# Building Social Cohesion Through Intergenerational Collaboration: A Peace Partnership Model for Countering Religious Hate Speech and Polarization

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## ABSTRACT

Religious hate speech and religious polarization have become significant challenges in diverse and digitally connected societies, where harmful narratives can spread rapidly, reinforce prejudice, weaken trust, and undermine social cohesion. Addressing these challenges requires approaches that promote intergroup understanding, constructive interaction, and peaceful coexistence. This conceptual paper examines how religious knowledge experts and educators and youth can collaborate as intergenerational peacebuilding actors to counter religious hate speech and polarization. Drawing on Social Cohesion Theory and Contact Theory, the paper conceptualizes how trust, meaningful intergroup interaction, mutual understanding, and cooperation can strengthen social relationships and social cohesion. Through a conceptual synthesis of relevant literature, four complementary strategies are identified: interfaith dialogue, digital advocacy, community-based collaboration, and peace education. These strategies provide avenues for combining the religious knowledge, moral guidance, and educational influence of religious knowledge experts and educators with the digital engagement, creativity, and mobilization capacity of youth. Based on this synthesis, the paper proposes the Intergenerational Peace Partnership Model (IPPM), integrating these actors and strategies to counter religious hate speech and polarization. The model contributes theoretically by integrating Social Cohesion Theory and Contact Theory and offers practical and policy insights for strengthening interfaith engagement, youth participation, peace education, and responsible digital advocacy. Future empirical research can further examine the applicability and effectiveness of the proposed model.

**Keywords:** Religious Hate Speech, Polarization, Intergenerational Collaboration, Social Cohesion, Peace Partnership Model

## INTRODUCTION

The increasing interconnectedness of contemporary societies has created greater opportunities for intercultural and interreligious interaction, but it has also intensified the challenges associated with hate speech, misinformation, religious intolerance, and social polarization. Digital communication technologies have transformed how individuals encounter, discuss, and negotiate religious identities, allowing information and opinions to circulate rapidly across social and geographical boundaries (Campbell & Tsuria, 2022; Fuchs, 2021; Schliesser et al., 2020). While these developments can facilitate communication and knowledge exchange, they can also provide favourable conditions for the rapid dissemination of hostile and divisive narratives. Religious hate speech can reinforce stereotypes, generate mistrust, and contribute to social divisions between religious communities (Idi et al., 2020; Munibi, 2025). These concerns are particularly significant in multicultural and multi-religious societies, including Southeast Asia, where diverse religious communities coexist within complex historical, cultural, and social relationships (Faizin et al., 2024; Gottowik, 2014; Zamri et al., 2023). In such contexts, religious polarization can transform differences that might otherwise be accommodated through peaceful coexistence into sources of distrust, antagonism, and social fragmentation (Dupi & Husaen, 2025; Kwuelum, 2024).

The relationship between digital communication and religious polarization is particularly important because online environments can amplify the visibility and circulation of divisive content. Social media algorithms that prioritize engagement may increase the exposure of users to controversial, sensational, or emotionally charged material, while echo chambers and selective exposure can reinforce existing beliefs and prejudices (Bellina et al., 2023; Cinelli et al., 2021; Peralta et al., 2024; Russo et al., 2024). Religious hate speech can therefore extend beyond individual expressions of hostility by contributing to broader patterns of prejudice, social exclusion, and intergroup distrust. Existing research suggests that persistent exposure to discriminatory discourse can influence perceptions of out-group members and may contribute to offline discrimination and intergroup tensions (Kim & Kim, 2024; Liu et al., 2024; Schäfer et al., 2024). At the same time, digital environments should not be understood solely as spaces of division. Social media and other digital platforms can also facilitate interfaith communication, positive counter-narratives, educational initiatives, and peacebuilding activities when they are used to promote tolerance, mutual respect, and constructive engagement (Driessen, 2025; King & Owen, 2020). Recent international initiatives similarly emphasize the potential of dialogue, media and information literacy, and youth engagement to counter hate speech and strengthen social cohesion in digital environments.

Addressing religious hate speech and polarization therefore requires the involvement of actors who possess different forms of knowledge, authority, social influence, and communicative capacity. Religious knowledge experts and educators including lecturers, teachers, ustaz, and other individuals with substantial knowledge of religious teachings can contribute through religious education, ethical guidance, community engagement, interfaith dialogue, and the correction of misconceptions about religious beliefs and communities. Their influence can be particularly important when addressing religious narratives because they are able to interpret and communicate religious teachings in ways that encourage compassion, respect, tolerance, and peaceful relations. The current literature also identifies religious figures as important actors in countering harmful narratives and promoting social cohesion through educational activities, community outreach, interfaith engagement, and digital communication (Estuningtyas, 2024; Hadiyanto et al., 2025; Odak, 2024). At the same time, youth represent an increasingly important group in contemporary peacebuilding because of their extensive engagement with digital platforms, peer networks, civic activities, and community initiatives. Their creativity, digital competencies, communication practices, and capacity for mobilization provide opportunities for developing and disseminating alternative narratives that challenge prejudice and promote constructive engagement. Research demonstrates that youth can function as active peacebuilding agents through intergroup contact, civic engagement, community initiatives, and digital communication rather than merely as beneficiaries of peacebuilding programmes (McKeown & Taylor, 2017; Nur Rois et al., 2025; Ragandang, 2020; Reimer et al., 2021a). Social media can provide young people with spaces to challenge harmful narratives and exercise peacebuilding agency, including efforts to counter Islamophobia and other forms of online hate speech (Ragandang, 2020). Evidence from youth-focused intergroup interventions further suggests that meaningful contact can contribute to outcomes associated with improved intergroup relations and social cohesion (McKeown et al., 2025; Reimer et al., 2021a).

However, a significant actor gap remains in the literature and practice of peacebuilding, particularly regarding the sustained collaboration between youth and religious actors (Anaya Jiménez & Robinson, 2022). Existing peacebuilding literature and programming have often addressed youth participation and religious actors as distinct areas of engagement, with comparatively less attention to sustained intergenerational collaboration between these groups. (Anaya Jiménez & Robinson, 2022). Religious knowledge experts and educators can contribute religious knowledge, moral and ethical guidance, educational influence, and community connections, while youth can contribute digital competencies, creativity, peer networks, and capacities for civic and peacebuilding engagement (Anaya Jiménez & Robinson, 2022; Hadiyanto et al., 2025; Odak, 2024; Ragandang, 2020). Treating these actors independently may therefore overlook the potential created when different forms of knowledge, influence, and experience are brought together through intergenerational collaboration (Anaya Jiménez & Robinson, 2022). The issue is therefore not simply whether religious knowledge experts or youth can independently counter hate speech, but how their complementary strengths can be organized into collaborative processes that address both the interpersonal and digital dimensions of religious polarization. This gap is particularly important because meaningful intergroup contact can contribute

to reductions in prejudice and can operate through mechanisms such as increased outgroup knowledge, reduced intergroup anxiety, and greater empathy and perspective-taking (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2008a).

A second intervention gap concerns the fragmented treatment of strategies for addressing religious hate speech and polarization. Existing literature identifies several potentially valuable approaches to addressing religious tensions and strengthening peaceful relations, including interfaith dialogue, community-based collaboration, digital advocacy, and peace education. Interfaith dialogue can create opportunities for interaction, mutual understanding, tolerance, and trust across religious communities, while community-based initiatives can facilitate cooperation and contribute to social cohesion (Jatmika & Prameswari, 2025; Rashid & Hossain, 2019). Peace education can further provide a pedagogical framework for developing knowledge, attitudes, and practices related to peace and conflict, although its implementation requires critical attention to how peace, conflict, and education are conceptualized (Zembylas & Bekerman, 2013). Consequently, there remains a need for a conceptual framework that explains how these approaches can be coordinated through collaboration between religious knowledge experts and youth.

