

A Review of the Literature on Spirituality and Religion in Information Research - 1990 to 2022

Pranay Nangia and Ian Ruthven

Department of Computer and Information Sciences, University of Strathclyde, Glasgow, UK

Abstract

Purpose: *More than eight in ten people worldwide identify with a religious group. In addition, people often engage with spiritual and religious content despite having no formal beliefs or affiliations. Spirituality remains a prominent feature of Western and Westernised information-based societies and cultures; however, people's everyday interactions with spiritual and religious information have received disproportionate attention in information and library science research. Accordingly, this paper aims to understand how scholars have explored religion and spirituality in information research and identify current and emerging trends in the literature.*

Design/methodology/approach: *This paper analyses 115 peer-reviewed articles, 44 book chapters, 24 theses and 17 unrefereed papers published between 1990 and 2022 to present a narrative review of how scholars have explored spirituality and religion in information research. The reviewed literature is first organised into spirituality-related and religion-related articles and thereafter analysed in Internet studies, information behaviour studies and galleries, libraries, archives and museums-related research groups.*

Findings: *Our analysis indicates scholars in Internet studies have researched both established and alternative religious interactions, and emerging research agendas seek to explore intersections between traditional religious authority and modern Internet-facilitated engagements. Information behaviour scholars have examined interactions in Christianity and Islam, focused primarily on Western contexts and conventional interactions, with emerging research aiming to explore diverse contextual and methodological combinations. Finally, GLAM researchers have investigated the practicality, suitability, and appropriateness of spirituality and religion-related service provisions; however, a clear research agenda is currently lacking in spirituality and religion information research more broadly.*

Originality/value: *This paper is the first review of the spirituality and religion-related information research spanning Internet studies, information behaviour studies and galleries, libraries, archives and museums research domains.*

Keywords: *Libraries, Religion, Information behaviour, Spirituality, Narrative review, Internet studies*

Paper type: *Literature review*

Introduction

More than eight in ten people worldwide identify with a religious group (Pew Research Center, 2012). In addition, people often engage with spiritual and religious content despite having no formal beliefs or affiliations (Pew Research Center, 2017). Spirituality remains a prominent feature of Western and Westernised information-based societies and cultures; however, people's everyday interactions with spiritual and religious information have received disproportionate attention in information and library science research.

Here, Kari's (2007) influential Review of the Spiritual in Information Studies helps discern various information processes, services, systems and technologies in the spiritual context and posits that spirituality-related phenomena can significantly affect individuals' and communities' information interactions. Likewise, Penner's (2009) bibliographic essay, Information Behaviour of Theologians, reviews studies concerning religious academicians' behaviours (specifically those interested in the Jewish and Christian traditions) and insists that information professionals, especially those working in theological libraries and institutions, may benefit from a deeper understanding of people's religion-related information needs and search behaviours. Both articles criticise the lack of empirical studies within this area; however, a decade since Kari's and Penner's papers, many scholars have investigated a range of interactions such as Bible study, sermon preparation, spiritual journaling and online and offline ritual participation (e.g. Freeburg, 2011; Campbell, 2011; Siracky, 2013; Gorichanaz, 2016; Gaston, Dorner and Johnstone, 2015; Dankasa, 2015; Lacović and Tanacković, 2018; Caidi, 2019), providing new insights and details into people's religious and spiritual information-related engagements. Accordingly, understanding this literature

more closely may help academics and practitioners deliver more pertinent and better-informed services and outcomes.

To this end, this paper analyses 115 peer-reviewed articles, 44 book chapters, 24 theses and 17 unrefereed papers published between 1990 and 2022 to present a narrative review of how scholars have explored spirituality and religion in information research, analyse current understandings and indicate trends in the literature.

Background

The Pew Research Center's 2017 Changing Global Religious Landscape report signals that sixteen per cent of the global population currently has no religious affiliation. A complementary report, however, indicates that this group is relatively heterogeneous. In the US, many who are religiously unaffiliated identify as atheists or agnostic; however, some claim they are spiritual, not religious, and numerous others identify as both spiritual and religious but seldom attend services at churches, mosques or temples (Pew Research Center, 2017). A subsequent Pew report points out that a quarter of unaffiliated individuals regularly pray, contemplate or practice yoga or meditation, indicating that spiritual practices remain somewhat popular despite religious de-affiliation (Pew Research Center, 2018). These trends are also prevalent in European countries such as the UK, Germany, Italy, Austria and the Netherlands (Pew Research Center, 2012). Contemporary religious and spiritual activities may, therefore, be diverse as people's inclinations have begun to present themselves in various orientations: the religious and spiritual, the spiritual but not religious, the religious but not spiritual and neither spiritual nor religious (Pew Research Center, 2017).

Like the Pew Research Center's reports, Van Der Veer (2009) notes that while historically there has been considerable overlap between religious and spiritual conceptions, popular interpretations now relate spirituality with personal values and beliefs rather than religious grand-narrative-related frameworks. Accordingly, contemporary religion and spirituality-related *information interactions* may be equally heterogeneous, as people's preferences range from religiously unaffiliated and personal interactions to those spread across several ideologies and compatible with memberships of various formal and informal institutions. According to Van der Veer, this change may be attributed to late nineteenth-century liberalism, socialism, globalisation, and scientific advancements followed

by widespread searches for freedom from institutionalised religion and spiritualities not bound to specific traditions (Van der Veer, 2009; also: Borowik, 2011).

For context, Van der Veer (2009) explains that modern spiritual change occurred alongside secularisation in late nineteenth-century Euro-American society. Scientific progress during this time, coupled with increasing separation between church and state, resulted in the growth of secularism and increased searches for rational means of satisfying human needs (Van Niekerk, 2018). Alongside this, contemporary forms of spirituality emerged as an alternative to organised religion. These new spiritualities were defined by a ‘thoroughgoing political, economic and cultural integration of the world’ (Van der Veer, 2009, p. 1098) and, in the West, presented as various attempts seeking to dissociate from established church Christianity. Van der Veer (2009) describes this period as a combination of socialist radicalism, secularism and spirituality, characterised by attempts to isolate crux elements of spirituality in existing religious traditions (e.g., the formation of the Theosophical Society and the World Parliament of Religions). These attempts involved the creation of new philosophical and linguistic tools for translating existing traditions into a set of ‘world’ religions that could be treated relatively equally. Chief among these was Muller’s Sacred Books of the East series (1879-1910), which helped make the religious traditions of India and China more relatable to the West and contributed to the growth of spirituality as a concept independent of the authoritative boundaries of religious institutions (Van der Veer, 2009).

