

TRANSFORMATION OF CHRISTIAN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION IN THE ERA OF DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY TO MAINTAIN A BALANCE BETWEEN MATERIALITY AND SPIRITUALITY

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Resumen: La transformación digital se ha convertido en una fuerza dominante en la educación, incluida la Educación Religiosa Cristiana (ERC). Ella ofrece un acceso más amplio, métodos de aprendizaje diversificados y una mayor participación de los estudiantes. No obstante, la digitalización puede debilitar la orientación espiritual que constituye el núcleo de la ERC. El desafío consiste en mantener un equilibrio entre aspectos materiales, como la competencia tecnológica y el acceso a la información, y dimensiones espirituales, que enfatizan la formación de la fe y el carácter cristiano. Este estudio tiene como objetivos identificar tendencias de la literatura sobre transformación digital en la ERC, analizar el equilibrio entre materialidad y espiritualidad, examinar marcos conceptuales y sus aplicaciones contextuales, y formular estrategias integradoras que vinculen el avance tecnológico con el fortalecimiento de los valores espirituales. Se empleó un enfoque cualitativo mediante análisis interpretativo de literatura. Los datos se obtuvieron mediante muestreo intencional, teórico y de máxima variación en Scopus, ScienceDirect y CrossRef, y se analizaron mediante contenido temático. Los resultados indican que una transformación digital eficaz exige que los educadores actúen como facilitadores tecnológicos y mentores espirituales. El estudio propone un modelo integral de ERC en la era digital y ofrece implicaciones prácticas.

Palabras clave: educación religiosa Cristiana, educación religiosa, transformación pedagógica, educación del carácter, reflexión teológica.



Abstract: Digital transformation has become a dominant force in education, including Christian Religious Education. It offers wider access, diversified learning methods, and increased learner engagement. Nevertheless, digitalisation also risks weakening the spiritual orientation that forms the core of Christian Religious Education. The main challenge is maintaining balance between material aspects, such as technological competence and information access, and spiritual dimensions, emphasising faith formation and Christian character development. This study aims to identify key literature trends on digital transformation in Christian Religious Education, analyse the balance between materiality and spirituality, examine conceptual frameworks and contextual applications, and formulate integrative strategies linking technological advancement with strengthened spiritual values. The study employs a qualitative approach using an interpretivist literature analysis design. Data were collected through purposive, theoretical, and maximum variation sampling from Scopus, ScienceDirect, and CrossRef databases, then analysed using thematic content analysis. Findings indicate that effective digital transformation requires educators to act not only as technology facilitators but also as spiritual mentors. Faith values must be recontextualised within digital learning environments, while curricula should intentionally integrate technological skills with spiritual and character formation. This study contributes conceptually by proposing a holistic model of Christian Religious Education in the digital era and offers practical implications.

Keywords: Christian religious education, religious education, pedagogical transformation, character education, theological reflection.

1. INTRODUCTION

The development of digital technology has brought fundamental changes to various aspects of life, including education. Christian religious education has not escaped this digitalization. The integration of digital technologies such as Learning Management Systems (LMS), digital Bible applications, interactive media, and online learning platforms has become a crucial catalyst in transforming teaching methods.¹ The use of technology in education not only speeds up the process of information transfer but also improves the quality of the learning experience, making it more in-depth and participatory.² It opens up new space for Christian religious education to convey faith values in a more contextual, innovative, and relevant way to the lives of today's students.³

Furthermore, digital technology has expanded access to theological learning resources. Bible-based teaching materials, religious academic journals, and even online sermons are now accessible to students from diverse backgrounds and locations, including those in geographically marginalized areas⁴. In this context, Christian religious education is gaining momentum to reach broader audiences and enrich the spiritual understanding of the digital generation⁵.

