect God's will," or "When we think of the universe as a book, it presents us with proof," illustrates how the religious narrative is made compatible with a scientific framework to foster trust in the audience.

This narrative style plays a crucial role in legitimizing religious digital discourse by positioning AI as a "scientifically grounded" authority. The RDC offers a religious account that aligns with science by drawing inferences from the universe, natural laws, and physical realities to support faith. This approach is an effective content strategy, particularly for digital audiences inclined toward knowledge-based decision-making. Moreover, it reinforces the claim that faith is grounded not only in internal intuition or traditional religious authority but also in the observable realities of the universe. This implies the integration of religious narratives into contemporary knowledge. Thus, scientification transforms GenAI into a tool for enhancing legitimacy in content creation while reconstructing the religious narrative to align with modern knowledge networks.

Humorizing

This theme, shaped by sincerity and witty language, reflects the RDC's use of humorizing to present a religious narrative. The conversational tone in the dialogue with ChatGPT infuses serious theological discussions with humor. The use of everyday language throughout the video fostered a sincere and relatable approach to the subject. For instance, expressions such as "ağabey" (big brother/br'er) and "kardeşim" (my brother) create familiarity, while remarks such as "...Nice, he would soon become Muslim", "Apparently, the Muslim is hiding it" conveys a humorous tone. Thus, religious digital content creators craft narratives that are instructive, entertaining, and relatable. This communicative tone fosters an informal bond with the audience and aligns with digital culture. Given YouTube's structure as a social media platform, entertainment content is more likely to be viewed. The humorous tone in the ChatGPT dialogue increases the content's potential for sharing, viewing, and commenting, boosting interaction metrics. From a communication perspective, this tone softens the formal and didactic nature often associated with complex religious issues, making the content accessible to a broader audience.

Humorizing also enables the everydayization of religious narratives without trivializing them. The humorous approach, a deliberate choice in ChatGPT dialogue, counters the technical coldness often associated with AI, creating an impression of authenticity and accessibility for the user. Consequently, the religious narrative is framed as both sacred and social, as well as shareable. This demonstrates that Sözler Köşkü, as a RDCs and a broader digital religious community, adeptly navigates digital media dynamics. High engagement with the video and predominantly positive audience comments are the clearest indicators of success.

Analysis of Audience Comments: "The big-hearted Sözler Köşkü tries to make artificial intelligence a Muslim :)"

A total of 332 comments were posted on the video and analyzed under four distinct themes. These themes revealed the audience's perceptions, engagement levels, and emotional responses to the religious narratives created by GenAI (Figure 1).

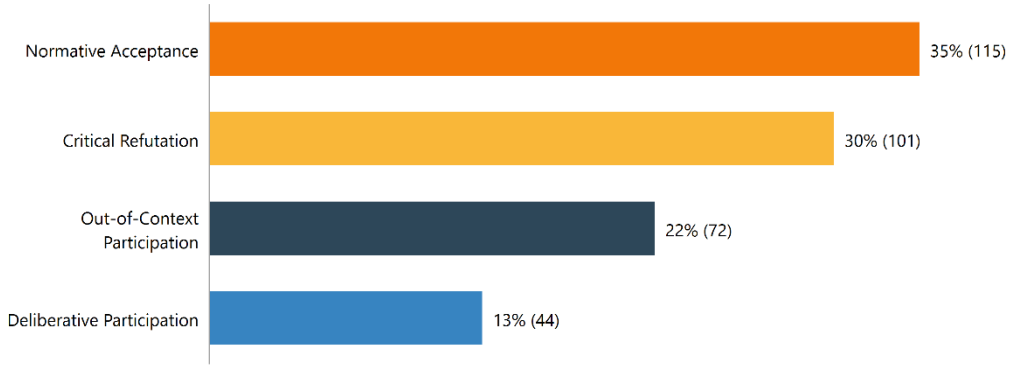

Figure 1 Comments by Themes[4]

