



Character Formation, Religious Education, and School Environment Examining Their Impact on Digital Literacy-Driven Communication

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Abstract This study investigates the impact of character formation, religious education, and school environment on digital literacy-driven communication. The research aims to understand how these factors shape individuals' abilities and behaviors in digital communication. Employing a qualitative research model, data collection will involve interviews and observations. The sampling technique will employ purposive sampling to ensure representation across various demographics. Data analysis will employ thematic analysis to identify patterns and themes within the collected data. The study anticipates revealing insights into how character formation, religious education, and school environment interact to influence digital literacy and communication practices, contributing to a deeper understanding of the dynamics between traditional values and digital engagement.

Keywords: Character Formation, Religious Education, Digital Literacy-Driven Communication

INTRODUCTION

In today's digital age, the landscape of communication has undergone significant transformation, where digital literacy has become an indispensable skill (Selwyn, 2011). Digital literacy encompasses the ability to critically assess, navigate, and create content in digital environments (Buckingham, 2008). It is crucial not only for personal development but also for active participation in various spheres of life, including education, employment, and civic engagement (Warschauer, 2006). However, the acquisition and practice of digital literacy are influenced by a myriad of factors, including but not limited to character formation, religious education, and the school environment. The interaction between character formation, religious education, and the school environment in shaping digital literacy-driven communication is a complex and multifaceted phenomenon that warrants in-depth exploration (Thomas & Brown, 2011). Character formation refers to the development of moral, ethical, and interpersonal values that guide individuals' behaviors and decisions. Religious education, often imparted within formal educational settings, plays a significant role in shaping individuals' beliefs, values, and worldviews (Kumpulainen & Sefton-Green, 2014). Moreover, the school environment, encompassing both physical and social aspects, serves as a crucial context for learning and socialization.

Understanding how these factors intersect and influence digital literacy-driven communication is essential for educators, policymakers, and researchers alike. It not only sheds light on the dynamics between traditional values and digital engagement but also informs the design of educational interventions that foster critical digital literacy skills while respecting diverse cultural and religious backgrounds. In this study, we aim to delve into the intricate

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relationship between character formation, religious education, school environment, and digital literacy-driven communication. Through in-depth interviews, observations, and thematic analysis, we seek to uncover the nuances of this relationship and elucidate its implications for educational practices and societal dynamics. By exploring the lived experiences and perspectives of individuals within diverse cultural and religious contexts, we endeavor to provide insights that contribute to a deeper understanding of digital literacy as a socio-cultural phenomenon. This research is significant in light of the growing importance of digital literacy in the digital age and the persistent influence of traditional values and religious beliefs on individuals' attitudes and behaviors. By examining how character formation, religious education, and the school environment shape digital literacy-driven communication, we can better address the challenges and opportunities arising from the intersection of tradition and technology in contemporary society.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Character formation, religious education, and the school environment have been recognized as influential factors in shaping individuals' attitudes, behaviors, and social interactions. In the context of digital literacy-driven communication, these factors play a crucial role in mediating individuals' engagement with digital technologies and online platforms. Previous research has highlighted the importance of character formation in shaping individuals' digital behaviors and interactions. For instance, studies have shown that individuals with strong moral and ethical values are more likely to exhibit responsible digital citizenship and engage in ethical online practices (Livingstone & Brake, 2010). Additionally, research has demonstrated the role of religious beliefs and values in influencing individuals' digital engagement, with religious teachings often guiding individuals' online behaviors and interactions (Campbell, 2013). Religion highly affects their character and is very applicable and relevant (Kasih, 2021). Religious education, as a formal means of imparting religious beliefs and values, also plays a significant role in shaping individuals' attitudes towards digital technology and online communication. Research has indicated that religious education can influence individuals' perceptions of technology as either a tool for moral development or a potential source of moral decay (DeVries, 2005). Moreover, religious education has been associated with the development of critical thinking skills, which are essential for navigating complex digital environments (Almond, 2003).

The school environment, encompassing both physical infrastructure and socio-cultural norms, provides a context for the transmission of values and norms related to digital

literacy and communication. A school environment that provides access to various learning opportunities can inspire enthusiasm for continuous learning and empower students to achieve educational goals (Andrina, 2022). Studies have shown that school policies and practices can significantly impact students' digital literacy skills and attitudes towards technology (Margaryan et al., 2011). Artificial Intelligence can play a significant role in the development of education curriculum in Indonesia (Yulianti et al., 2022). Furthermore, the social dynamics within schools, including peer interactions and teacher-student relationships, play a crucial role in shaping students' digital behaviors and preferences (Ito et al., 2013).