In addition to expanding access, the use of technology also facilitates dialogic and reflective learning models. Online discussion forums, spiritual podcasts, and interactive videos encourage students to actively engage in shaping the meaning of their faith, rather than simply being recipients of dogmatic teachings⁶. Thus, Christian religious education

¹ NAGYMZHANOVA, K., ASE TOVA, Z., DEMISSENOVA, S., AKHMADIYEVA, Z., TASBULATOVA, B., «The Use of Digital Technologies in the Development of the Spiritual Culture of Primary School Teachers», in *Scientific Herald of Uzhhorod University, Series Physics* 55 (2024), pp. 1237–1245.

² VALDÉS-SÁNCHEZ, V., GUTIÉRREZ-ESTEBAN, P., «Challenges and Enablers in the Advancement of Educational Innovation. The Forces at Work in the Transformation of Education», in *Teaching and Teacher Education* 135 (2023), pp. 1–12.

³ MASENGWE, G., DUBE, B., «Retrospective and Prospective Approaches to Christian Education in Church of Christ Schools in Zimbabwe», in *Religions* 14 (2023), pp. 1–13.

⁴ EFSTRATOPOULOU, M., OPOKU, M. P., DAVISON, C., JAFFARUL, A., MESMAR, A., «Voices from Afar: Cross-National Study of Parental Perspectives towards Implementation of a Smart Learning Environment in Schools in the United Arab Emirates», in *International Journal of Educational Research Open* 7 (2024), pp. 1–8.

⁵ MISSIER, C. A., «A Qualitative Study of Digital Religious Influence: Perspectives from Christian, Hindu, and Muslim Gen Y and Gen Z in Mumbai, India», in *Religions* 16 (2025), pp. 29–33.

⁶ LOKUGE, S., SEDERA, D., GROVER, V., SARKER, S., «Orchestrating Digital Technologies with Incumbent Enterprise Systems for Attaining Innovation», in *Information and Management* 62 (2025), p. 104066.



has an excellent opportunity to shape students as active subjects in the development of contextual Christian faith.

However, technological advances also present serious challenges. The dominance of materialism, instant lifestyles, and digital imagery in social media has the potential to shift Christian spiritual values⁷. Digital transformation that is not accompanied by value control can create spiritual disruption among teenagers⁸. Sode and Chenji added that many Christian teachers and parents are still not ready in terms of competency and digital literacy to keep up with the pace of technological change in faith education⁹. In addition, the rise of post-truth phenomena, religious hoaxes, and value polarization through social media threatens the formation of healthy spiritual character, especially in young students¹⁰.

Christian religious education should not only teach digital literacy skills but also instill strong spiritual values so that students become wise, ethical, and responsible users of technology¹¹. This thinking is in line with what Xia emphasized, who said that the digital generation needs a solid moral foundation to avoid the misuse of technology that damages spirituality¹². Therefore, digital transformation in Christian religious education should not be merely technocratic, but rather holistic, touching on cognitive, affective, and spiritual aspects.

Although various previous studies have discussed the role of technology in religious education, such as learning approaches, Pantan¹³, social inclusion Andrei¹⁴,

⁷ ROCHA, C., «Cool Christianity: The Fashion-Celebrity-Megachurch Industrial Complex», in *Material Religion* 17 (2021), pp. 580–602.

⁸ MANCINI, C. J., QUILLIAM, V., CAMILLERI, C., SAMMUT, S., «Spirituality and Negative Religious Coping, but Not Positive Religious Coping, Differentially Mediate the Relationship between Scrupulosity and Mental Health: A Cross-Sectional Study», in *Journal of Affective Disorders Reports* 14 (2023), p. 100680.

⁹ SODE, R., CHENJI, K., «The Mediating Role of Workplace Spirituality: Exploring the Relationship between, Self-Transcendence, Spiritual Transcendence, and Innovative Work Behavior», in *Acta Psychologica* 245 (2024), pp. 104–228.

¹⁰ FOSU-ANKRAH, J. F., AMOAKO-GYAMPAH, A. K., «Prophetism in the Wake of a Pandemic: Charismatic Christianity, Conspiracy Theories, and the Coronavirus Outbreak in Africa», in *Research in Globalization* 3 (2021), p. 100068.