A third theoretical gap concerns the limited conceptual integration of social cohesion perspectives and Contact Theory within an intergenerational framework for addressing religious polarization. Contact Theory provides a theoretical basis for understanding how intergroup contact can contribute to reductions in prejudice and improvements in intergroup relations. However, Contact Theory is fundamentally concerned with prejudice and its reduction through contact rather than providing a comprehensive account of intergroup relations (Zuma, 2014). The effectiveness of intergroup contact is further associated with conditions such as cooperation, shared goals, and supportive social contexts (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006, 2008b). Social cohesion scholarship, meanwhile, provides a broader framework for understanding how social relationships, trust, belonging, participation, and orientation toward the common good contribute to cohesive societies (Schiefer & Van Der Noll, 2017). These perspectives therefore operate at different but connected analytical levels: Contact Theory helps explain the interpersonal mechanism through which constructive intergroup contact may reduce prejudice, whereas social cohesion provides a broader framework for understanding collective relational outcomes. Empirical research linking intergroup contact with social cohesion further suggests that positive intergroup interaction can contribute to improved intergroup relations and cohesion (McKenna et al., 2018; Reimer et al., 2021b). Bringing these perspectives together therefore provides a useful theoretical foundation for conceptualizing how intergenerational collaboration can facilitate meaningful intergroup contact and contribute to broader social cohesion.

Taken together, these gaps indicate the need for an integrated framework that connects actors, strategies, mechanisms, and outcomes. Such a framework should recognize religious knowledge experts and educators and youth as complementary peacebuilding actors; integrate interfaith dialogue, digital advocacy, community-based collaboration, and peace education as interconnected strategies; and explain the role of intergroup contact, trust, mutual understanding, and cooperation in strengthening social cohesion. This paper addresses these gaps by proposing the Intergenerational Peace Partnership Model (IPPM), a conceptual framework that brings together the complementary capacities of religious knowledge experts and educators and youth in countering religious hate speech and polarization. Guided by Social Cohesion Theory and Contact Theory, the model conceptualizes intergenerational collaboration as a mechanism through which religious knowledge, moral and educational influence, digital engagement, creativity, and community mobilization can be combined to promote constructive intergroup interaction. The proposed model consequently seeks to contribute to the literature by providing an integrated conceptual explanation of how intergenerational peacebuilding can support the reduction of religious polarization, strengthen social cohesion, and foster peaceful coexistence.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Hate Speech and Religious Polarization in the Digital Era

The rapid advancement of digital communication technologies has transformed the way individuals interact, exchange information, and participate in public discourse (Fuchs, 2021). Social media platforms, online forums, and instant messaging applications have expanded opportunities for communication across cultural, national, and religious boundaries (Campbell & Tsuria, 2022). While these developments have facilitated

greater connectivity and information sharing, they have also created new challenges related to the spread of hate speech, misinformation, and religious polarization (Cinelli et al., 2021). The digital environment has increasingly become a space where religious identities are debated, contested, and, at times, exploited to promote divisive narratives.

Hate speech generally refers to expressions that promote hostility, discrimination, or violence against individuals or groups based on characteristics such as religion, ethnicity, race, nationality, or other forms of identity (Azman et al., 2023). In the context of religion, hate speech often manifests through derogatory comments, stereotyping, incitement, exclusionary rhetoric, and the dissemination of false information targeting specific religious communities (Zamri et al., 2023). Unlike traditional forms of communication, digital platforms enable such content to be disseminated rapidly, reaching large audiences within a short period of time (Hassim et al., 2024). The interactive nature of social media further amplifies the impact of hate speech as users can share, comment on, and reproduce harmful narratives across multiple networks (Toktarova et al., 2023).

The emergence of algorithm-driven communication ecosystems has further complicated efforts to address religious intolerance online (Munibi, 2025). Social media algorithms are designed to maximize user engagement by promoting content that generates strong emotional reactions (Peralta et al., 2024). As a result, controversial, sensational, and polarizing content often receives greater visibility than balanced or moderate perspectives (Bellina et al., 2023). This phenomenon contributes to the formation of online echo chambers, where individuals are primarily exposed to information that reinforces their existing beliefs and prejudices (Russo et al., 2024). Within these environments, misconceptions about religious groups may become normalized, increasing social divisions and reducing opportunities for meaningful intergroup dialogue (Sulfikar et al., 2023).

Religious polarization occurs when individuals and communities become increasingly divided along religious lines, leading to heightened distrust, social exclusion, and antagonism between groups (Zorgdrager & Vos, 2023). In digitally connected societies, polarization is often intensified by the circulation of misinformation, selective exposure to ideological content, and the strategic use of religious narratives to mobilize support or opposition (Dupi & Husaen, 2025). Political actors, extremist groups, and influential online personalities may exploit religious sentiments to advance particular agendas, thereby deepening social fragmentation and weakening social cohesion (Arosoaie & Osman, 2025). Consequently, religious differences that might otherwise coexist peacefully can become sources of conflict and tension (Kwuelum, 2024).

The consequences of religious hate speech and polarization extend beyond the digital sphere. Research has shown that persistent exposure to discriminatory discourse can contribute to prejudice, fear, and negative perceptions of out-group members (Kim & Kim, 2024; Schäfer et al., 2024). Online hostility may also influence offline attitudes and behaviors, increasing the likelihood of discrimination, social exclusion, and intergroup conflict (Liu et al., 2024). In multicultural societies, these developments can undermine trust among citizens, weaken social solidarity, and threaten the foundations of peaceful coexistence (Zamri et al., 2023). The effects are particularly concerning among young people, who spend significant portions of their daily lives engaging with digital media and are frequently exposed to diverse forms of online content (Hassim et al., 2024).

At the same time, the digital environment should not be viewed solely as a source of division. Digital platforms also provide opportunities for promoting interfaith understanding, dialogue, and peacebuilding initiatives. Religious organizations, community leaders, educators, and youth groups increasingly utilize social media to disseminate messages of tolerance, mutual respect, and social responsibility (Driessen, 2025). These efforts demonstrate that digital technologies can serve as powerful tools for countering harmful narratives when strategically employed to foster positive engagement and intercultural understanding (King & Owen, 2020).

Given the growing influence of digital communication on religious discourse and social relationships, addressing hate speech and religious polarization has become a critical societal challenge. Effective responses require the involvement of multiple stakeholders, including policymakers, educators, civil society organizations, religious institutions, and young people themselves (Hatano, 2023). In particular, the combined

efforts of religious leaders and youth offer significant potential for promoting constructive dialogue, challenging extremist narratives, and strengthening social harmony in increasingly diverse societies (Sidik & Dilawati, 2025). Understanding the nature and implications of hate speech in the digital era is therefore essential for developing sustainable strategies that support coexistence, social cohesion, and global peace (Suryadi et al., 2026).