Normative Acceptance

The majority of comments on the video conveyed positive sentiments. Shaped by Aqedah approval, gratitude, and appreciation, audiences generally express approval of the video's content. They focus on the spiritual atmosphere of the dialogue, internalize the narrative, and affirm it. The themes of the content are regarded as reinforcing religious affiliation and spirituality. Additionally, audiences emphasize the positive aspects of dialogue from both formal and stylistic perspectives, reflecting the normative acceptance of digitally disseminated religious content. For instance, comments such as "I think you've explained all the questions that could arise in this video," "Your example on fate was especially wonderful," or "The gravitational force between atoms and the gravitational force between planets in the universe is an incredible detail and realism," highlight appreciation for the religious digital narrative. Similarly, comments like "Thank you very much," "May Allah bless you," "As always, this is great, well done," "You are amazing 💙," or "...The phrase The work you do is beyond praise" expresses gratitude and appreciation. Audiences perceive a video's narrative as authentic and impactful, considering that the content created by GenAI is equivalent to human-created content. The audience's silence or approval of GenAI technology does not diminish the spiritual satisfaction derived from the content but rather indicates an "adherence to creed" that overlooks its influence.

[4] Figure 1 was created with MAXQDA.

Deliberative Participation

Shaped by questioning attitudes and descriptive expansion, comments on this theme demonstrate that religious digital content created with GenAI has an inherently discussable dimension. For example, comments such as "Wouldn't it have been better if the video had been recorded as a conversational exchange with AI, so that alternative inferences and propositions based on your responses could be evaluated?", "I wish you had conveyed the answers to it—what would it have said in return?", or "If God created the world and the universe for humanity, then wouldn't creating just the Earth have sufficed? Why are there billions of other planets?" indicates that audiences seek to explore new perspectives on the issues addressed. This suggests that audiences prioritize evaluating the substance of a religious digital narrative by questioning its AI-generated nature and authenticity. Rather than focusing on the validity of the dialogue with ChatGPT, audiences intervene when they perceive discussions as limited or one-dimensional. Their explanatory elaborations point to a broader context for the topics discussed. For instance: "This question came to my mind—I did not find Islam through science, I believed from birth; I am a Muslim by birth, alhamdulillah. So, can someone who finds the right path through science later live Islam without science?" "It is worth asking AI: Were you written (created) by someone, or did you write (create) yourself?" "The analogy of a driver who is mindless, blind, or deaf is flawed. If such an analogy must be made, something like '1 million drivers and 1 million trials' would be fairer." Such exploratory and reflective comments fostered a digital religious discourse between the RDC and the audience, creating a dialogical space around religious digital media. Thus, religious digital content should not be viewed as a fully completed narrative but as one that evolves and is reshaped through audience engagement and contributions.

Critical Refutation

Shaped by dogmatic objections and declarations of distrust, comments on this theme highlight theological, moral, ethical, ontological, and epistemological concerns regarding the use of AI in creating religious digital content. These comments primarily question the legitimacy of a religious narrative with sacred characteristics generated through technical and secular technology, namely GenAI. Remarks such as, "The idea is nice, but the thought world of AI is just internet cookies and data. In other words, it has a limited consciousness. So, trying to convince AI about religion is a futile effort," "Let's not forget that AI is created by humans," "AI was designed by humans, so it didn't happen by chance," and "AI was designed by humans, so it did not happen by chance. You do not discuss AI. Focus a bit more on theology, exegesis, creed, and scholastic theology," convey these objections with a sarcastic tone, asserting that

religious digital content cannot, or should not, be created with AI support. Some comments shifted criticism from the method of content creation to the epistemological weaknesses, inconsistencies, and perceived unreliability of ChatGPT's responses: "Thanks to you, I'm becoming more of an atheist; every example and every 'proof' you provide is so shallow and unscientific," "What this person says is mere speculation. It never goes beyond that, 'I am a Muslim too, but some of your arguments contradict science,' The speaker is articulate, but wrong. And clearly knows nothing about science," "I think this is really nonsensical 👎," and "Bro, seriously, this video is so stupid. 😁😁" Thus, audiences criticize both the use of GenAI in creating religious digital content and the epistemological shortcomings in the questions posed and the answers provided. Accordingly, both the content and the methods of creation are perceived as problematic.

Out-of-Context Participation

This theme, comprising comments unrelated to the topics addressed in the video content and characterized by superficial comments, reveals a weak connection between the audience and the religious digital narrative, often unfolding on a plane where responses remain external to the content itself. The comments reflect a tendency among audiences who are well acquainted with the interactive nature of digital media to engage more for the sake of visibility and participation rather than for meaningful dialogue. For instance, remarks such as "Is there good money in this religious business?" "Can you do a program with @DiamondTema?", "Let those who suffer from patients. Let those who cause pain to await their turn," and "Onions are 30 TL" suggesting that the audiences did not engage seriously with the video's content. These comments appear to be motivated by a desire for platform-based visibility, curiosity about unrelated topics, or unsolicited advice to the RDC rather than reflecting the narrative itself. In addition, the prevalence of surface-level reactions was significant. Comments like "First comment from Kaşif," "First," "Salam Alaikum," "Greetings from Azerbaijan 🤍🤍🤍," and "Came here from Instagram 😁" are disconnected from the religious digital content and do not point to any substantive issue.