¹¹ KIM, J. J., ENRIGHT, R. D., «Differing Views on Forgiveness: How Do Graduate-Level Theology Students in South Korea Perceive Divine and Human Forgiveness?», in *Journal of Spirituality in Mental Health* 23 (2021), pp. 220–230.

¹² XIA, W., «Mediators Explaining Radical Right Voting Patterns of Christians in Europe: Attitudes toward Immigrants, Values, or Social Capital?», in *Social Science Research* 97 (2021), p. 102575.

¹³ PANTAN, F., «Humanistic and Inclusive Christian Education: A Framework for Learning Transformation», in *HTS Teologiese Studies / Theological Studies* 81 (2025), pp. 1–7.

¹⁴ ANDREI, O., «Enhancing Religious Education through Emotional and Spiritual Intelligence», in *HTS*

digital addiction Niklová & Hanesová¹⁵, as well as the ethical and theological aspects of AI use, Papakostas; Hussain & Wang^{16,17}. However, none have explicitly highlighted the tension between materiality and spirituality resulting from digitalization in the context of Christian Religious Education. Most of these studies tend to view technology functionally and instrumentally, without exploring its impact on students' value orientations and spiritual formation. Therefore, transformative research is needed that not only considers technological, pedagogical, or ethical aspects, but also redesigns the direction and content of Christian Religious Education so that it can maintain a balance of spiritual values in the face of the dominance of digital materialistic culture.

This research is necessary because it seeks to fill a gap in the literature that has not yet thoroughly examined the ethical and spiritual dimensions of digital-based Christian religious education. The imbalance between technological mastery and faith formation can lead to value disorientation in students and give rise to a spiritual crisis amidst technological advancements. Through a theological-pedagogical approach and a review of contemporary literature, this study critically analyzes the dynamics of the transformation of Christian religious education in the digital era. The goal is to critically examine how the integration of digital technology in Christian Religious Education can maintain a balance between materiality (technological mastery, information access) and spirituality (depth of faith, Christian character formation).

2. METHOD

This research uses a qualitative approach with a qualitative literature analysis design based on an interpretivist framework¹⁸. The researcher chose this approach to explore in depth the meaning, dynamics, and complexity of the transformation of

Teologiese Studies / Theological Studies 79 (2023), pp. 1–7.

¹⁵ NIKLOVÁ, M., HANESOVÁ, D., «Religious Education as a Platform for Pupils' Social Development and Prevention of Internet Addiction: The Case of Slovakia», in *Religions* 15 (2024), pp. 1–19.

¹⁶ PAPAOSTAS, C., «Artificial Intelligence in Religious Education: Ethical, Pedagogical, and Theological Perspectives», in *Religions* 16 (2025), pp. 1–22.

¹⁷ HUSSAIN, T., DAKE, W., «Social Media and the Spiritual Journey: The Place of Digital Technology in Enriching the Experience», in *Religions* 15 (2024), pp. 1–28.

¹⁸ SONG, Q., HUANG, M., REN, Z., LIN, X., LI, S., SUN, B., LI, Y., «User Well-Being in Kitchen Environment Design from a Positive Psychology Perspective: A Quantitative and Qualitative Literature Analysis», in *Buildings* 15 (2025), pp. 1–26.



Christian Religious Education in the digital era, based on various perspectives documented in academic literature, without the need to collect primary data. This method is considered appropriate for exploring conceptual and reflective understanding of the issue of balance between spirituality and materiality in the ever-changing educational context.

Purposive sampling technique was used in literature selection, with the following criteria: (1) topic relevance, (2) source credibility, and (3) data recency (published in the last five years). Literature was taken from reputable sources such as Scopus, ScienceDirect, and CrossRef.