Following this, further changes came in the 1960s and 1970s, as baby boomers (born between 1946 and 1964) were seen as a generation disillusioned by institutionalised religion and more likely to relate to the sacred privately (Roof, 1993; 2001). According to Roof (1993), religious values were no longer handed down from parents to children or passively accepted during this period. Instead, baby boomers ‘value[d] experience over beliefs, distrust[ed] institutions and leaders, stress[ed] fulfilment yet yearn[ed] for community, and [were] fluid in their allegiances’ (Roof, 1993, p. 8). Thus, in Roof’s (1993) view, the 1970s was a time of charismatic spiritual revival in the United States, following which an array of New Age and Eastern spiritualities marked the 1980s. Sutcliffe (2003) regards these alternative spiritualities as explorations in ‘communal and cooperative living, reading ‘mystical’ texts, practising meditation, and using occult divination and personal growth techniques’ (p. 2). However, unlike Roof (1993; 2001), who believed this to be a sign of collective movement away from religious affiliation in America, Sutcliffe (2003) recalls these as ‘a diffuse collectivity of

individuals, networks, societies and small groups ... that amounted to a loose culture of 'alternative' spirituality' in Europe (p. 3, emphasis original).

Roof's (1993; 2001) conclusions were based on a subsample of baby boomers (surveyed in four American states, California, Massachusetts, North Carolina, and Ohio) who claimed they were not religious but considered themselves spiritual. This was repeated in a 1999 Gallup Organisation survey in which 30% (of 1037 surveyed US adults) described their beliefs as spiritual but not religious (Princeton Religion Research Center, 2000). These (and subsequent— Zinnbauer et al., 1997; Marler et al., 2002; Roof, 2000; Scott, 2001) studies relayed a growing sense of divergence between religious and spiritual attitudes in the United States (although Marler and Hadaway (2002) pointed out that respondents typically identified as both religious and spiritual in studies allowing for more than one option). In Western Europe, the divergence appeared to be more dramatic (Davie, 2000). Two European Value Studies conducted in 1981 and 1999 pointed to an overall decline in religious orthodoxy, ritual participation and institutional attachment; however, feelings, experiences, and beliefs regarding God, heaven and souls persisted (Davie, 2003). Therefore, the spiritual landscape appeared to be evolving but unclear, and although religion was in decline, spiritual belief endured.

Nowadays, however, people's spiritual inclinations may be theistic, i.e. related to God, creating better relationships with God and an openness to mysterious encounters, or extra-theistic, related to a core self, building connections with the community, experiencing nature, beauty, awe, and seeking meaning and transcendence (Ammerman, 2013; 2021). Moreover, people may engage in spiritual activities and practices outside formalised religious contexts and may even identify as unchurched or spiritual, not religious (Fuller, 2001; Smith and Denton, 2009; Mercadante, 2014; Pew Research Centre, 2017). According to York (2001), such spiritual diversity may be considered characteristic of an information age, where easy information access allows familiarity with religions and religious movements beyond one's birthplace. In addition, books, journals, television documentaries, and the Internet help increase knowledge of new spiritual practices. Therefore, an interconnected world might make spiritual pluralism a possible option. Moreover, increased access to multiple perspectives may allow people to select a personalised spirituality more easily. Despite this, information research in spirituality and religion has been narrowly focused. Some studies have looked at religious information on and off the Internet (e.g. Campbell 2005, 2010, 2012)

and have explored people's information interactions during religious pilgrimage and bible-study sessions (e.g., Freeburg, 2011; Siracky, 2013; Gorichanaz, 2016; Caidi, 2019); but have seldom examined the growing number of unaffiliated, extra-theistic and spiritual but not religious expressions. Studies concerning spirituality-related interactions outside formalised religion are few but growing and may have interesting implications for understanding spiritual informational behaviours and practices outside traditional religious settings and situations. Therefore, synthesising the current literature on spirituality and religion in information research at this stage might be helpful. To this end, this paper seeks to answer the following research question:

- RQ: How have scholars explored religion and spirituality within information research, and what are the current trends in the literature?

Method and Literature Search Technique

Information research deals with how and why people collect, organise, retrieve and present information in various contexts and subject matters (Bates, 2007). As such, information research can relate to research in several fields, such as information science research, social studies of information, media and communication research, museum studies and librarianship. In addition, researchers can look at information-related topics in specific contexts; for example, they may examine information seeking for spiritual needs, the relationship between new media and spirituality, or the relationship between spirituality and Internet use. Moreover, information research can include research about galleries, libraries, archives and museums (e.g. Given and McTavish, 2010). Therefore, we used a literature review to understand explorations of spirituality and religion in these different areas and defined information research as multidisciplinary research conducted across various information-related disciplines. Since literature reviews gauge existing understandings in a domain, this method can help identify trends and spot gaps.

We chose Google Scholar to gather the literature for review as this allowed us to retrieve literature from several different fields simultaneously (we also considered other databases, such as Library and Information Science Abstracts, Scopus and Semantic Scholar, but found relatively fewer results using these systems). Moreover, in addition to traditional peer-reviewed journal articles, Google Scholar's results included broader literature, such as conference proposals, working papers and posters from several fields, which helped us

understand the formally published works better. In preparatory searches, we discovered that the terms ‘religion’ and ‘prayer’ sufficiently captured most theistic conceptualisations of spirituality; however, for extra-theistic conceptualisations, the terms ‘contemplation’, ‘meditation’ and ‘yoga’ often served as notional replacements for spiritual practice. Therefore, in addition to searches for articles about spirituality and religion, we also included searches for contemplation, yoga and meditation.

While searching Scholar, we used the keywords spirituality, spiritual, religion, religious, contemplation, contemplative, meditation, meditative, yoga, and prayer. However, we used the operators ‘AND information’, ‘AND Internet’, ‘AND world wide web’, ‘AND online’, ‘AND document’, ‘AND museum/s’, ‘AND gallery’, ‘AND galleries’, ‘AND archive/s’, ‘AND library’, ‘AND librarianship’ and ‘AND libraries’ for each keyword in an attempt to restrict the number of results to article titles within information-related fields. We also examined the literature cited within the retrieved articles to include other significant works uncaptured by these keywords. We chose to review the literature over the past 30 years and limited my search to works published in English between 1st January 1990 and 1st January 2023.

After removing duplicates and false positives, we examined 115 peer-reviewed articles, 44 book chapters, 24 theses and 17 unrefereed papers. We considered a result to be a false positive if it did not pertain to information-related topics and research (broadly construed) according to our understanding of the field. Since we aimed to understand how scholars have explored spirituality and religion collectively and possibly as divergent concepts, we organised the literature into religion and spirituality categories. We categorised works that used only spirituality and spiritual in their titles rather than religion as ‘spirituality-related’ because we felt, in doing so, these works implicitly or explicitly intended to emphasise spirituality rather than religion. In contrast, we categorised those that used either religion/religious alone or in conjunction with spirituality/spiritual as ‘religion-related’ research as these made no such distinction. We then organised both types separately by looking for shared notions and understandings of information-related, religion-related, and spirituality-related concepts within the various information research fields, following which we wrote up our findings as a chronological narrative. Such an approach (i.e., a narrative review) is a traditional one where the researcher(s) provides an account of what is already known about an area of interest (Bryman, 2016). According to Bryman (2016), such reviews

can serve as a contextual prelude for further research or function as stand-alone reviews in and of themselves (p. 91). Therefore, our narrative review (presented in the following sections) serves both these functions, i.e., in addition to reviewing studies and identifying gaps that may provide context for further research, it also consolidates understandings from existing information research conducted regarding the spiritual and religious and presents them in the form of a narrative discussion.