**Religious Knowledge Experts and Youth as Peacebuilding Actors**

In this paper, religious knowledge experts and educators refer to individuals with formal or substantial knowledge of religious teachings who contribute to religious education, interpretation, guidance, or community engagement, including lecturers, teachers, ustaz, and ustazah. These actors can play an important role in shaping moral values, guiding ethical behaviour, and strengthening social relationships within communities (Khatib, 2026). In contemporary multicultural societies, their roles extend beyond spiritual instruction to include peacebuilding, conflict resolution, interfaith engagement, and the promotion of social cohesion (Odak, 2024). Through their educational and community-based influence, religious knowledge experts and educators can encourage mutual respect, tolerance, and cooperation across religious and cultural boundaries, positioning them as important actors in addressing religious intolerance, hate speech, and polarization (Hadiyanto et al., 2025)

Religious knowledge experts and educators can contribute to peacebuilding through religious education, moral guidance, interfaith engagement, and community outreach. Values such as compassion, justice, forgiveness, respect for human dignity, and peaceful coexistence can be incorporated into sermons, teaching, community programmes, and interfaith activities to challenge prejudice and encourage constructive interaction. (Bahrudin, 2026; Odak, 2024). Their involvement in interfaith dialogue can provide opportunities for individuals from different religious backgrounds to exchange perspectives, challenge misconceptions, and develop mutual understanding (Pealore et al., 2025; Sahri & Himad Ali, 2025). They can also contribute to countering harmful narratives by challenging misinformation, discrimination, and exclusionary interpretations and by promoting responsible religious communication (Estuningtyas, 2024). The increasing use of digital platforms further provides opportunities for religious educators to communicate peace-oriented messages and engage younger audiences (Wahyuni & Karlina, 2024).

Youth, meanwhile, represent an increasingly important group of peacebuilding actors in digitally mediated societies. Their extensive engagement with social media, peer networks, and online communities provides opportunities for them to participate in digital advocacy, develop counter-narratives, challenge stereotypes, and disseminate messages promoting tolerance and peaceful coexistence (Effendi et al., 2021; Ogenga, 2025; Ragandang, 2020). Beyond their digital roles, youth can also contribute through civic participation, community initiatives, intergroup engagement, and collaborative activities (Maloiy & Cranefield, 2022; Masullo, 2026). Their participation is therefore not limited to being recipients of peace education or guidance; they can also act as active producers and disseminators of peace-oriented knowledge and narratives (Hayvon, 2026; Wielk & Standlee, 2021). This capacity is particularly relevant to addressing contemporary religious polarization, where young people are simultaneously exposed to harmful digital content and positioned to influence the communication environments in which such content circulates.

Although religious knowledge experts and educators and youth can independently contribute to peacebuilding, their capabilities are complementary rather than interchangeable. Religious knowledge experts and educators can contribute substantive religious knowledge, moral and ethical guidance, educational experience, and community connections, while youth can contribute digital competencies, creativity, peer networks, and contemporary communication practices. Bringing these capacities together can create opportunities for knowledge exchange, shared learning, and collaborative peacebuilding across generations. However, existing discussions have given comparatively limited attention to how these complementary capabilities can be systematically integrated through intergenerational collaboration to address religious hate speech and polarization. This provides the basis for considering intergenerational collaboration as a potential mechanism for connecting religious knowledge, community influence, digital engagement, and youth participation within a broader peacebuilding framework.

**Social Cohesion and Intergroup Contact as Theoretical Foundations**

Social cohesion provides an important conceptual foundation for understanding the broader societal outcomes associated with efforts to address religious hate speech and polarization. Although the concept has been defined in different ways, the literature generally emphasizes the quality of social relationships, identification with a broader social unit, and orientation toward the common good. Schiefer & Van Der Noll (2017), through a review of major conceptualizations, identify social relations, identification, and orientation toward the common good as three essential dimensions of social cohesion. These dimensions highlight that social cohesion extends beyond the absence of conflict and involves the development of positive relationships, social connectedness, shared belonging, and willingness to contribute to collective well-being. For the present study, social cohesion is therefore understood as a broader relational and societal condition in which individuals and groups maintain constructive relationships, recognize their shared social membership, and cooperate toward common interests. This perspective is particularly relevant to religiously diverse societies because religious polarization can weaken social relationships and collective identification, whereas constructive engagement across religious boundaries can contribute to stronger social bonds and peaceful coexistence.

Contact Theory provides a complementary perspective by explaining the interpersonal mechanisms through which interaction between social groups may reduce prejudice. Originating from Allport, (1954) contact hypothesis, Contact Theory proposes that interaction between members of different groups can reduce prejudice, particularly when contact occurs under favourable conditions. A large meta-analysis by Pettigrew & Tropp (2006), based on 713 independent samples from 515 studies, found that intergroup contact generally reduces intergroup prejudice and that the effects can be observed across different groups and settings. The analysis further indicates that favourable contact conditions can enhance the effectiveness of contact, although such conditions are not necessarily required for prejudice reduction. Thus, intergroup contact can be understood as an important mechanism through which interaction between religious communities may challenge stereotypes, reduce prejudice, and improve intergroup relations.

The mechanisms underlying the relationship between intergroup contact and prejudice reduction are also important for the present conceptual framework. Pettigrew & Tropp (2008b) found that intergroup contact can reduce prejudice through increased knowledge about the outgroup, reduced anxiety concerning intergroup interaction, and increased empathy and perspective-taking. These mechanisms are particularly relevant to religious polarization because limited interaction between religious communities may allow stereotypes and misconceptions to persist, whereas meaningful interaction can provide opportunities to encounter alternative perspectives and develop more positive perceptions of outgroup members. However Zuma (2014), cautions that Contact Theory is fundamentally concerned with prejudice and its reduction, rather than functioning as a comprehensive theory of intergroup relations. This distinction is important for the present study because intergroup contact is conceptualized as a mechanism rather than the outcome of the proposed model.

The relationship between intergroup contact and social cohesion provides the basis for connecting these theoretical perspectives. Empirical research has demonstrated that structured intergroup contact can contribute not only to reductions in prejudice but also to broader improvements in intergroup relations and social cohesion. For example, Reimer et al., (2021b) evaluated a large-scale intervention among adolescents and examined the potential of intergroup contact to build social cohesion, demonstrating the relevance of contact-based interventions for improving relations between groups. This suggests a conceptual progression from meaningful intergroup contact, through mechanisms such as reduced prejudice, increased empathy, and improved understanding, toward stronger social relationships and social cohesion. Nevertheless, the existing literature does not sufficiently explain how such processes can be organized specifically through collaboration between religious knowledge experts and educators and youth to address religious hate speech and polarization.

Accordingly, this study conceptualizes social cohesion as the broader outcome and intergroup contact as an important relational mechanism within an intergenerational peacebuilding process. Religious knowledge experts and educators can provide religious knowledge, moral and educational guidance, and community connections, while youth can contribute digital competencies, creativity, peer networks, and contemporary communication practices. When these complementary capacities are brought together through

intergenerational collaboration, they may create opportunities for meaningful interaction, knowledge exchange, mutual understanding, and cooperation across religious and generational boundaries. The integration of social cohesion perspectives with Contact Theory therefore provides the theoretical foundation for the proposed Intergenerational Peace Partnership Model (IPPM), in which intergenerational collaboration and four peacebuilding strategies interfaith dialogue, digital advocacy, community-based collaboration, and peace education are conceptualized as pathways toward reducing religious polarization and strengthening social cohesion.

# METHODOLOGY

This study employs a conceptual synthesis and framework development design using an integrative literature review approach to develop the Intergenerational Peace Partnership Model (IPPM). An integrative literature review is appropriate for the present study because it enables the synthesis of diverse forms of literature, including theoretical perspectives and empirical research, to develop a broader conceptual understanding of a complex phenomenon. In this study, the review integrates literature on religious hate speech and polarization, religious knowledge experts and educators, youth agency, intergenerational collaboration, peacebuilding, and the theoretical perspectives of intergroup contact and social cohesion.