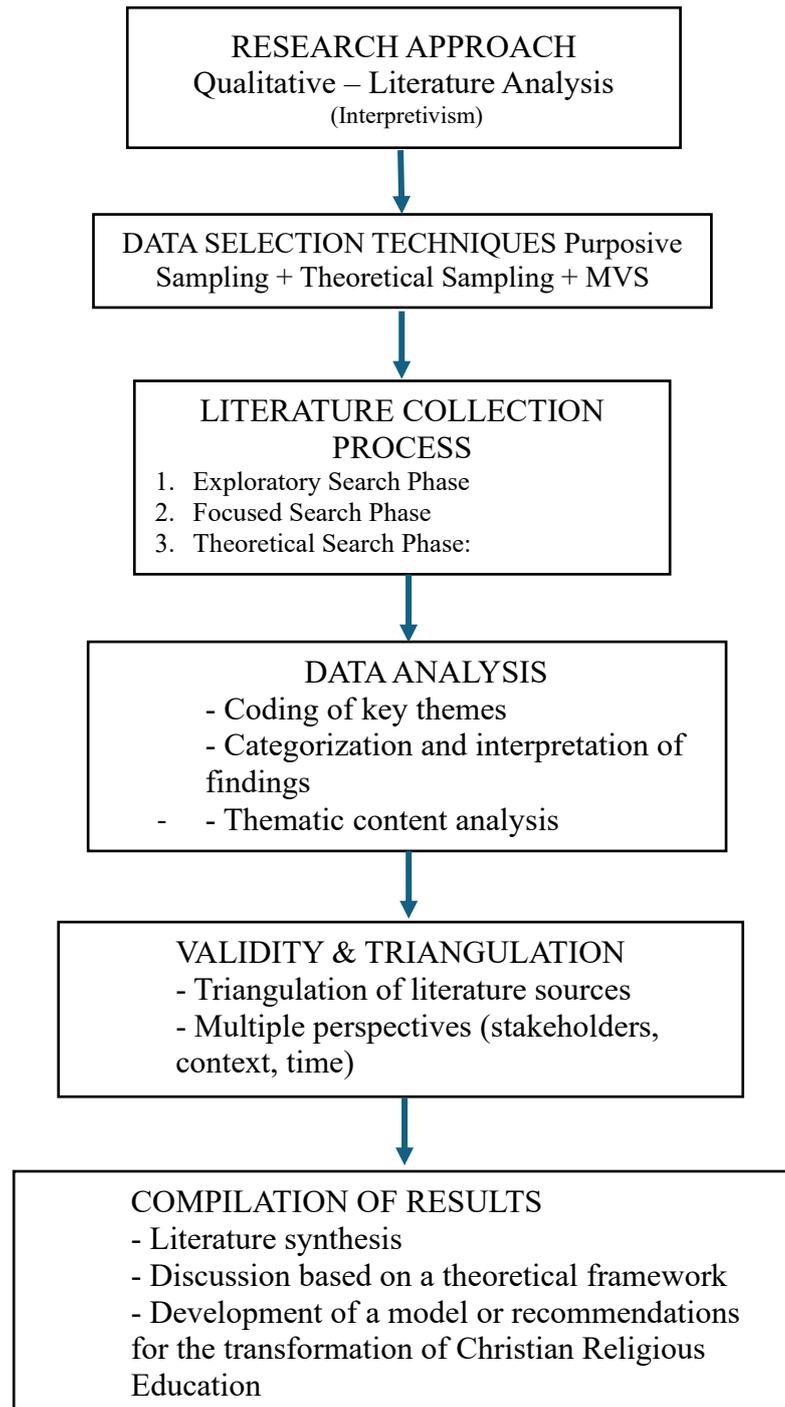
To enrich the perspective, a combination of theoretical sampling and maximum variation sampling was used, which included:

1. Theoretical relevance to the concept of digital transformation in Christian Religious Education
2. Depth of discussion on the integration of technology and spirituality
3. Diversity of information sources (empirical, conceptual, case studies)
4. Variation in geographic contexts and stakeholders

The literature data collection process was carried out in three stages:

1. Exploratory Search Phase: initial mapping of themes, identification of key authors, and critical terminology.
2. Focused Search Phase: literature search based on emerging themes and snowballing techniques (citation tracking).
3. Theoretical Search Phase: search for the theoretical framework underlying the topic.