Religion in Information and Communication Research

In the broadest sense, scholars have explored religion within information and communication research in two ways. Firstly, by examining people's online religious activities (internet studies) and second, by analysing people's informational strategies in religious contexts (information behaviour studies). The first orientation includes research generally motivated to understand the sociology of religion in new informational environments. In contrast, the second seeks to uncover how and why people seek and use various forms of information for religious matters. Although both orientations have slightly different motivations, they employ shared terminologies such as information seeking and browsing. They also share a set of common sociological frameworks. We discuss the understandings available from both these orientations, beginning with research on religion in Internet studies.

Religion in Internet Studies

Research on religion in internet studies began in the mid-1990s as several authors highlighted a prominent growth in religious representation online (e.g. O'Leary, 1996; Zaleski, 1997; Brasher, 2001). Many early studies used ethnographic methods and content analyses to describe particular online communities, websites, or environments (Campbell, 2011). Researchers analysed official and unofficial websites and explored central questions such as what religious information is on the Internet, who is using it, and why. These studies can help us understand the kinds of religious information available online. For example, Helland's (2000) article points out that religious information on the early Internet was divided into two categories. The first, which he called 'religion online', included official websites where people could access information such as religious texts, sermons, prayer times and guides. The second, 'online religion', comprised unofficial websites and forums where individuals could participate in religious discussions, conduct rituals and request religious services. The article also emphasised that religious organisations (such as the Vatican and the Church of

Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints) created websites primarily for one-to-many communication purposes without allowing for reciprocal input from those receiving information. However, in contrast, ordinary religious individuals created and used websites to facilitate discussions about religious beliefs, share personal opinions and receive feedback (Helland, 2000).

Similarly, Bunt's (1997; 2000) studies reveal that Islamic information on the early Internet consisted of explicitly 'religious material' such as digital versions of the Quran and broader personal accounts of Muslim practices and experiences. In his work, Bunt (2000) highlights various types of online Islamic information. For example, on many early websites, the Quran was available in several languages, often accompanied by audio clips of traditional recitations, which people downloaded to understand proper recitation techniques and develop better recitation styles (Bunt, 2000). In addition to the Quran, some websites also had other information, such as personal accounts of the Hajj pilgrimage. These accounts helped provide other Muslims with travel information for Hajj, suggestions on what to pack, and appropriate prayers for different aspects of the pilgrimage (Bunt, 2000). Finally, some websites also discussed concepts such as sexual identities (e.g. being a gay Muslim), gender-related concerns (women's issues) and mystically inclined perspectives ('Sufi' orders) that might be seen as radical or 'un-Islamic' in other Muslim contexts (Bunt, 2000). In these cases, Bunt noted that people often used websites that provided anonymity and confidentiality whilst 'permitting the circulation of opinions about Islam, which [did] not find favour within home cultural-social contexts' (Bunt, 2000, p. 130).

Horsfall's (2000) analysis of early websites of established religious organisations (such as the Vatican and the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints) shows that information on these sites was limited to telephone directories, local church locations, information about the Bible and reference information for religious officials. However, information on newer and possibly controversial religious organisations' websites (such as the Church of Scientology and the Unification Church) also included information to counter negative publicity and actively educate members and non-members. Her study also points out that official websites sometimes contained personal records; for example, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints provided information about people's genealogical histories (Horsfall, 2000).

In contrast to the formal information provided on official websites, information shared on some fundamentalist websites (such as those concerning beliefs about the end of the world and subsequent (God's) judgement) included conversations about specific religious topics or

convictions (Howard, 2000). Howard's (2000) ethnography of dispensationalist websites argued that the discourses promoted through such sites helped foster information exchange among individuals who shared similar convictions (e.g. Judgement Day) but possibly held different beliefs associated with those convictions (e.g. the Rapture vs Armageddon). Therefore, religious information on the early Internet comprised explicitly religious information, i.e. authoritative and sacred texts; official religious information, i.e. one-way communications between organisations and members (and non-members) and unofficial religious information, such as personal experiences and discussions about religious matters.

As the Internet evolved, later research into online religion expanded to investigate the opportunities and obstacles created by diverse and freely available online information. The following subsection reviews these later research developments. Hadden and Cowan (2000) noted that information about almost every religious tradition, movement or group was increasingly available online. Therefore, the abundance of information and relative ease of access (at least in the West) made online religious information-seeking possible. However, it also created new information environments with particular characteristics and mechanisms. While earlier work helped map out the variety of online religious information, later studies can help us understand why people used the Internet to seek religious information and the broader characteristics of their interactions.

For example, Lövheim's (2004) work concerning young people's online religious interactions reveals that younger individuals used the Internet to discuss their religious convictions and beliefs more deeply. In her study, some individuals felt that talking about religious and spiritual issues through proximal interactions and only with those in one's local area was limited by social etiquette and compulsions to agree with others face-to-face (Lövheim, 2004). In contrast, online exchanges allowed for heated debates with disparate individuals about conflicting beliefs, resulting in more satisfying interactions. Apart from the possibility of debating beliefs, some young people also felt the Internet provided a means of learning about unconventional religions, such as Wiccan practices and witchcraft. Therefore, online interactions helped young people create a sense of personal religious identity (Lövheim, 2004). However, they also had limitations; as one of her participants pointed out, online religious interactions favoured 'a rhetorical style based on snappy arguments, polarized debates, wit, and theoretical knowledge' (p. #).

Online religious information could also help circumvent certain obstacles. For example, neo-pagan religions, such as Wicca, require young people to learn about religious rituals and practices from elders as part of a coven (Berger and Ezzy, 2004). This might not always be possible since suitably qualified elders are rarely available close by. In these circumstances, seeking information from the Internet might help free young seekers from the need to search for a coven (Berger and Ezzy, 2004). Berger and Ezzy (2004) described this as particularly important for underage seekers, as covens might be reluctant to train anyone under eighteen for fear of litigation by angry parents. A worrying concern for several scholars here was the information presented by specific religious movements seen as cults. Since the Internet allowed all individuals and groups to share information freely, researchers examined if the information provided by some new religious movements could also be used to recruit new members. This concern came to the fore after the mass suicide of 39 members of a new religious movement (Heaven's Gate) in 1997 led to fears about the presence of 'spiritual predators' on the world wide web (Dawson and Hennebry, 1999). However, numerous studies found little empirical evidence that online information provision increased recruitment to new religious movements (Dawson and Hennebry, 1999; Mayer, 2000; Krogh and Pillifant, 2004).