A structured literature search was conducted across Scopus, Web of Science, and Google Scholar to identify relevant scholarly literature. Scopus and Web of Science were used as the primary databases for identifying peer-reviewed publications, while Google Scholar served as a supplementary source to identify additional relevant scholarly works. The search focused primarily on literature published between 2020 and 2026 to capture contemporary developments related to digital hate speech, religious polarization, youth participation, and modern peacebuilding practices. Seminal theoretical works published before 2020 were also included where necessary to establish the theoretical foundations of the study, particularly literature relating to intergroup contact and social cohesion.

The literature search employed combinations of keywords and Boolean operators representing the major conceptual domains of the study. The primary search strategy included terms related to religious hate speech and polarization, intergenerational collaboration and youth engagement, religious actors and educators, intergroup contact, and social cohesion. An indicative search string included: ("religious hate speech" OR "religious polarization") AND ("intergenerational collaboration" OR "youth engagement") AND ("religious actors" OR "religious educators") AND ("contact theory" OR "intergroup contact" OR "social cohesion"). Additional combinations and variations of these terms were used where necessary to identify literature relevant to specific components of the proposed framework, including interfaith dialogue, digital advocacy, community-based collaboration, and peace education. To ensure the relevance and academic quality of the literature, the review prioritized peer-reviewed journal articles, scholarly book chapters, and theoretical publications addressing intergroup contact, religious tolerance, religious polarization, digital communication and hate speech, youth participation, interfaith engagement, peacebuilding, or social cohesion. Publications that were not academically credible, opinion-based, or unrelated to the conceptual focus of the study were excluded. Literature published before 2020 was generally excluded from the contemporary review, except for seminal theoretical and foundational works considered necessary for developing the conceptual and theoretical basis of the IPPM.

The conceptual synthesis was conducted through three interconnected stages. First, gap identification involved examining the literature to identify limitations in existing discussions relating to peacebuilding actors, intervention strategies, and theoretical integration. This process resulted in the identification of three central gaps: the limited integration of religious knowledge experts and educators and youth as collaborative actors, the fragmented treatment of peacebuilding strategies, and the limited conceptual connection between intergroup contact and broader social cohesion outcomes.

Second, theoretical integration involved synthesizing intergroup contact and social cohesion perspectives to establish the proposed relationships underlying the model. Intergroup contact was conceptualized as a relational mechanism through which meaningful interaction, cooperation, and engagement across group boundaries may contribute to reduced prejudice and improved intergroup relationships. Social cohesion was

conceptualized as a broader societal outcome associated with stronger social relationships, trust, cooperation, and collective belonging.

Third, framework construction involved integrating the identified actors, collaborative processes, peacebuilding strategies, relational mechanisms, and societal outcomes into the proposed IPPM architecture. Religious knowledge experts and educators and youth were positioned as complementary peacebuilding actors connected through intergenerational collaboration. Four interconnected strategies interfaith dialogue, digital advocacy, community-based collaboration, and peace education were incorporated as pathways through which collaborative activities may facilitate meaningful intergroup contact. The resulting relational outcomes, including reduced prejudice, mutual understanding, empathy, trust, and cooperation, were subsequently linked to the broader objective of strengthening social cohesion and supporting peaceful coexistence.

The resulting IPPM should therefore be understood as a conceptually derived framework based on the integration and synthesis of existing literature and theoretical perspectives rather than an empirically validated model. The proposed relationships represent theoretically informed pathways that require further empirical examination and validation across different religious, cultural, and social contexts.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The persistence of religious hate speech and polarization in digitally connected societies highlights the need for peacebuilding approaches that address both the social and communicative dimensions of intergroup relations. As discussed in the preceding literature, religious hate speech can reinforce prejudice, mistrust, and social division, while digital environments can facilitate the rapid circulation of polarizing narratives. Although digital platforms can contribute to these challenges, they also provide opportunities for constructive communication, interfaith engagement, and peace-oriented advocacy. Addressing these challenges therefore requires approaches that do not focus exclusively on suppressing harmful content but also strengthen the social relationships, understanding, and cooperation necessary for peaceful coexistence. Within this context, religious knowledge experts and educators and youth represent complementary peacebuilding actors. Religious knowledge experts and educators, including lecturers, teachers, ustaz, and ustazah, can contribute religious knowledge, moral and ethical guidance, educational influence, and community connections. Youth, meanwhile, can contribute digital competencies, creativity, peer networks, and capacities for contemporary communication and community mobilisation. These capabilities are particularly relevant to the contemporary nature of religious polarization, which occurs across both physical and digital spaces. However, examining these actors independently may overlook the potential of combining their different forms of knowledge, experience, influence, and communication capabilities. Intergenerational collaboration therefore provides a basis for connecting religious and educational knowledge with youth-oriented digital and participatory capacities.

The need for IPPM also arises from the fragmented treatment of peacebuilding strategies in existing literature. Interfaith dialogue, digital advocacy, community-based collaboration, and peace education each provide potentially important avenues for addressing religious tensions, but they are often conceptualized as distinct approaches. An intergenerational perspective provides an opportunity to integrate these strategies according to the complementary capabilities of religious knowledge experts and youth. For example, religious knowledge experts and educators can contribute substantive religious knowledge and ethical guidance to peace-oriented communication, while youth can support the development and dissemination of such messages through contemporary digital platforms. Similarly, both groups can jointly participate in interfaith dialogue, community activities, and peace education. The proposed model therefore conceptualizes these strategies not as isolated interventions, but as interconnected avenues through which intergenerational collaboration can be translated into peacebuilding practice. The theoretical foundation established in this paper further supports the development of IPPM. Contact Theory provides an explanation of how meaningful interaction between groups can reduce prejudice and improve intergroup relations, particularly when contact involves favourable conditions such as cooperation and shared goals (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006, 2008b). At the same time, social cohesion scholarship emphasizes the importance of social relationships, belonging, trust, participation, and orientation toward the common good in maintaining cohesive societies (Schiefer & Van Der Noll, 2017). These perspectives allow the proposed model to distinguish between intergroup contact as an important

relational mechanism and social cohesion as a broader societal outcome. Thus, intergenerational collaboration can create opportunities for meaningful interaction and knowledge exchange, while the resulting reductions in prejudice and improvements in understanding and cooperation may contribute to stronger social cohesion.

Based on these considerations, the Intergenerational Peace Partnership Model (IPPM) is proposed as an integrated conceptual framework that connects complementary peacebuilding actors, collaborative processes, peacebuilding strategies, relational mechanisms, and societal outcomes. The model brings together religious knowledge experts and educators and youth through intergenerational collaboration, operationalized through four interconnected strategies: interfaith dialogue, digital advocacy, community-based collaboration, and peace education. These strategies are conceptualized as pathways through which the complementary knowledge, influence, and capabilities of both groups can facilitate meaningful intergroup contact, thereby contributing to mutual understanding, reduced prejudice, empathy, trust, and cooperation. These relational outcomes, in turn, may contribute to stronger social cohesion and peaceful coexistence while supporting efforts to counter religious hate speech and polarization. The value of IPPM therefore lies not in proposing another isolated peacebuilding intervention, but in integrating existing actors, strategies, and theoretical mechanisms into a coherent intergenerational peacebuilding framework. The following figure presents the proposed relationships among these components and illustrates how intergenerational collaboration may translate complementary capabilities into peacebuilding processes and, ultimately, broader social cohesion.