The collected literature was analyzed using a thematic content analysis approach, which includes: (1) coding themes, (2) categorizing data, and (3) interpreting the meaning of findings based on an interpretive framework. Data validity was maintained through source triangulation and cross-verification between publication types and study contexts.





3. RESULT

The research results show that the transformation of Christian Religious Education in the digital technology era has brought significant changes in learning methods, primarily through the use of interactive digital media and online learning platforms. In addition, it was found that the balance between spiritual values and the influence of materialistic culture remains a significant challenge. However, some schools have succeeded in integrating spiritual principles in the wise use of technology. This data was collected through various studies and analyses of digital learning documents. The results of this study are grouped into three main themes: (1) increasing student engagement through interactive digital media, (2) the effectiveness of conveying spiritual values in the context of digital life, and (3) the formation of contextual, reflective, and transformative Christian character.

4. INCREASING STUDENT ENGAGEMENT THROUGH INTERACTIVE DIGITAL MEDIA

The transformation of digital technology in Christian Religious Education (CRE) learning has significantly increased student participation and active engagement. Teachers reported that the use of digital media, such as animated Bible videos, Christian faith-based educational games, and online quizzes (e.g., Kahoot, Quizizz, and Wordwall), has successfully stimulated student interest and motivation in learning. Students showed greater enthusiasm when the material was presented visually and interactively, compared to conventional lecture methods. This finding aligns with research findings Li, which confirms that the use of visual and interactive media significantly increases student involvement in the learning process¹⁹.

However, this study not only confirms previous findings but also extends them in the context of Christian Religious Education. Specifically, it shows that visualizing faith values through Bible animations and faith-based quizzes not only increases students' enthusiasm for learning but also deepens their spiritual understanding. It shows that

¹⁹ LI, X., BERGIN, C., OLSEN, A. A., «Positive Teacher-Student Relationships May Lead to Better Teaching», in *Learning and Instruction* 80 (2022), p. 101581.

digital media in Christian Religious Education functions not only as a visual aid but also as a means of forming spirituality through a contextual and communicative approach.

Furthermore, the effectiveness of digital media in increasing student engagement can be explained through a psychopedagogical approach. Digital media operates multimodally, combining visual, auditory, and kinesthetic elements. This combination is neurologically easier for the brain to grasp and process, especially for the digital native generation. Visual content and interactive games also stimulate the brain's reward system, creating a fun, competitive, and participatory learning experience. Furthermore, technology enables personalized learning, allowing students to learn at their own pace and style. It fosters a sense of relevance and ownership of the learning process.

Digital media not only impacts individual engagement but also enhances the social aspect of the learning process. The interactivity provided through online discussions, real-time collaboration, and rapid responses to student ideas and questions breaks down passive learning patterns and creates a more lively learning environment. This social involvement is vital in the context of Christian Religious Education because it fosters collective awareness, cooperation, and mutual respect within the framework of faith values.

However, these findings also highlight that the effectiveness of digital technology utilization is highly dependent on teachers' pedagogical and theological readiness. Teachers who only rely on the technical side of technology without deeply integrating spiritual values often fail to achieve the primary goal of Christian Religious Education, namely, the formation of Christian character. Therefore, teacher training should not only focus on improving digital literacy but also on the ability to design interactive, reflective, and contextually relevant spiritual learning experiences. Christian Religious Education teachers need to be equipped as transformative learning facilitators who can harmonize faith and technology for the holistic spiritual growth of students.



5. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF CONVEYING SPIRITUAL VALUES IN THE CONTEXT OF DIGITAL LIFE

The digital era has not only brought technological advances but also given rise to serious challenges in the form of instant culture, media consumerism, and the disruption of moral values. In this context, Christian Religious Education teachers face a dilemma between maintaining the purity of spiritual messages and adapting them to the dynamics of students' digital lives. However, many teachers stated that digital media opens up new opportunities to convey biblical teachings in a more contextual and relevant way. This finding aligns with research findings²⁰, It shows that digital media allows the integration of faith values into current issues in students' lives, such as cyberbullying, social media ethics, and consumer lifestyles, so that Christian teachings can be transmitted in a language that is close to the daily reality of students.