The 2001 September 11 terror attacks brought greater attention to religious issues. Millions of people (many for the first time) sent and received prayers online, and many Americans turned to online sources to seek information about Islam. By the mid-2000s, more and more people were using the Internet for religious purposes. Larsen (2004) noted that by 2001 'more people had gotten religious or spiritual information online than had gambled online, used Web auction sites, traded stocks online, placed phone calls on the Internet, or done online banking, or used Internet-based dating services' (p. #). Most online religious interactions, however, were solitary, with religious Internet surfers treating the Internet as a library, hunting for information, and occasionally interacting with friends and strangers to swap prayers and advice (Larsen, 2004). Still, some groups refrained from using the Internet freely.

Campbell and Golan (2011) noted that ultra-orthodox and fundamentalist religious groups (e.g. Jewish Orthodox groups) typically prohibited online information engagements, fearing they were contamination and moral pollution sources. However, as online information environments and Internet use became more embedded within everyday activities and workplaces, some groups created 'digital enclaves' to enable controlled participation whilst attempting to protect their communities. These enclaves included websites aimed selectively

at specific Orthodox groups, were focused on religious content and discussions within those groups, and were filtered using extensive application and participation processes (Campbell and Golan, 2011). Although participation was selective and controlled, these websites often allowed personal and controversial discussions. Therefore, new online information environments both affirmed and challenged Orthodox religious authority and identity within bounded communities by providing safe spaces for discussions that would typically not be allowed publicly (Campbell, 2011).

More recently, with the increase in user-generated content, pervasive network connectivity and more interactive communication channels, religious information on the Internet now includes 24-hour live feeds, YouTube videos, Facebook discussions, songs, music, memes, blogs and podcasts. This new environment helps individuals participate in rituals virtually, gather religious knowledge, maintain relationships, and build new friendships but also reshapes existing social and religious structures by facilitating newer forms of networking, activism and spiritual practice (Tomalin, Starkey and Halafoff, 2015; Campbell and Garner, 2016). Both religion online and online religion (i.e., formal information channels and informal participatory interactions) provide resources for religious and spiritual meaning-making. Moreover, searching for information on and amongst different religions allows individuals to understand and create personal religious identities in pluralistic, post-traditional and information-enabled ways.

Religion in Information Behaviour Studies

Apart from religion in Internet studies, a second type of religion-related information research typically concerns work-related religious information-seeking behaviour, i.e., the information behaviour of religious professionals, and everyday life religious information-seeking behaviour, i.e., the behaviour of ordinary religious individuals. Unlike internet studies, where scholars have examined established *and* new religious movements (such as Wicca and Scientology), information behaviour researchers have mainly studied behaviours in established religions such as Christianity, Islam and Buddhism, with most studies concerning the first two. These include studies concerning Christian church leaders (clergy, pastors and ministers), Islamic leaders (Ulama) and ordinary Christian, Muslim and Buddhist individuals. We elaborate on these in the following subsections.

Information Behaviours of Christian and Islamic Leaders

Several early studies have examined clergy's information-seeking behaviours within particular work-related and professional roles (e.g. Phillips, 1992; Tanner, 1993; Wicks, 1999). For example, Wicks (1999) interviewed pastoral clergy from several Christian congregations in Canada to determine the influence of work worlds and work roles on their information-seeking behaviours. He defined a pastor's work world as comprised of particular theological, denominational and congregational worlds and his or her role as a preacher, administrator or caregiver. A pastor may, for example, be theologically conservative, part of an Anglican denomination, hold a large congregation and perform various work-related duties for different roles. Wicks' study notes that, in general, pastors' information behaviours are closed (i.e. restricted to sources within their theological, denominational and congregational work world) when attempting to seek information for preaching and administrative tasks; however, they are open (i.e. open to information sources and channels from beyond their worlds) when seeking information for caregiving.

Like Wicks, Lambert's (2010) study reports that Baptist ministers prefer known authoritative sources (formal spiritual texts) for preaching research but might consider newer informal sources for administrative work. In addition, Lambert's study also examined ministers' stopping behaviours, i.e., how ministers judge their information-seeking sessions to be finished or decide to give up and reports that, similar to ordinary individuals, ministers stop seeking more information when they have 'had enough'.

Roland's (2008; 2012) case study qualitatively analysed one clergy member's decision and Sense-Making strategies for sermon preparation. His study indicates that clergy possibly use standardised lectionaries and church calendars to help decide on weekly sermon topics. In addition, he notes that clergy members might prefer information sources that align with their congregations' biblical attitudes and literacies when preparing sermons. Aside from the conventional strategies noted by Roland, Michels's (2011; 2012; 2014) studies highlight that clergy often seek guidance through prayer to seek answers, make decisions and prepare for various tasks. He identified this through an ethnographic study of church leaders in Canada whose congregations were engaged in a restructuring or re-visioning process. In his study, Michels described prayer as communicating with God to receive information for cognitive (wisdom and direction) and affective (peace-related) information needs and positioned this behaviour as analogous to seeking information from personal sources.

More recently, Lacović and Tanacković (2018) surveyed several hundred parish priests in Croatia and found that priests typically require information about theology, general culture, psychology, and pedagogy for liturgy and caregiving roles. In addition, their study reports that many priests now go online to find liturgy-related information; however, they still prefer to seek information from colleagues and other members of pastoral and economic boards for caregiving. That clergy prefer to curate their sources through personal contacts and the Internet rather than seeking help from public/specialised library staff is also reported more widely in other studies (e.g. Wicks, 1999; Curran and Burns, 2011). Outside work-related settings, Dankasa's (2015) study examined clergy's information-seeking behaviours in everyday life, such as for sports and leisure activities. His is possibly the only study to include clerical behaviours unrelated to work worlds and roles. However, it also notes that distinguishing between the clergy's work life and everyday life is complicated, as religious professionals' work often functions as a vocation, calling or way of life rather than an exclusive professional role. As such, Dankasa's study reports that clergy members' professional religious commitments (such as being celibate) can sometimes more broadly intrude on their everyday information practices and behaviours. To the extent that clergy members might prefer not to seek information from people outside their immediate clerical circles for fear of being judged or misunderstood.

Bakar and Saleh (2011), Saleh and Bakar (2013) and Saleh and Sadiq (2013) are possibly the only studies concerning the behaviours of Islamic religious professionals. In their first study, Bakar and Saleh (2011) adopted Wicks' (1999) questionnaire to identify the information resource needs of the Ulama in Nigeria. Their study reports that the Ulama have scripture-related needs similar to Christian professionals. Later, Saleh and Bakar (2013) and Saleh and Sadiq (2013) attempted to examine the Ulama's information-seeking behaviours for preaching and counselling roles using larger sample sizes. Unlike studies of Christian religious professionals in the West, Saleh and Bakar and Saleh and Sadiq's studies report that the Ulama often seek help from local libraries and library professionals rather than the Internet. This difference perhaps reflects the different socio-economic contexts of the studies and might be considered a potent motivation for researchers to examine religious information behaviours in non-Western contexts.