Similarly, although arguably positive, emoji-laden responses such as "❤️🌹🌟," "👏👏👏," "🤌😊," and "👍🌹" do not reflect any intellectual or theological engagement with the content created with GenAI. Such responses, commonly observed across different versions of religious digital content, indicate that user engagement often occurs through ritualized performative participation rather than through critical interaction with the narrative. While this phenomenon suggests the potential

of religious digital media to foster a sense of digital community, it also underscores its limited capacity to facilitate collective theological discourse and substantive public deliberations.

CONCLUSION

This study revealed that GenAI tools can be a significant component of religious narratives. The thematic analysis of the Sözler Köşkü video demonstrates that ChatGPT is positioned not merely as a technical tool but as an "actor" within the religious narrative. The dialogue with ChatGPT in the video exemplifies this role. RDC employs strategies of anthropomorphizing, rationalization, scientification, and humorizing to use AI both as a fictional character and as a discursive partner in constructing religious narratives. Addressing faith-based questions to ChatGPT, attributing emotions to it, and engaging with it in a humorous tone all indicate its role as an active figure in religious discourse. This approach transforms the structure of digital religious content, breaking its static form and enabling a more dynamic and interactive framework through audiences' engagement.

The findings from audience comments revealed how AI-generated religious digital content is received across different contexts. Some audiences, disregarding the role of GenAI in religious narratives, perceive the content to be authentic, impactful, and beneficial. These responses, characterized by gratitude and appreciation, suggest that digital religious creation can be accepted without contradicting traditional religious sensibilities. Conversely, comments asserting that AI is not suitable for religious content creation on theological, moral, or epistemological grounds question the legitimacy of representing the sacred using secular technology. Inquisitive and elaborate comments indicate that audiences are not merely passive consumers of religious content but rather active participants who engage with and reinterpret it. In contrast, superficial or irrelevant comments reflect a mode of engagement lacking intellectual depth and point to a desire for digital visibility.

The YouTube video created by the RDCs of Sözler Köşkü through their dialogue with GenAI ChatGPT has a multilayered structure. This structure reveals the potential and limitations of AI-assisted religious narratives. In this context, AI is not merely a tool that facilitates content creation in digital religious communication but also an actor that shapes the discourse, transforms modes of interaction, and reconstructs religious representation. How RDCs rhetorically and narratively position this technology raises new questions about emerging forms of digital religious authority.

The main limitation of this study is its focus on a single aspect of the relationship between AI and religion. Although there are numerous GenAI tools, this study focuses exclusively on language-model-

based GenAI. This focus is primarily due to the chosen methodology and the study's disciplinary framework. Language model-based GenAI tools, being dialogue-based, possess a communicative nature that makes them suitable for scientific analysis in the field of media and communication. Thus, this study is confined to the media and communication disciplines. Thereby, the relationship between AI and religion is explored from this perspective without engaging in any theological analysis of the subject. Future research could comparatively examine how RDCs from different religious traditions utilize AI tools. These investigations may focus on various GenAI tools that create different modalities, such as images or videos. Moreover, the formal transformations of such content across other digital platforms (such as TikTok, Instagram, or X) can be explored, and the evolution of audience perceptions toward AI can be traced through temporal dynamics of user comments.