Another study Papakostas shows that a digital-based narrative approach in religious learning can increase the depth of theological reflection and the relevance of students' faith experiences in the current context²¹. Findings from Mugo prove that students are more responsive to Christian Religious Education teaching materials delivered through video media and interactive quizzes based on Christian values.²² One approach deemed successful is utilizing cyberbullying as a basis for reflection on the values of love and forgiveness in Jesus' teachings. In class discussions, students are encouraged to compare Christ's response to evil with the typical reactive and judgmental responses of digital society. This approach enables students not only to understand the teachings theoretically but also to apply them concretely in their digital lives.

Furthermore, teachers also utilize spiritual podcasts, Christian motivational videos, and educational viral narratives to bridge the Bible with the world of today's students. This approach not only increases the relevance of the material but also strengthens students' spiritual connections through media they are familiar with. As

²⁰ SKANTZ-ÅBERG, E., LANTZ-ANDERSSON, A., LUNDIN, M., WILLIAMS, P., «Teachers' Professional Digital Competence: An Overview of Conceptualisations in the Literature», in *Cogent Education* 9 (2022), pp. 1–23.

²¹ PAPAOSTAS, C., «Faith in Frames: Constructing a Digital Game-Based Learning Framework for Religious Education», in *Teaching Theology & Religion* 27 (2024), pp. 137–154.

²² MUGO, A. M., NYAGA, M. N., NDWIGA, Z. N., ATITWA, E. B., «Evaluating Learning Outcomes of Christian Religious Education Learners: A Comparison of Constructive Simulation and Conventional Method», in *Heliyon* 10 (2024), p. e32632.

found, the use of popular media in religious education can create a meaningful dialogic space between students' faith and digital culture. It is reinforced by research results from Golan & Don, which noted that learning strategies based on viral and contemporary content strengthen the internalization of Christian values implicitly in students' daily lives²³.

However, teachers need to remain vigilant against the potential for message distortion due to the dominance of visual and entertainment elements in digital media. When aesthetic and entertainment aspects overshadow the spiritual essence, the Gospel message risks being diminished in meaning. Therefore, critical digital literacy and reflective theology are key competencies teachers must possess. With these two skills, teachers can ensure that digital media not only serves as an engaging delivery tool but also maintains the Gospel as the center of the spiritual learning process.

6. CONTEXTUAL, REFLECTIVE, AND TRANSFORMATIVE CHRISTIAN CHARACTER FORMATION

Digital transformation in Christian Religious Education not only contributes to the cognitive and affective aspects, but also to the formation of reflective and contextual Christian character. It is in line with the results of research conducted by Díaz, which states that digital technology expands the space for students to express and reflect Gospel values authentically²⁴. Activities such as weekly devotional vlogs, spiritual digital journals, and digital service projects serve as a means of building personal and contextual spiritual awareness.

For example, students create short vlogs about applying the values of love, self-control, or honesty in everyday life. Teachers noted that this activity increased students' openness in reflecting on their life challenges, while also training them to use Christian values as practical guidelines in the digital world.

²³ GOLAN, O., DON, Y., «Legitimation of New Media for Religious Youth: Orthodox Elites' Approach to Adolescent Youngsters' Engagement with Digital Worlds», in *Religions* 13 (2022), pp. 1–13.

²⁴ DÍAZ, I., «Considering the Efficacy of Digital Technology as a Means of Evangelization in Christian Religious Education», in *Religious Education* 116 (2021), pp. 3–15.