Therefore, we somewhat understand religious information behaviours and strategies in work-related settings; however, our understanding is limited mainly to Christianity and Islam,

two historically intersecting traditions wherein professional religious literacy typically involves similar ideas of effectively understanding and interpreting divine scripture. In addition, most studies of religious professionals have been conducted in Western contexts, with a few studies outside Europe and North America mostly relating to religious professionals in Nigeria. Missing are studies that examine the information behaviours of professionals in other major religions, such as Hinduism, Buddhism, and Judaism, as well as behaviours in new religious movements and non-institutionally-affiliated and folk religions.

Information Behaviours of Lay Christian, Muslim and Buddhist Individuals

Besides religious professionals, researchers have also explored the information behaviours of lay religious individuals in various settings, such as bible study sessions, pilgrimages, formal/informal religious gatherings, daily-life interactions, health-related uncertainty, religious teaching and learning, migration and other social settings (e.g. Gorichanaz, 2016; Caidi, 2019; Gaston, Dorner and Johnstone, 2015; Caidi and Innocenti; 2018). Here, scholars have attempted to understand people's motivations for religious information-seeking rather than examining pre-defined tasks or roles. In a relatively early example, Coco's (1998; in Dervin et al., 2012) dissertation used Dervin's Sense-Making methodology to examine forty Catholic individuals' recollections of conflicts between life experiences and spiritual understandings. In her research, her informants described several types of barriers and struggles, especially when sexually maturing and coming into adulthood, during which their Catholic education conflicted with wider relationships and power struggles (p. 8).

Accordingly, Coco's work indicated that balancing adherence to religious teachings and practices could be difficult for some individuals and consequently, religious individuals might view their religious education as confusing or burdensome. Following this, Quirke's (2012) and Guzik's (2017; 2018) studies identified that religious information-seeking could sometimes form part of greater social integration and assimilation strategies for migrants and recent converts. Quirke (2012) interviewed seven young Afghan newcomers to Canada in her study. Her (2012) poster reports frequent technology-enabled religious information sharing and the use of digital versions of sacred texts. However, it also notes newcomers' wariness of using websites to seek information about Islam due to concerns over the perceived accuracy of online sources. Caidi and MacDonald (2008) also reported this guarded behaviour. They emphasised that several Muslim Canadians felt overly scrutinised and therefore mistrusted

conventional media and communication channels in a post-9/11 world (Caidi and MacDonald, 2008).

Guzik (2018) ethnographically examined the religious conversion experiences of Muslims in Toronto. Her paper emphasises embodied information practices, i.e., practices where the body acts as an important actor and information source (Olsson and Lloyd, 2017). And reports that Muslim converts might wear particular clothes or change their appearances to convey information regarding their new religious identities. Her study reveals that religious information often relates to one's sense of identity, and sharing this information through embodiment might help facilitate identity formation (or transformation) in everyday life contexts. Religious information is also sought in contexts where a new religious identity might involve a decision to make religion one's sole activity, purpose or life vocation. For example, Hickey's (2017) study demonstrates that women contemplating life as religious sisters or nuns extensively seek information to help discern their religious calling. To do so, they use various digital and formal print resources; however, seeking out and listening to other women's lived experiences often provides them with better knowledge and information than simply using online resources (Hickey, 2017). Therefore, Quirke's (2012) and Hickey's (2017) studies illustrate that religious information on the Internet and other formal print resources might only superficially address people's religious concerns. Moreover, Caidi and MacDonald (2008) demonstrate that, due to socio-political contexts, Muslims in Western countries might perceive online religious information differently than Christians or other religious groups.

Information practices can also differ among religious sub-groups. Freeburg (2013), for example, reports that information practices within different religious congregations intersect with wider ideas and beliefs held within those congregations. In his doctoral work, he examined the information practices of two congregations holding different views regarding homosexuality within the same church and discovered their information practices as mutually distinct. His is possibly the only study to examine the information practices of religious groups rather than individuals, and reports that congregations open and accepting (of homosexuality) used more unique information sources than their counterparts. In addition, although both congregations in his study relied extensively on sacred texts such as the Bible, he reported that the liberal congregation was more critically reflective of its content than the conservative one. Before this, Freeburg (2011) examined information processes within bible

study groups by surveying individuals in three US Midwestern churches. Here, he identified that although individuals used a large amount of unique information at the sessions (i.e., information from sources known only to a few members of the group), this information was often debated, discussed and validated against shared information sources recognised by all members of the group (such as the Bible). Freeburg's studies, therefore, demonstrate that although individuals might use several unique religious information sources, these may often be considered less authoritative than certain standard or cornerstone information sources. Moreover, wider beliefs and attitudes amongst particular religious groups might intersect differently with these standard sources and their perceived authority or value.

Religious information interactions may also be conceptualised as different from those *about* religion (cf. Bronstein, 2007). For example, Lipton and Nyrose (2011) examined student essay submissions for the same (religious studies) course at two different US college institutions (one faith-based and the other secular). Their study indicates that while students at secular institutions choose essay topics due to class discussions, personal interests and negative experiences, those at faith-based institutions often research and write on topics to understand personal religious experiences. Likewise, Siracky's (2013) ethnographic account helps reveal that (unlike non-religious students) Catholic students' religious information interactions often explicitly represent religious intents, such as attempts to communicate with God. Therefore, religion-related information interactions may be understood as occurring at various *levels* of religiosity; however, the more religious ones tend to possess greater aspects of personal meaning than those simply about religion.

Individuals might also seek religious information sources during problematic times and health-related uncertainties (Baker, 2004; Fourie, 2008; Cadge and Bergey, 2013). And as Cadge and Bergey (2013) note, they may even differentiate between spirituality and religion. However, these interactions might sometimes be framed negatively. For example, Cadge and Bergey's (2013) examination of people's behaviours during health-related uncertainties indicates that while many people seek religious information to help support other biomedical information sources, some may do so to appraise their illnesses spiritually and may at times express anger and dissatisfaction with religious information sources. Religious information interactions may, therefore, at times, be emotionally and cognitively disconcerting. This can also be seen empirically where, for example, Internet searches for religious information

usually last for much longer than other everyday searches and are often more intensely articulated (Wan-Chik, Clough and Sanderson, 2013; Cunningham and Hinze, 2014).

Outside Christianity and Islam, Chabot's (2019) study is possibly the only one to explore the religious information practices of Western Buddhists. In his (2019) dissertation, Chabot (2019) stresses; in addition to conventional practices such as listening and reading, Buddhists often employ strategies such as contemplating and meditating to facilitate spiritual understanding. In addition, he notes that Buddhists' religious information-seeking might be motivated by broader existential concerns, such as a desire to achieve a 'good' death, be happier and help others avoid sadness and suffering. Shortly before this, in a working paper, Chabot (2014) discussed potential applications and limitations of Dervin's Sense-Making theory and approach vis-a-vis Buddhist hermeneutic conceptions and understandings of individuals' sensemaking patterns.