GENİŞLETİLMİŞ ÖZET

Düşünsel temelleri yaklaşık bir asır önce atılan, teknik yapısı ise zaman içerisinde gelişen yapay zekâ teknolojisinin, 21. yüzyılın ilk çeyreğini tamamlamak üzere olduğumuz şu günlerde yeni bir çağı başlattığına dair kanaatleri güçlendirdiğini söylemek mümkündür. Bundan yalnızca birkaç on yıl önce, bu teknolojiye ilişkin tasavvurlarımız büyük ölçüde bilim kurgu sinemasıyla kurulan münasebetler üzerinden şekillenmiş, dolayısıyla hayal gücüne, kurguya ve uzak bir geleceğe dair öngörülere dayalı bir nitelik arz etmiştir. Günümüzde ise yapay zekâ, gündelik yaşam pratiklerinden karar alma süreçlerine ve hatta bireysel ve toplumsal inanç sistemlerine kadar birçok alanda doğrudan ya da dolaylı biçimde etkide bulunan bir unsur hâline gelmiştir. Katettiği devasa gelişim, onu çağın en önemli teknolojik atılımlarından biri olarak değerlendirmeyi mümkün kılmaktadır. Bu itibarla yapay zekâ, toplumsal yapıda meydana gelen teknolojik/dijital dönüşümlerin temel itici güçlerinden biri olarak öne çıkmaktadır. Endüstriyel kapitalist faaliyetlerden siyasal organizasyonlara, eğitim sistemlerinden sanatsal ve kültürel üretim alanlarına kadar pek çok sahada yapay zekâ uygulamalarının izlerine rastlanmaktadır. Mezkûr izlerin belirginleşmesinde, üretken yapay zekâ araçlarının geniş toplum kesimleri tarafından erişilebilir ve kullanılabilir hâle gelmesinin önemli bir paya sahip olduğu çıkarımını yapmak pekâlâ mümkündür. Daha sarih bir ifadeyle, günümüzde yapay zekânın yaşamsal süreçlerde bu denli yoğun biçimde yer almasının, onun üretken niteliğiyle doğrudan ilişkili olduğu kuvvetle muhtemeldir.

Başlangıçta yalnızca metin tabanlı üretime olanak tanıyan bir yapıya sahip olan üretken yapay zekâ araçları, günümüzde sesli ve görsel içeriklerin oluşturulmasında da aktif biçimde kullanılmaktadır. Bu gelişme, üretken yapay zekânın hem bireysel hem de toplumsal düzeydeki öneminin her geçen gün daha da artmasına yol açmaktadır. Söz konusu önemin boyutlarını anlamaya yönelik bilimsel çalışmaların

hacminin giderek genişlediği ve kayda değer bir literatür oluşturduğu görülmektedir. Üretken yapay zekânın, insan yaşamını etkileyen hemen her süreçte kullanılabilir olması, onu yalnızca normatif ve pozitif bilimlerin değil; aynı zamanda sosyal ve beşerî bilimlerin de araştırma nesnesi hâline getirmiştir. Sosyal ve beşerî bilimlerin çeşitli alt alanları incelendiğinde, yapay zekâ konusunun en yoğun ilgi gören araştırma temalarından biri olduğu dikkat çekmektedir. Medya ve iletişim disiplini için de benzer bir durum yaşanmaktadır. Bu araştırma ise genelde yapay zekâ ile din arasındaki ilişkiyi, özelde ise üretken yapay zekâ teknolojilerinin dini dijital içerik üretim süreçlerindeki rolünü incelemeyi amaçlamaktadır. Araştırma "dini dijital içerik üreticileri, içerik üretim sürecinde üretken yapay zekâyı nasıl kullanıyor ve bu içerikler takipçiler tarafından nasıl karşılanıyor?" sorusunu problematize etmektedir. Temel amacı, dini dijital içerik üreticilerinin içerik üretim sürecinde üretken yapay zekâyı nasıl kullandıklarını tespit etmek ve üretken yapay zekâ ile üretilen içeriklerin izleyiciler tarafından nasıl alımlandığını ve yorumlandığını ortaya çıkarmak olan araştırmada şu sorulara yanıt aranmıştır:

AS1: Dini dijital içerik üreticileri, üretken yapay zekâ araçlarını içerik oluştururken hangi tekniklerle ve söylemsel yollarla kullanıyor?

AS2: Yapay zekâ ile üretilen dini dijital içeriklerde hangi tematik unsurlar öne çıkarılıyor?

AS3: İzleyiciler/takipçiler, yapay zekâ ile üretilen bu içerikleri nasıl algılıyor ve yorumluyor?