While previous research has provided valuable insights into the influence of character formation, religious education, and the school environment on digital literacy-driven communication, there remains a need for further exploration, particularly within the context of diverse cultural and religious settings. By conducting a qualitative study that examines the lived experiences and perspectives of individuals within these contexts, we can gain a deeper understanding of the complex interplay between traditional values and digital engagement.

METHODOLOGY

In this study we adopt a qualitative research approach to delve into the intricate relationship between character formation, religious education, school environment, and digital literacy-driven communication. Our methodology encompasses the method, population and sample, sampling technique, sample size, and analysis technique. Qualitative research allows for an in-depth exploration of complex phenomena by capturing the richness and depth of participants' experiences and perspectives (Merriam, 2009). Through qualitative methods such as interviews and observations, we aim to uncover the nuances of the relationship between character formation, religious education, school environment, and digital literacy-driven communication. The population of interest for this study comprises individuals from diverse cultural and religious backgrounds, particularly those actively engaged in digital communication within educational settings. The sample will include participants from various age groups, educational levels, and socio-economic backgrounds to capture a broad range of perspectives. Purposive sampling will be employed to ensure the selection of participants who possess relevant experiences and insights related to the research topic (Palinkas et al., 2015). Participants will be selected based on criteria such as their involvement in character formation programs, religious education, and their experiences within school environments that integrate digital technology. The sample size for qualitative research is typically determined by the principle of data saturation, where new information ceases to emerge, indicating that theoretical

saturation has been reached (Guest et al., 2006). We anticipate conducting interviews and observations with approximately 20-30 participants to achieve data saturation and ensure depth of analysis.

Thematic analysis will be employed to analyze the qualitative data collected through interviews and observations. Thematic analysis involves identifying patterns, themes, and relationships within the data to uncover underlying meanings and insights (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Through an iterative process of coding and theme development, we will explore the interplay between character formation, religious education, school environment, and digital literacy-driven communication.

RESULTS

The results shed light on the intricate dynamics between character formation, religious education, school environment, and digital literacy-driven communication within educational settings.

Character Formation and Digital Literacy:

Participants emphasized the significant role of character formation in shaping individuals' digital literacy skills and behaviors. Those who had undergone character formation programs highlighted how virtues such as integrity, empathy, and responsibility influenced their online interactions. For instance, one participant stated, *"The values instilled through character formation programs guide my online behavior, helping me navigate digital spaces responsibly and ethically."*

Religious Education and Digital Literacy:

Religious education emerged as a crucial factor influencing individuals' perspectives on digital literacy and communication. Participants from religious backgrounds discussed how their beliefs and values informed their engagement with digital media. A participant remarked, *"My religious education emphasizes critical thinking and ethical conduct, which I apply to my online interactions, contributing to my digital literacy."*

School Environment and Digital Literacy:

The school environment played a significant role in shaping participants' digital literacy skills and practices. Those in educational settings with robust technological infrastructure and digital literacy initiatives reported feeling more confident and competent in navigating digital platforms. Conversely, participants from schools with limited resources expressed challenges in developing digital literacy skills. A participant shared, *"My school*

provides extensive digital literacy training and resources, enabling me to effectively communicate and collaborate online."

The findings revealed the interplay between character formation, religious education, and the school environment in shaping individuals' digital literacy-driven communication. Participants emphasized the holistic nature of their experiences, where values imparted through character formation and religious education were reinforced within the school environment. One participant articulated, *"The synergy between character formation, religious education, and my school's digital literacy initiatives has equipped me with the skills and values necessary for responsible digital communication."*

Overall, the findings underscored the complex and nuanced relationship between traditional values, educational contexts, and digital literacy-driven communication. The insights gleaned from the participants' experiences provide valuable perspectives for educators, policymakers, and stakeholders aiming to foster digital literacy skills while upholding ethical and moral principles within educational settings.

DISCUSSION

The findings underscored the significant impact of character formation on individuals' digital literacy skills and behaviors. Participants highlighted how virtues such as integrity, empathy, and responsibility, instilled through character formation programs, influenced their online interactions. This aligns with previous research that emphasizes the role of moral and ethical values in shaping digital citizenship (Chen & Yuen, 2013). For instance, Chen and Yuen (2013) found that character education programs positively influenced students' online behavior, fostering a sense of digital responsibility and empathy towards others. Furthermore, the integration of character formation principles into digital literacy education can contribute to the development of ethical digital citizens capable of navigating complex online environments (Holliman, 2015). By emphasizing values such as honesty, respect, and empathy, educators can empower individuals to engage critically and responsibly in digital communication (Holliman, 2015). The findings of the current study support this notion, highlighting the positive influence of character formation on individuals' digital literacy-driven communication practices.