**Proposed Relationships of the Intergenerational Peace Partnership Model**

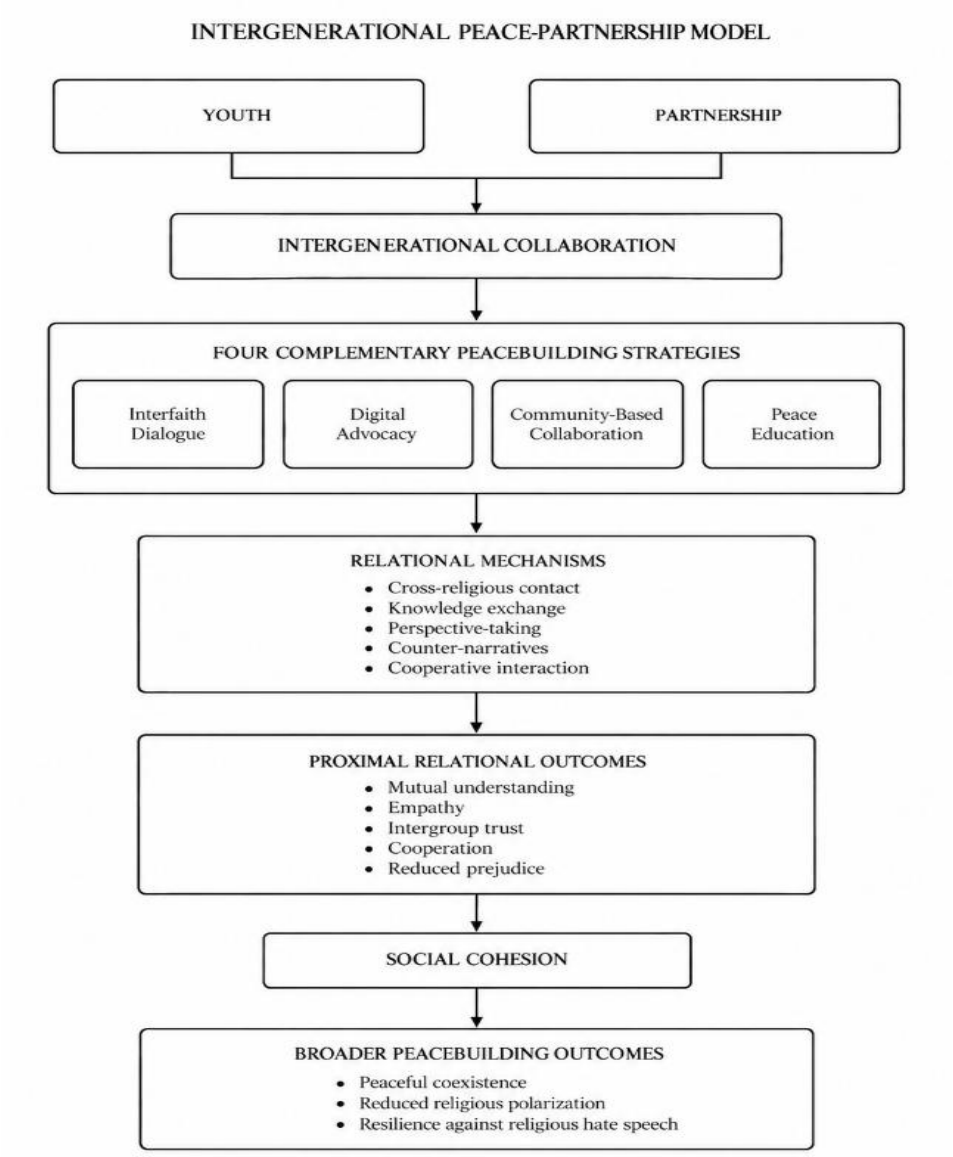


**Figure 1: Intergenerational Peace Partnership Model (IPPM)**

Figure 1 presents the proposed Intergenerational Peace Partnership Model (IPPM) as a multi-level conceptual process linking peacebuilding actors, intergenerational collaboration, complementary peacebuilding strategies, relational mechanisms, proximal relational outcomes, and broader societal outcomes. The model distinguishes intergenerational collaboration from cross-religious intergroup contact. Intergenerational collaboration represents the process through which religious knowledge experts and educators and youth combine their complementary capacities, whereas cross-religious intergroup contact represents one relational mechanism through which specific peacebuilding strategies may influence relations between religious groups.

The IPPM proposes that religious knowledge experts and educators and youth function as complementary peacebuilding actors whose distinct capacities can be brought together through intergenerational collaboration. Religious knowledge experts and educators contribute religious knowledge, moral and ethical guidance, educational influence, and community connections, while youth contribute digital competencies, creativity, peer networks, contemporary communication practices, and capacities for civic and community engagement. The model therefore positions intergenerational collaboration as the central collaborative process through which these complementary capacities may be combined and translated into collective peacebuilding action.

Intergenerational collaboration is proposed to operate through four complementary peacebuilding strategies: interfaith dialogue, digital advocacy, community-based collaboration, and peace education. These strategies are positioned at the same conceptual level and are not treated as sequential stages. Interfaith dialogue may provide opportunities for participants from different religious backgrounds to exchange perspectives, clarify misconceptions, and develop mutual understanding. Community-based collaboration may facilitate cooperation through shared activities and common goals across religious boundaries. Digital advocacy may extend peacebuilding into online environments through constructive communication, counter-narratives, and responses to harmful or polarizing discourse. Peace education may strengthen knowledge, values, critical reflection, tolerance, and awareness of peaceful coexistence.

The model further proposes that these strategies may influence intergroup relations through multiple, partially overlapping relational mechanisms. Interfaith dialogue may facilitate cross-religious intergroup contact, knowledge exchange, and perspective-taking. Community-based collaboration may promote cross-religious intergroup contact and cooperative interaction through shared activities and common goals. Digital advocacy may contribute through counter-narratives and knowledge exchange by challenging harmful or misleading representations and presenting constructive alternative perspectives. Peace education may support knowledge exchange and perspective-taking by helping participants engage with religious differences, reconsider misconceptions, and develop more constructive understandings of other religious groups. These mechanisms are not mutually exclusive and may operate simultaneously across different peacebuilding activities.

Within the model, cross-religious intergroup contact is therefore distinguished from intergenerational collaboration. Intergenerational collaboration refers to how religious knowledge experts and educators and youth work together as peacebuilding partners, whereas cross-religious intergroup contact refers to meaningful interaction between members of different religious groups. This distinction is important because Contact Theory is used in the IPPM to explain how constructive interaction across religious boundaries may contribute to improvements in intergroup relations, rather than to explain collaboration between generations itself.

Through these relational mechanisms, the model proposes that participants may develop greater mutual understanding, empathy, intergroup trust, and cooperation, alongside reduced prejudice. These are conceptualized as proximal relational outcomes because they represent changes in the quality of intergroup relationships rather than social cohesion itself.

In particular, meaningful interaction, cooperative activities, knowledge exchange, perspective-taking, and constructive communication may help participants challenge stereotypes, reconsider negative assumptions, and develop more positive orientations toward members of other religious groups.