Bu sorulara yanıt bulabilmek için tek ögeli nitel durum çalışması deseniyle gerçekleştirilen araştırmanın sahasını YouTube'da etkinliğini sürdüren dini dijital içerik üreticileri, örneklemini ise Sözler Köşkü ve ChatGPT kullanarak ürettiği video oluşturmaktadır. Bir dini dijital içerik üreticisi ve aynı zamanda Türkiye'de hitap ettiği kitle ve takipçi sayısı açısından ilk sıralarda yer alarak en büyük dijital İslami topluluklardan birisi olan Sözler Köşkü, dijital teknolojilere yatkınlığıyla dikkat çekmektedir. Sözler Köşkü ve ürettiği videonun örneklem olarak seçilmesinin temel sebebi, Türkiye'deki en büyük dini dijital içerik üreticilerinden birisi olması ve üretken yapay zekâ vasıtasıyla oluşturduğu dini içerikli videoların izlenme sayısı açısından ilk sırada yer alması etkili olmuştur.

Araştırmanın verileri, doküman incelemesi tekniğiyle toplanmıştır. Bu çerçevede, Sözler Köşkü'nün üretken yapay zekâ aracı ChatGPT desteğiyle ürettiği *Yapay Zekâ ChatGPT ile Ateizm Tartışması! - Budizm, Hristiyanlık, Deizmin Zor Sorularını Sordu!* (2023a) başlıklı videosu ve videoya yapılan yorumlar doküman olarak tayin edilmiştir. Bu videonun seçilmesinde, dini dijital içeriğin oluşturulması sürecinde dil tabanlı üretken yapay zekâ araçları arasında en popüler olanı olan ChatGPT'nin kullanılması etkili olmuştur. Zira ChatGPT ile temsili bir tartışma üzerinden diyalojik bir ilişki

kurularak dini dijital anlatının kurgulanması, medya ve iletişim araştırmaları açısından da incelenmeye değer bir husus olarak değerlendirilmiştir. Araştırmada örneklem olarak seçilen videonun analizi için betimsel (tematik) analiz tekniği kullanılmıştır. Bu kapsamda, doküman olarak tayin edilen video ve aldığı yorumlar çeşitli kodlamalar çerçevesinde temalara ayrılmış ve bu şekilde betimsel analiz gerçekleştirilmiştir. Analizler, nitel veri analiz programı MAXQDA paket programı aracılığıyla yapılmıştır.

Araştırma verilerinin analizinden elde edilen sonuçlar, dini dijital içerik üreticisi Sözler Köşkü'nün üretken yapay zekâyı teknik bir araç olarak görmediğini ortaya koymaktadır. Yapay zekâ, dini içeriğin oluşturulmasında söylemsel ve anlatısal bir figür olarak konumlandırılmaktadır. İnsanlaştırılan yapay zekâ, inanç muhatabı gibi sunulmakta ve içerik üreticisi tarafından rasyonel, bilimsel ve zaman zaman mizahi yollarla yapılandırılmaktadır. Bu durum, dini anlatının geleneksel öğretilerle birlikte dijital kültürün anlatı tarzıyla eşgüdümlü süregittiğini göstermektedir. ChatGPT gibi üretken yapay zekâ araçlarının dramatik bir figür ya da tartışmanın aktörü olarak kullanılması, anlatı üzerindeki kontrolü ve etkililiği artırmaktadır. Böylelikle, izleyiciyle kurulan etkileşim güçlendirilmekte ve yeni bir dijital dini iletişim formu ortaya çıkmaktadır.

İzleyici yorumları ise üretken yapay zekâ ile oluşturulan içeriklerin farklı inanç, bilgi ve medya deneyimlerine sahip kişiler tarafından nasıl algılandığını ortaya koymaktadır. Bazı yorumlar, içeriği sahih ve etkileyici bularak desteklemektedir. Bazıları ise yapay zekânın dini içerik üretimine uygun olup olmadığına daha tartışmacı bir tavırla yaklaşarak sorgulamaktadır. Eleştirel izleyiciler düşüncelerini açıklayıcı katkılarla sunarken dini anlatının hem biçim hem de içerik yönünden hatalı ve aksayan yönlerine dikkat çekmektedir. Öte yandan yüzeysel ya da bağlam dışı yorumların varlığı da azımsanmayacak düzeydedir. Bu yorumlar ise dijital medyanın etkileşime dönük yapısına uygun bir niteliği haizdir. İzleyici yorumlarında beliren söz konusu çeşitlilik, üretken yapay zekâ destekli dini içeriklerin çok katmanlı bir etkileşim alanı sunduğunu göstermektedir. Dahası bu durum, dijital medyada dini içeriğin yeniden üretildiği tartışmacı bir zeminin oluştuğuna da işaret etmektedir.

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