Overall, many studies demonstrate that everyday religious information-seeking behaviours can often be informative, formative, and transformative, i.e., in addition to helping seek and use information, these behaviours may also contribute to personal growth, identity formation and spiritual development (Vamanu and Guzik, 2015). However, with a few exceptions, here, too, most research has looked at behaviours in mainstream Christianity, with rare one-off studies concerning Muslim and Buddhist individuals. In addition, Western contexts continue to dominate, with very little known about religious information practices in Africa, Central Asia, South Asia, the Middle East and the Far East.

Religion in Galleries, Libraries, Archives and Museums Research

Galleries, libraries, archives and museums form part of wider knowledge and cultural heritage institutions often grouped as GLAM institutions. In the West, these institutions are generally classified as different from religious establishments such as churches, mosques and temples; however, many house religious artefacts, objects and installations and may also provide access to religion-related information and experience. Despite this, religious information interactions here have received relatively little research attention. The following subsections review religion-related research in GLAM institutions, beginning with religion in galleries and museums.

Religion in Gallery and Museum Studies

In museum studies, Duncan (1995; 2005) notes that many museums are comparable with ceremonial buildings (such as temples) and are sometimes deliberately designed to resemble religious institutions. Like churches and temples, museums often serve as spaces for rituals; however, being secular spaces, ritual practices here can often be implicitly religious and subtle (Duncan, 2005). Several museum scholars have conceptually examined the appropriateness of implicit religion in museums. For example, Buggeln (2012) discussed the appropriateness of religion and spirituality-related behaviours by reflecting on her experiences in three American museums— the New York Metropolitan Museum of Art, the National Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, DC and the National Museum of the American Indian. In her essay, she points out that although all three museums are contemplative and reverential, the Metropolitan’s displays sometimes include cautionary signs to underline that the sacred spaces represented are not meant to be seen as *real*. On the other hand, the Museum of the American Indian has multiple references to spirituality and religion (and overtly presents itself as a sacred space in general), and the Holocaust Memorial Museum is rendered sacred and contemplative by the weight of tragic human loss and emotion. In contrast, the signage in these spaces encourages contemplative silence and reverence, similar to those in temples. Therefore, in Buggeln’s (2012) view, the appropriateness of religious behaviours in museums is often contingent on context and museum professionals’ ideas and views.

Aside from grappling with implicit religion, Paine (2012) suggests that museum professionals’ secular worlds are sometimes challenged by attempts to include and reproduce religious objects in museums. He explains that although most Western societies are viewed as secular, religious sentiments still hold ground in many traditional cultures, where symbols and artefacts have wider religious and spiritual connotations. These sentiments can sometimes clash with ill-considered ideas attempting to present religious artefacts simply as aesthetic installations. Moreover, similar to sacralisation, ‘museumincation’ (i.e., the entry of an object into a museum) can ascribe to artefacts a particular kind of meaning that may be incongruous with the one previously held (Paine, 2012). Likewise, in gallery studies, Alderton’s (2014) paper on Religion at Te Papa Tongarewa builds upon Duncan’s (1995; 2005) ideas to question the place of state institutions in dealing with, commenting on and standing in place of sacred artefacts, especially in predominantly secular societies and cultures. Therefore, by portraying religious objects, galleries and museums can often influence popular understandings of religion, giving rise to various issues (Buggeln, Paine

and Plate, 2017). However, Duncan's (1995), Buggeln's (2012), Paine's (2012), Alderton's (2014) and Buggeln, Paine and Plate's (2017) works serve as examples of the few conceptual attempts in gallery and museum studies to look at implicit religion; future studies might help better understand the intersections between museums and religion by empirically examining matters and various religion-related issues.

Religion in Library and Archive Research

Many libraries function as spaces for silence and contemplation; however, they do not invoke a kind of implicit religion like the one seen in certain museums. Like museums, most public and academic libraries are viewed as secular institutions; however, where museums might allow for (and even encourage experiences of) the numinous, most libraries are seen as spaces for rational information provision.

Many academic and public libraries facilitate access to religious materials, often as a commitment to people's intellectual freedoms; this, however, does not always translate into religion being given equal consideration compared with other types of information. In library research, Loria (2006) is possibly the only scholar to explore the idea of 'religious information poverty' by emphasising the Australian state school system's lack of attention to religious education. In her paper, she argues that although religious education is part of the school curriculum in Australian state schools, young school-age students often lack a nuanced understanding of various religious traditions. As a result, they cannot partake in and appreciate the religious diversity of the contemporary cosmopolitan world. She points out that religion often plays a role in major international crises and debates. Yet, in her view, the average Australian state school student cannot distinguish between common religious figures such as the Buddha or an ayatollah (Loria, 2006, p.23). This might also resemble other Western state school systems more generally, where religious education increasingly plays a marginal role in young students' development and education. In addition, Loria emphasises that although many young people express interest in the spiritual, they generally do not seek answers from religious institutions (Loria, 2006). Therefore, providing better quality religious education and information through libraries and state schools might help young people explore deeper existential questions and provide a more meaningful education.

Aside from religious information poverty, the lack of religious information provision through libraries and schools has also been framed as detrimental to ethnic understanding and

inclusion. For example, Onyebuchi's (2022) paper suggests that multi-ethnic and religiously diverse countries (in her case, Nigeria) with persistent political and terrorist-related turmoil can struggle to achieve peaceful coexistence among various religious and social groups. However, school libraries embedded within wider state education systems can help promote ethnic and religious understanding and reduce antisocial behaviours by providing resources on issues concerning ethnicity and religion.

In archival studies, Warkentin's (2020) thesis is perhaps the only example of research examining religion in modern archiving and preservation. His main argument posits that Christian Church archives have intrinsic spiritual value and, thus, in increasingly digital information environments where newer records are often 'born digitals', archivists must seek to create better long-term preservation strategies to hold on to these for future generations. Therefore, Loria's (2006), Onyebuchi's (2022) and Warkentin's (2020) works are examples of the limited research concerning religion in archival studies and librarianship. Future studies may, therefore, consider empirically appraising the effectiveness of library-supported religious education, determining libraries' functions regarding religious and spiritual information provision and ways of better preserving increasingly digital spirituality-related texts and materials.