The IPPM further proposes that improvements in these relational outcomes may contribute to broader social cohesion. Greater mutual understanding, reduced prejudice, empathy, intergroup trust, and cooperation may strengthen social relationships, encourage constructive participation across religious boundaries, and support

orientation toward shared social interests. The model does not assume that individual-level changes automatically produce social cohesion. Rather, it proposes that when positive intergroup relationships become sustained and more widely embedded in community and social interaction, they may contribute to stronger social cohesion.

Stronger social cohesion may, in turn, support broader peacebuilding outcomes, including peaceful coexistence, reduced religious polarization, and greater resilience against the divisive effects of religious hate speech. These outcomes represent the longer-term societal orientation of the model. Religious hate speech is therefore not treated only as an initial problem motivating the framework, but also as a broader social challenge that stronger intergroup relationships and social cohesion may help societies resist and counter.

Accordingly, the IPPM conceptualizes peacebuilding as an interconnected process linking peacebuilding actors, intergenerational collaboration, complementary peacebuilding strategies, relational mechanisms, proximal relational outcomes, social cohesion, and broader peacebuilding outcomes. The proposed relationships are theoretically informed rather than empirically established and therefore require future empirical testing across different religious, cultural, and social contexts.

**Theoretical Contribution of the IPPM**

The primary theoretical contribution of the Intergenerational Peace Partnership Model (IPPM) lies in its integration of peacebuilding actors, intergenerational collaboration, complementary peacebuilding strategies, relational mechanisms, proximal relational outcomes, and broader societal outcomes within a single conceptual framework. Rather than conceptualizing religious knowledge experts and educators and youth as independent contributors to peacebuilding, the model positions them as complementary actors whose different capacities can be brought together through intergenerational collaboration. Religious knowledge experts and educators contribute religious knowledge, moral and ethical guidance, educational influence, and community connections, while youth contribute digital competencies, creativity, peer networks, contemporary communication practices, and capacities for civic and community engagement. The IPPM therefore conceptualizes intergenerational collaboration as a central process through which these complementary capacities may be combined and translated into collective peacebuilding action.

A second theoretical contribution lies in the integration of interfaith dialogue, digital advocacy, community-based collaboration, and peace education as four complementary peacebuilding strategies operating at the same conceptual level. Existing peacebuilding literature often discusses these approaches separately or within particular intervention contexts. The IPPM instead proposes that they can function as interconnected strategies through which intergenerational collaboration is expressed across interpersonal, community, educational, and digital environments. This integrated perspective is particularly relevant to contemporary religious hate speech and polarization because these challenges occur across both offline and online spaces. Interfaith dialogue and community-based collaboration may provide opportunities for direct engagement and cooperation across religious boundaries, while digital advocacy and peace education may extend peacebuilding through communication, learning, and the development of more constructive understandings of religious difference.

A further contribution of the model is that it does not assume that all peacebuilding strategies operate through a single mechanism. Instead, the IPPM proposes five partially overlapping relational mechanisms: cross-religious intergroup contact, knowledge exchange, perspective-taking, counter-narratives, and cooperative interaction. This distinction allows the model to recognize that different strategies may influence intergroup relations through different pathways. Interfaith dialogue and community-based collaboration may more directly facilitate cross-religious intergroup contact and cooperative interaction, whereas digital advocacy may contribute through counter-narratives and knowledge exchange. Peace education may further support knowledge exchange and perspective-taking. These mechanisms are not mutually exclusive and may operate simultaneously within particular peacebuilding activities.

The distinction between intergenerational collaboration and cross-religious intergroup contact is particularly important to the theoretical structure of the IPPM. Intergenerational collaboration refers to the process through which religious knowledge experts and educators and youth work together as peacebuilding partners, whereas cross-religious intergroup contact refers to meaningful interaction between members of different religious

groups. This distinction clarifies the role of Contact Theory within the model. Contact Theory is used to explain how constructive interaction across religious boundaries may contribute to improved intergroup relations, rather than to explain collaboration between generations itself.

The IPPM further proposes that these relational mechanisms may contribute to a set of proximal relational outcomes, namely greater mutual understanding, empathy, intergroup trust, cooperation, and reduced prejudice. These outcomes are conceptually distinguished from social cohesion because they concern more immediate changes in the quality of intergroup relationships. Cross-religious intergroup contact, knowledge exchange, perspective-taking, counter-narratives, and cooperative interaction may support these outcomes by enabling participants to encounter different perspectives, engage constructively across religious boundaries, and develop more positive orientations toward members of other religious groups.

A further theoretical contribution lies in connecting these proximal relational outcomes with the broader concept of social cohesion. Social cohesion is not treated as an immediate consequence of participation in a single peacebuilding activity. Rather, the model proposes that sustained improvements in mutual understanding, empathy, intergroup trust, cooperation, and reduced prejudice may contribute to stronger social relationships and more constructive engagement across religious boundaries. In this way, the IPPM links the interpersonal and relational processes emphasized by Contact Theory with the broader societal dimensions emphasized in social cohesion scholarship.

The model therefore provides a multi-level conceptual pathway from collaborative peacebuilding processes to broader societal outcomes. Stronger social cohesion may, over time, support peaceful coexistence, reduced religious polarization, and greater resilience against the divisive effects of religious hate speech. This progression should be understood as theoretically proposed rather than empirically established. The contribution of the IPPM therefore lies not only in bringing together existing actors and strategies, but also in specifying how intergenerational collaboration, differentiated relational mechanisms, proximal relational outcomes, and social cohesion may be conceptually connected within a coherent peacebuilding framework.

**Friction and Power Dynamics in Intergenerational Peacebuilding**

Although the IPPM emphasizes the complementary capacities of youth actors and religious experts and educators, intergenerational collaboration should not be assumed to occur under conditions of equal authority, influence, or participation. Differences in age, institutional position, religious authority, educational status, access to organizational resources, and control over programme agendas may shape whose knowledge is recognized and whose contributions influence decision-making. The presence of youth within a peacebuilding initiative therefore does not necessarily indicate meaningful intergenerational collaboration.

A particular concern is the possibility of tokenistic youth participation. Youth actors may be invited to attend activities, disseminate messages, or provide a visible youth presence while having limited influence over programme objectives, religious interpretations, communication strategies, or decision-making processes. Such arrangements would weaken the collaborative premise of the IPPM because youth would function primarily as recipients or implementers of adult-defined agendas rather than as substantive peacebuilding partners. Meaningful intergenerational collaboration therefore requires more than representation. It involves opportunities for reciprocal learning, substantive participation, shared decision-making, and recognition of the different forms of knowledge and experience contributed by participating actors.

Power asymmetries may also operate through assumptions about expertise. Religious experts and educators may possess theological, educational, or institutional authority, but they may have less familiarity with contemporary digital communication practices, youth cultures, or rapidly changing online environments. Youth actors may therefore possess forms of practical, digital, and peer-network knowledge that are essential to contemporary peacebuilding. Recognizing these different forms of expertise can help shift intergenerational engagement from one-directional instruction toward reciprocal collaboration.

The quality of intergenerational participation should consequently be understood as an important condition affecting the operation of the IPPM. Institutional arrangements that provide opportunities for shared agenda-

setting, transparent decision-making, reciprocal knowledge exchange, and joint responsibility for peacebuilding activities may help reduce tokenistic participation and hierarchical relationships. Future empirical research should examine how different distributions of authority and decision-making power influence intergenerational collaboration and the relational outcomes proposed in the model.