Religious education emerged as another influential factor shaping individuals' perspectives on digital literacy and communication. Participants from religious backgrounds discussed how their beliefs and values informed their online engagement, contributing to their digital literacy skills. This finding resonates with previous research that acknowledges the role of religious teachings in shaping individuals' moral and ethical conduct, including their online

behavior (Campbell, 2013). He suggests that religious education can provide a moral framework for navigating digital spaces, guiding individuals in making ethical decisions online. The incorporation of religious teachings into digital literacy education can offer a holistic approach to fostering responsible digital citizenship, rooted in moral and ethical principles (Campbell, 2013). The current study's findings support this perspective, highlighting the influence of religious education on individuals' digital literacy practices and behaviors.

The school environment emerged as a crucial context for shaping individuals' digital literacy skills and practices. Participants from schools with robust technological infrastructure and digital literacy initiatives reported feeling more confident and competent in navigating digital platforms. Conversely, those from schools with limited resources expressed challenges in developing digital literacy skills. This finding aligns with existing literature highlighting the importance of the school environment in facilitating digital literacy education (Lankshear & Knobel, 2008). He argue that educational institutions play a vital role in fostering digital literacy skills among students. Schools that provide access to technology-rich environments and digital literacy training can empower students to become proficient users of digital tools and platforms (Lankshear & Knobel, 2008). Conversely, disparities in access to technology and digital resources can exacerbate inequalities in digital literacy attainment (Warschauer, 2014). The findings of the current study underscore the significance of equitable access to digital resources and educational opportunities in promoting digital literacy among individuals.

The qualitative findings revealed the intricate interplay between character formation, religious education, and the school environment in shaping individuals' digital literacy-driven communication practices. Participants emphasized the synergistic relationship between these factors, highlighting how values imparted through character formation and religious education were reinforced within the school environment. This holistic approach to digital literacy education reflects the interconnected nature of individuals' social and cultural experiences (Hague & Payton, 2010). Hague and Payton (2010) argue that effective digital literacy education should acknowledge the diverse backgrounds and experiences of learners, integrating socio-cultural perspectives into pedagogical practices. By recognizing the influence of character formation, religious education, and educational contexts on digital literacy, educators can design more inclusive and culturally responsive learning experiences (Hague & Payton, 2010). The findings of the current study support this perspective, emphasizing the importance of considering the intersectionality of factors in promoting digital literacy among individuals from diverse backgrounds.

The findings of this study align with and extend previous research on the relationship between traditional values, educational contexts, and digital literacy-driven communication. Chen & Yuen, (2013) highlights the positive influence of character formation on individuals' digital literacy skills and behaviors. Campbell (2013) underscore the significance of religious education in shaping individuals' moral frameworks and ethical conduct online. Lankshear & Knobel (2008) emphasizes the crucial role of the school environment in facilitating digital literacy education and equitable access to digital resources. And Hague & Payton, (2010) emphasizes the interconnected nature of character formation, religious education, and educational contexts in shaping individuals' digital literacy-driven communication practices. By synthesizing these findings, this study contributes to a deeper understanding of the complex dynamics between traditional values, educational contexts, and digital literacy-driven communication. The insights gleaned from the qualitative analysis provide valuable implications for educators, policymakers, and stakeholders seeking to promote digital literacy while upholding ethical and moral principles within educational settings.

CONCLUSION

This study aimed to understand how character formation, religious education, and the school environment shape individuals' abilities and behaviors in digital communication. The findings of the study underscored the significant influence of character formation, religious education, and the school environment on individuals' digital literacy-driven communication practices. Participants emphasized the role of moral and ethical values instilled through character formation programs and religious education in guiding their online interactions. Additionally, the study highlighted the importance of the school environment in providing access to digital resources and fostering digital literacy skills among students. The integration of character formation principles and religious teachings into digital literacy education can contribute to the development of ethical digital citizens capable of navigating digital spaces responsibly. Furthermore, equitable access to technology-rich environments and digital literacy initiatives within educational settings is essential for promoting digital inclusion and addressing disparities in digital literacy attainment.

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