Spirituality in Information and Communication Research

As will become evident, information research concerning religion considerably outweighs research looking explicitly at spirituality. This is perhaps expected as the notion of spirituality as conceptually distinct from religion is relatively emergent. As an early example, Clark's (1995; 1999; in Dervin et al., 2012) dissertation examined spirituality-related discussions in an intimate feminist spirituality group. Here, Clark used Dervin's Sense-Making methodology and framework to understand her participants' spiritual or paranormal visions and explained that several participants engaged in practices such as reading and discussion to supplement and reaffirm their visions (Dervin et al., 2012, p.6). Likewise, Foreman-Wernet and Dervin (2006; in Dervin et al., 2012) provided examples of qualitative relationships between people's aesthetic or art-related experiences and those typically considered spiritual or transcendence-related. Therefore, Clark's and Foreman-Wernet and Dervin's studies serve as early examples of research indicating possible connections between spirituality and information. Following this, Kari's (2007) Review of the Spiritual in Information Studies was the next significant development. In his review, Kari (2007) characterised the spiritual as akin

to concepts like ‘esoterica, magic, mystique, New Age, occult, paranormal, religion, supernatural, and superstition’ (p. 936). However, his review asserted that religion, or religiously affiliated forms of spirituality, were enshrouded in complex social and political structures and accordingly did not include articles that looked at religious information. Instead, Kari recommended that researchers consider religiously affiliated contexts separately. Through his review, Kari (2007) discovered that scholars broadly conceived of spiritual information as information that may be reckoned holy (e.g. The Bible or The Quran), be acquired through spiritual means (such as spiritual channelling), originate from a spiritual entity (such as an Angel or God), or be on the topic of spiritual matters. This discovery helped establish a definition for spiritual information, which many scholars have used to describe information in affiliated *and* unaffiliated contexts such as pilgrimage, bible study sessions, meditation classes and formal/informal religious gatherings. In addition, Kari (2007) identified several ways of interacting with spiritual information, such as describing, conceptualising, seeking, storing, using, processing and providing, enabling further explorations into relationships between spirituality and information (Kari, 2009; 2011a; 2011b). Kari’s review concluded that existing knowledge in this domain was sorely inadequate and recommended that scholars look more seriously at informational sources such as sacred books, spiritualist channelling and divine inspiration.

Following this, Kari (2009; 2011a; 2011b) conducted two qualitative studies examining a corpus of Finnish texts reportedly received spiritually/paranormally. He explained that such texts ‘may be almost anything from the voice of conscience to (alleged) communication with ‘higher beings’’ (2009, p. 454). In his first study, Kari (2009) analysed the content of numerous spiritual texts and reported that many contained instructions for various types of information use, such as acquiring, identifying, developing, thinking, examining, creating, presenting, communicating, and exchanging information. Subsequently, his second study (2011) reported several outcomes of spiritual information use and the effects of and dispositions to spiritual information.

In addition to Kari’s studies, Gaston et al. (2015) reported on the general prevalence of spirituality in Buddhist Laos by emphasising the use of spiritual information sources for everyday concerns among Lao people and highlighting spiritual information interactions as a prominent mode of every information-seeking behaviour. Moreover, Nangia and Ruthven (2022a) explored information interactions at a contemplative spiritual retreat centre in

Portugal. Their study examined personal narratives shared by several residents on the centre's website and indicates that the residents' most valued interactions occur during Satsang sessions—contemplative question-answer sessions with the resident teacher or Guru. Their paper characterises these sessions as similar to counselling/therapy sessions and notes that attendees often use silence and meditation techniques to facilitate understanding during the sessions. Nangia and Ruthven's (2022a) study concludes that Satsang sessions may help facilitate affective and contemplative outcomes contributing to the residents' overall spiritual experience. Following this, Nangia and Ruthven (2022b) also interviewed contemporary spiritual teachers and speakers to understand people's everyday spiritual-seeking behaviours and interactions. Like the retreat study, here, too, their paper indicates that spiritual people often use a combination of informational strategies (book-reading and web browsing) and contemplative strategies (praying and meditating) to negotiate various affective, developmental and metaphysical concerns.

Besides empirical studies, spirituality has also been discussed in conceptual articles about spiritual practice and contemplation. Contemplation in secular terms refers more generally to thoughtfulness and introspection; however, many techniques for contemplation originate in religious and spiritual traditions. For example, contemplative practices like *Lectio Divina* (divine reading) come from Western Christian traditions and involve reading from the heart rather than building epistemic understandings and connections. Similarly, Loving-Kindness meditations (from Buddhist traditions) attempt to empathise more deeply by vividly visualising others' sufferings and misfortunes. Here, some scholars have explored intersections between such practices and information. For example, Latham et al. (2020) suggest that contemplative practices such as silence, centering and meditation might have distinctly informational features that help facilitate self-understanding, spiritual growth and rich identity formation (Latham et al., 2020). Their paper helps assert that information researchers have typically examined conventional interactions, such as those associated with data, knowledge and information (a reference to the popular pyramid conceptualisation), and have paid less attention to interactions involving understanding and wisdom, such as those associated with spirituality and religion. Similarly, Gorichanaz and Latham (2019) offer a framework of contemplative information using aspects such as being, meaning, attention, unity, wisdom and compassion and also highlight that existing research has typically ignored contemplative information interaction and provision. Latham et al. (2020) and Gorichanaz and Latham (2019) help provide a broader conceptual framework for discussing spiritual

information by facilitating connections with contemplative studies and other related disciplines.

Spirituality in Galleries, Libraries, Archives and Museums Research

Some scholars have empirically explored spiritual needs and practices in library research. For example, Mross and Riehman-Murphy's (2018; 2019; 2021) work highlights the ubiquity of students praying at an American college/university library and campus. Their (2019) study surveyed numerous Penn State Abington students and indicates that despite being a secular space, many students choose the library as their preferred campus prayer location. In addition, through subsequent focus groups with students, Mross and Riehman-Murphy (2021) report that many students prefer similar reflection spaces and provisions regardless of religious faith or inclination. These provisions include spaces for reading spiritual texts in groups (such as for bible study sessions) or praying/meditating together in specifically designated rooms/locations. Therefore, although colleges and universities may have designated spiritual spaces elsewhere, due to campus dynamics and overall convenience, many students still prefer various attributes of libraries for attending to their spiritual needs and obligations (Mross and Riehman-Murphy, 2021).

In addition to Mross and Riehman-Murphy, Samson (2021) ethnographically explored the usefulness of a mindfulness/meditation space inside the University of Toronto Faculty of Information's combined learning/library resource space— Inforum. His thesis reports that such spaces help create a more contemplative infrastructure and may be considered essential for modern libraries wishing to build an environment more conducive to reflection and relaxation. Aside from Samson's (2021) empirical work, some researchers have attempted to conceptualise public libraries as modern spaces for reflection and contemplation. For example, Pyati (2019) argues that in addition to epistemic information provision, modern libraries also have a role in cultivating patrons' inner lives through spiritual, religious and contemplative information and resource provision. Similarly, Gorichanaz (2021) envisages an Information Sanctuary as a modern intersection between an information institution and a contemplative institution. Here, Nangia and Ruthven (2022c) empirically explored practising US and UK librarians' attitudes and perceptions regarding spiritual needs and modern librarianship. Their paper indicates that while most librarians may be happy to provide resources and services to support needs such as mindfulness and meditation, many feel that

overtly religious/spiritual rituals may be inappropriate to support in modern libraries and academic institutions (Nangia and Ruthven, 2022c).