**Actor Heterogeneity and Boundary Conditions of the IPPM**

The IPPM does not assume that youth actors or religious experts and educators are inherently peace-oriented. Both groups are internally diverse, and their participation in peacebuilding may be shaped by religious interpretations, ideological commitments, political orientations, institutional environments, prior intergroup attitudes, and willingness to engage constructively with religious difference. The capacities associated with each actor group should therefore be understood as potential resources for peacebuilding rather than as characteristics that automatically produce peace-oriented behaviour.

For youth actors, digital competence, peer-network influence, and creativity may support constructive advocacy, but the same capacities can also be used to circulate divisive narratives, misinformation, or exclusionary discourse. Similarly, religious experts and educators may contribute ethical guidance and religious knowledge to peacebuilding, but religious authority can also be exercised through interpretations or communication practices that reinforce social boundaries or antagonistic attitudes. The effectiveness of intergenerational collaboration therefore depends not only on the presence of particular actors but also on their willingness to engage in non-violent, dialogical, and cooperative forms of intergroup interaction.

The IPPM is consequently most directly applicable to contexts in which participating actors demonstrate at least a baseline willingness to engage in dialogue, reciprocal learning, cooperation, and peaceful interaction across religious differences. This represents an important boundary condition of the model. The framework should not be interpreted as assuming that the same processes will operate in identical ways among actors holding strongly exclusionary, antagonistic, or extremist orientations.

Where participants hold deeply antagonistic intergroup attitudes, additional trust-building, disengagement, mediation, psychosocial, educational, or institutional interventions may be required before the collaborative processes proposed by the IPPM can operate effectively. The applicability of the model to strongly radicalized or exclusionary actors therefore requires separate empirical investigation and should not be assumed from the present conceptual framework.

Institutional context is also likely to shape the model's operation. Supportive schools, universities, religious institutions, community organizations, and civil society settings may provide opportunities for sustained collaboration and cross-religious engagement, whereas highly polarized or restrictive environments may limit participation and reinforce existing hierarchies. The IPPM should therefore be understood as context-sensitive rather than universally self-activating.

**Digital Advocacy and Platform Ecology**

Digital advocacy represents an important component of the IPPM because religious hate speech and polarization increasingly circulate through digitally mediated communication. However, digital advocacy does not occur within a neutral communication environment. Its effectiveness may be shaped by platform architectures, recommendation systems, engagement-driven content distribution, echo-chamber dynamics, trolling, coordinated harassment, misinformation, and uneven visibility of peace-oriented content. These conditions may influence whether constructive messages reach intended audiences or remain confined to already supportive networks.

Algorithmically mediated environments may create particular challenges because emotionally provocative or polarizing material can attract substantial engagement and visibility. Peace-oriented messages may therefore compete with content that is more sensational, confrontational, or identity-affirming. Echo chambers and selective exposure may further reduce the likelihood that counter-narratives reach individuals who hold strongly negative attitudes toward other religious groups. Digital advocacy within the IPPM should consequently be understood not simply as the production of positive messages, but as communication

undertaken within complex platform environments that may both enable and constrain peacebuilding.

Intergenerational collaboration may nevertheless provide practical advantages in navigating these environments. Religious experts and educators can contribute theological interpretation, religious contextualization, ethical guidance, and credibility, while youth actors can contribute familiarity with platform conventions, contemporary communication styles, visual formats, audience engagement, and peer-network dynamics. Collaborative production may therefore combine substantive religious knowledge with communication practices suited to digital environments.

For example, a religious educator and youth actors might jointly develop short-form video explainers addressing misleading or exclusionary interpretations of religious teachings. Youth actors could contribute platform-specific presentation, editing, storytelling, and distribution strategies, while the religious expert or educator could contribute theological context and review the content for interpretive accuracy and ethical framing. Similarly, collaborative livestreams or moderated digital dialogues could bring together religious educators and youth participants from different communities to respond to misconceptions and encourage constructive engagement.

Digital advocacy may also involve coordinated counter-narrative campaigns in response to harmful or polarizing religious content. Youth actors may identify emerging narratives or communication trends within digital spaces, while religious experts and educators contribute contextual responses that challenge distorted interpretations without reproducing hostile rhetoric. Such collaboration may strengthen the credibility, accessibility, and relevance of peace-oriented communication.

At the same time, digital advocacy should not be treated as a substitute for meaningful interpersonal or community engagement. Online communication may extend the reach of peacebuilding activities, but exposure to constructive content does not necessarily produce sustained changes in intergroup attitudes. Within the IPPM, digital advocacy is therefore conceptualized as complementary to interfaith dialogue, community-based collaboration, and peace education rather than as an independent solution to religious hate speech and polarization.

**Practical and Policy Implications**

From a practical perspective, the IPPM provides a framework that may support the design of collaborative peacebuilding initiatives involving religious knowledge experts, educators, and youth. Religious institutions, educational organizations, universities, schools, civil society organizations, and community groups may use the model as a guide for developing initiatives that combine religious and ethical knowledge with youth participation, digital engagement, and community action. Rather than positioning youth primarily as recipients of religious or peace education, the model emphasizes their potential role as active partners in the design, implementation, and communication of peacebuilding initiatives.

The model also suggests that peacebuilding programmes should not assume that all interventions influence intergroup relations in the same way. Interfaith dialogue and community-based collaboration may be particularly useful for creating opportunities for cross-religious intergroup contact and cooperative interaction. Digital advocacy may support peacebuilding through counter-narratives and knowledge exchange in online environments, while peace education may strengthen knowledge exchange and perspective-taking. Designing initiatives around these different mechanisms may help practitioners align activities more closely with their intended relational outcomes.

This has practical implications for programme design. Interfaith dialogue initiatives, for example, may be strengthened when participants are provided with meaningful opportunities to engage across religious boundaries rather than merely attend symbolic events. Community-based collaboration may be more effective when participants work together around shared tasks or common goals. Digital advocacy initiatives may benefit from involving youth in the development and dissemination of constructive counter-narratives, while religious knowledge experts and educators can contribute contextual, religious, and ethical guidance. Peace education initiatives may similarly be strengthened when they encourage knowledge exchange and perspective-taking rather than relying only on one-way transmission of information.

The IPPM further suggests that peacebuilding initiatives should aim not only to deliver activities but also to strengthen specific relational outcomes. Programmes informed by the model may therefore consider whether their activities contribute to greater mutual understanding, empathy, intergroup trust, cooperation, and reduced prejudice. These relational outcomes may provide useful indicators for assessing whether intergenerational peacebuilding activities are contributing to the broader objective of stronger social cohesion.

At the policy level, the IPPM highlights the importance of supporting sustained intergenerational participation in initiatives related to interfaith engagement, social cohesion, digital citizenship, peace education, and hate-speech prevention. Policymakers and relevant institutions may consider creating platforms that enable religious knowledge experts, educators, and youth to collaborate as partners rather than as separate stakeholder groups. Such initiatives may include intergenerational interfaith programmes, youth-led digital campaigns supported by religious educators, collaborative community projects, and peace education activities that promote constructive engagement across religious differences.

The model also suggests that policy responses to religious hate speech and polarization should extend beyond isolated or short-term interventions. Policies may be more effective when they support sustained partnerships that combine community-based, educational, and digitally mediated approaches. In this respect, IPPM offers a conceptual basis for coordinating different forms of peacebuilding activity while recognizing that their effects may operate through different relational mechanisms.

Nevertheless, because the model has not yet been empirically validated, these practical and policy implications should be understood as theoretically informed directions that require further testing across different religious, cultural, and social contexts.

## LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

Despite its potential contribution, the Intergenerational Peace Partnership Model (IPPM) remains a conceptual model and has not yet been empirically tested. The proposed relationships among peacebuilding actors, intergenerational collaboration, complementary peacebuilding strategies, relational mechanisms, proximal relational outcomes, social cohesion, and broader peacebuilding outcomes are derived from the theoretical and conceptual synthesis presented in this paper. Consequently, the model should not be interpreted as demonstrating direct causal relationships. The proposed pathways are theoretically informed and require empirical examination to determine whether, how, and under what conditions they operate across different religious, cultural, and national contexts.

A further limitation is that the model assumes that intergenerational collaboration can facilitate constructive peacebuilding processes, but the quality and effectiveness of such collaboration may vary considerably across contexts. Differences in authority, institutional roles, religious traditions, generational expectations, levels of digital competence, and opportunities for meaningful participation may shape how religious knowledge experts, educators, and youth work together.

Future research should therefore examine the conditions that strengthen or constrain intergenerational collaboration, including whether collaboration involves meaningful participation, shared decision-making, reciprocal learning, and sustained engagement rather than symbolic or tokenistic involvement.

The proposed relational mechanisms also require further empirical clarification. The IPPM identifies cross-religious intergroup contact, knowledge exchange, perspective-taking, counter-narratives, and cooperative interaction as mechanisms through which peacebuilding strategies may influence intergroup relations. However, these mechanisms may not operate with equal strength across all four strategies. Future studies should examine which mechanisms are most relevant to interfaith dialogue, digital advocacy, community-based collaboration, and peace education, as well as whether multiple mechanisms operate simultaneously or interact with one another in particular settings.

Future research should also investigate the proposed proximal relational outcomes of mutual understanding, empathy, intergroup trust, cooperation, and reduced prejudice. Although these outcomes are conceptually related, they should not be assumed to occur automatically or simultaneously. Research is needed to determine

whether particular mechanisms are more strongly associated with specific relational outcomes and whether improvements in these outcomes are sustained over time. Longitudinal research would be particularly valuable for examining whether short-term changes in attitudes and relationships develop into more durable forms of intergroup trust and cooperation.

Another important limitation concerns the proposed relationship between proximal relational outcomes and broader social cohesion. The IPPM conceptualizes social cohesion as a broader societal outcome rather than an immediate consequence of individual participation in peacebuilding activities. However, the process through which changes at the interpersonal or intergroup level become more widely embedded within communities and societies has not yet been empirically established. Future research should therefore examine how improvements in mutual understanding, empathy, trust, cooperation, and reduced prejudice may accumulate, diffuse, or become institutionalized in ways that contribute to stronger social cohesion.

Future studies could begin with qualitative research involving religious knowledge experts, educators, youth, community leaders, and participants in interfaith or peacebuilding initiatives. Interviews and focus groups could explore how different stakeholders understand intergenerational collaboration, how they perceive the four proposed peacebuilding strategies, which relational mechanisms they consider most important, and what barriers may limit the effectiveness of the model. Expert validation methods, such as a Delphi study, could also be used to assess the conceptual clarity, relevance, and coherence of the IPPM components and proposed relationships.

Subsequent research could employ quantitative or mixed-method approaches to test specific relationships within the model. Survey-based studies could examine associations among intergenerational collaboration, participation in interfaith dialogue, digital advocacy, community-based collaboration, and peace education, as well as the proposed relational mechanisms and outcomes. However, because the IPPM is a newly proposed conceptual framework, future quantitative studies should first ensure that its major constructs are clearly operationalized and measured reliably before testing the full model.

Longitudinal, quasi-experimental, or intervention-based research could provide stronger evidence regarding the direction and durability of the proposed relationships. For example, studies could examine whether participation in intergenerational peacebuilding programmes leads to changes in cross-religious intergroup contact, knowledge exchange, perspective-taking, counter-narratives, cooperative interaction, and subsequent relational outcomes over time. Comparative studies could further investigate whether the strength or relevance of these pathways varies across different religious communities, institutional settings, cultural contexts, and national environments.

Finally, future research should examine whether stronger social cohesion is associated with broader peacebuilding outcomes such as peaceful coexistence, reduced religious polarization, and greater resilience against the divisive effects of religious hate speech. These broader outcomes are likely to be influenced by multiple social, political, institutional, and digital factors beyond the scope of the present model. Empirical research should therefore avoid assuming that the IPPM alone can explain these outcomes and instead assess its contribution alongside other contextual influences.

Overall, future research should proceed incrementally by first validating the conceptual components and proposed relationships of the IPPM, then developing appropriate measures, testing specific pathways, and subsequently evaluating the model across different contexts. Such research would be necessary to refine, validate, or modify the IPPM and to determine its practical applicability in addressing religious hate speech, reducing religious polarization, strengthening social cohesion, and supporting peaceful coexistence.

## CONCLUSION

Religious hate speech and polarization present significant challenges to social relationships, social cohesion, and peaceful coexistence in increasingly diverse and digitally connected societies. These challenges are further exacerbated when religious hate speech and polarization originating on digital platforms spill over into the offline world, resulting in physical violence against individuals and undermining public order. Addressing these challenges requires approaches that extend beyond isolated interventions and recognize the

complementary roles of different social actors. This paper has highlighted the potential contributions of religious knowledge experts and educators and youth, whose respective strengths in religious and educational knowledge, moral and ethical guidance, community connections, digital competencies, creativity, peer networks, and contemporary communication practices can be brought together through intergenerational collaboration.

In response to the identified actor, intervention, and theoretical gaps, this paper proposes the Intergenerational Peace Partnership Model (IPPM) as an integrated conceptual framework for understanding how intergenerational collaboration may contribute to efforts to address religious hate speech and polarization. The model positions intergenerational collaboration as the central collaborative process connecting religious knowledge experts and educators and youth and proposes four complementary peacebuilding strategies: interfaith dialogue, digital advocacy, community-based collaboration, and peace education.

Rather than assuming that all four strategies operate through a single pathway, the IPPM identifies five partially overlapping relational mechanisms: cross-religious intergroup contact, knowledge exchange, perspective-taking, counter-narratives, and cooperative interaction. Through these mechanisms, peacebuilding activities may contribute to greater mutual understanding, empathy, intergroup trust, cooperation, and reduced prejudice. These proximal relational outcomes may, when sustained and more widely embedded in social relationships, contribute to stronger social cohesion.

The model further proposes that stronger social cohesion may support broader peacebuilding outcomes, including peaceful coexistence, reduced religious polarization, and greater resilience against the divisive effects of religious hate speech. In this way, the IPPM connects peacebuilding actors, collaborative processes, complementary strategies, relational mechanisms, proximal relational outcomes, and broader societal outcomes within a single conceptual framework.

The primary contribution of the IPPM lies in providing a coherent intergenerational framework that distinguishes intergenerational collaboration from cross-religious intergroup contact while integrating interpersonal, community, educational, and digital dimensions of peacebuilding. The model therefore provides a conceptual basis for understanding how collaboration between religious knowledge experts and educators and youth may strengthen intergroup relations and contribute to broader social cohesion.

Nevertheless, the IPPM remains a conceptually derived model and should not be interpreted as demonstrating causal relationships among its components. Future research is needed to validate its constructs, examine the proposed mechanisms and relationships, and determine how the model operates under different religious, cultural, institutional, and national conditions. Such research would help refine the IPPM and assess its practical relevance for strengthening social cohesion, supporting peaceful coexistence, reducing religious polarization, and increasing resilience against religious hate speech.

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