In museum studies, Cameron and Gatewood (2003) and Gatewood and Cameron (2004) note that people often visit historical sites and museums to seek emotional experiences that may closely resemble the numinous or spiritual. They explain that some people make personal connections with artefacts that may ‘manifest as a deep engagement, empathy, or spiritual communion’ (p. 57). Similarly, Latham (2013) points out that many people visit museums for intensely emotional experiences bordering on the mystical, numinous or spiritual. Similar to Duncan’s (2005) and Buggeln’s (2012) references to implicit religion, Cameron and Gatewood (2003), Gatewood and Cameron (2004), and Latham (2013) help point out implicit aspects of spirituality in museums. More concretely, Simpson (2013) discusses museums’ role in appropriately preserving and protecting objects of spiritual value. Similar to arguments in Paine (2012) regarding religion, Simpson’s (2013) paper emphasises that although objects from indigenous traditions may be better preserved and protected in museums, objects’ broader cultural and spiritual significance must be paid attention to. To do so, she suggests that museums might create designated secular and spiritual sections and control access to materials by revealing and concealing them according to customary rules. Therefore, like information and communication research, museum studies and librarianship have also paid little attention to spiritual (but religiously unaffiliated) information interactions.

Analysis and Discussion

Our review aimed to understand how scholars have explored religion and spirituality in information research and identify current and emerging trends in the literature. To do so, we classified research titles that used the terms spirituality and spiritual rather than religion as ‘spirituality-related’, as we felt these works implicitly or explicitly distinguished between spirituality and religion. In contrast, we classified titles that used spirituality, spiritual, religion and religious without distinction as ‘religion-related’ literature (see Method and Literature Search Technique section earlier). In addition, we organised the information and communication studies literature into Internet studies and information behaviour research domains and grouped galleries’s studies with museum-related publications and archives’ studies with the library research literature.

For religion, our review indicates that in Internet studies, scholars have researched people's online interactions in established and alternative or New Age religious contexts. In both contexts, scholars have investigated how online content is presented, consumed and shared by religious organisations (e.g., The Church of Scientology and The Vatican) and lay religious individuals (e.g., those surfing the internet for religious and spiritual matters). Here, research concerning religious organisations suggests that such organisations provide information primarily for one-to-many interaction purposes, whereas lay individuals seek and share information online to build religious communities and participate in conventional and alternative religious discussions. In these cases, the Internet helps provide a helpful communication channel to organisations and individuals; however, being an unregulated space, it also supports diverse and deviant opinions and may, in addition, potentially undermine traditional religious authority structures (Bunt, 1997; 2000; Helland, 2000; Lövheim, 2004; Berger and Ezzy, 2004 Campbell and Golan, 2011; Tomalin, Starkey and Halafoff, 2015; Campbell and Garner, 2016).

In information behaviour, scholars have similarly researched professionals' practices and behaviours and those of lay Christian, Muslim and Buddhist individuals; however, unlike Internet studies, information behaviour scholars are yet to explore unestablished, alternative or New Age contexts and traditions. Information behaviour studies generally indicate that religious professionals prefer to cultivate their information sources personally rather than seek help from libraries or information professionals; however, this might also depend on socio-economic contexts and professionals' geographical location. In addition, religious professionals might utilise prayer as an information-seeking strategy and their religious commitments and associated lifestyle (e.g., being celibate) may also affect their information practices and behaviours (Phillips, 1992; Tanner, 1993; Wicks, 1999; Roland, 2008; 2012; Lambert, 2010; Curran and Burns, 2011; Michels, 2011; 2012; 2014; Bakar and Saleh, 2011; Saleh and Bakar, 2013; Saleh and Sadiq, 2013; Dankasa, 2015). In contrast, information behaviour studies of lay Christians, Muslims and Buddhists suggest that spiritual information seeking is relatively common and that people's everyday spiritual information behaviour and practices may incorporate documentary information sources, embodiment, and contemplative-practice-related interactions (Baker, 2004; Fourie, 2008; Quirke, 2012; Wan-Chik, Clough and Sanderson, 2013; Cadge and Bergey, 2013; Gorichanaz, 2016; Gaston, Dorner and Johnstone, 2015; Guzik, 2017; 2018; Chabot, 2019; Caidi, 2019).

In museum studies and library research, religion is somewhat under-researched. Here, museum scholars have signalled the prevalence of implicit religiosity and questioned if and how religious objects should be appropriately housed and displayed inside modern secular museums (Duncan, 1995; 2005; Buggeln, 2012; Paine, 2012; Buggeln, Paine and Plate, 2017). Library researchers, on the other hand, have highlighted the possible implications of neglecting religion in Western literacy and education systems, such as by discussing religious information poverty-related issues, and analysed the role of state and school-run libraries in providing religious literacy by examining if and how library-supported religious literacy programmes might promote intercultural understanding and reduce delinquent social behaviours (Loria, 2006; Onyebuchi, 2022).

For spirituality, our review indicates that spirituality in information research has been little explored compared with religion. Here, scholars have stressed that spirituality can be an important factor in information evaluation and use and that spiritual information interaction might distinctly relate to contemplative information aims rather than conventionally understood epistemic ones alone (Kari, 2009; 2011a; 2011b; Gorichanaz and Latham, 2019; Latham et al., 2020;).

Likewise, museum studies and library research scholars have explored spirituality less than religion. In museum studies, scholars have highlighted that spiritual and numinous experience-seeking can significantly influence people's museum visits and motivations (Cameron and Gatewood, 2003; Gatewood and Cameron, 2004; Latham, 2013). Similarly, library scholars have empirically examined students' spirituality-related practices, such as prayer, yoga, mindfulness and meditation, to identify that students and patrons often use libraries for their spiritual needs and expectations (Mross and Riehman-Murphy, 2018; 2019; 2021; Samson, 2021). In addition, some have conceptualised public libraries as ideal candidates for contemplative and spiritual need provisions outside traditional, religious, privatised and paywalled systems. Moreover, others have proposed alternative institutional arrangements, such as an Information Sanctuary, to combine conventional epistemic and contemplative information resource provisions (Pyati, 2019; Gorichanaz, 2021).

Conclusion

This paper reviewed the literature on spirituality and religion in information research to consolidate current understandings and identify research trends. As evidenced by the

literature in this area, spiritual and religious interactions can be nuanced, meaningful and rich in information-related phenomena. However, these remain disproportionately explored in information and library research. Accordingly, researchers wishing to investigate information interactions in these contexts might consider focusing on the interactions of lay spiritual and religious individuals and those outside formalised religious settings and contexts.

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