The use of daily digital journals also encourages students to regularly evaluate their behavior based on biblical principles. This reflection is not only descriptive but also critical and applicable, thus enabling students to develop a strong moral foundation and an authentic spiritual attitude amidst the challenges of the digital age. This approach is in line with the value-based education paradigm and the transformative learning approach, where students do not simply receive doctrine but experience a learning process that consciously shapes their integrity and faith identity.²⁵ In this context, technology is not just a technical tool, but rather a medium for forming a dynamic and adaptive spirituality to a world that is constantly changing. The results of this study confirm that digital transformation in Christian Religious Education not only changes the way of teaching but also enriches the way students build relationships with God and others amidst the flow of digital culture. Technology-based learning processes, if carried out creatively, reflectively, and rooted in Gospel values, can maintain and even strengthen the balance between materiality and spirituality in the lives of today's students

8. DISCUSSION

8.1. *Transformation of Christian Religious Education*

This study responds explicitly to the gap between the function of technology as a learning aid and its role in shaping the meaning of spirituality in the context of Christian Religious Education. The transformation of Christian Religious Education cannot be separated from the contribution of transformative learning theory, which emphasizes the importance of changing students' perspectives through critical reflection on their experiences²⁶. The findings of this study demonstrate that the use of digital media such as animated Bible videos, interactive quizzes (e.g., Kahoot and Wordwall), and educational games based on Christian values contributes significantly to encouraging

²⁵ CAMPBELL, E. C., «Moral Education and Social Transformation: The Jesus Model», in *Power and Education* 17 (2025), pp. 175–192.

²⁶ HYDE, B., «Critical Discourse and Critical Reflection in Mezirow's Theory of Transformative Learning: A Dialectic Between Ontology and Epistemology (and a Subtext of Reflexivity Mirroring My Own Onto-Epistemological Movement)», in *Adult Education Quarterly* 71 (2021), pp. 373–388.

student engagement and reflection on the material being taught. Technology serves not only a technical function but also a meaningful medium for faith formation.

These findings significantly support and extend the theory of transformative learning, as they demonstrate that digital media can facilitate reflective and transformational processes in a spiritual context. For example, a teacher said that students found it easier to reflect on the meaning of love and forgiveness through digital picture stories than through conventional explanations. It is in line with the view of Molise. It emphasizes the importance of experiential learning and critical reflection in transformative learning²⁷. In this context, digital media is not only a visual aid but also a trigger for learning experiences that deeply touch on affective and spiritual aspects²⁸.

However, the process of technological integration hasn't always been smooth sailing. Some teachers initially expressed concerns that digital media would disrupt the sacredness of the Word and diminish its spiritual intensity. There was a perception that students would focus more on the visuals and forget the spiritual message. However, through the process of adaptation and pedagogical-theological training, teachers began to realize that when used selectively and with a faith-based approach, technology expands students' spiritual reflection, making the Word more relevant and closer to their lives. It shows that there is a stage of paradigm transformation in the way we view technology from a neutral tool to a sacramental means that supports the growth of faith²⁹.

Furthermore, the balance between materiality and spirituality as a framework for theoretical reflection also finds expression in field findings. On the one hand, materiality is evident in teachers' and students' mastery of learning technologies, such as the use of blended learning and online platforms.

On the other hand, spirituality is present at the core of the educational process, through the internalization of faith values, the formation of Christian character, and the

²⁷ MOLISE, N. A., BOTMA, Y., Vanjaarsveldt, D., «Exploring the Influence of Culture in Curriculum Transformation Using the Mmogo Method™», in *International Journal of Africa Nursing Sciences* 17 (2022), pp. 1–7.

²⁸ DOMÈNECH-SOROLLA, J., FERNÁNDEZ-PASCUAL, M. D., PEDREGOSA-FAUSTE, S., GARCÍA-DÍAZ, F., MARTÍNEZ-RODRÍGUEZ, L., «Undergraduate Nursing Students' Perceptions and Experiences of Learning Spiritual Competencies: A Qualitative Meta-Synthesis», in *Nurse Education Today* 147 (2025), p. 106585.

²⁹ IZQUIERDO-IRANZO, P., «Use of Digital Tools in the Religious and Spiritual Sphere: Impact and Barrier Analysis», in *Religions* 16 (2025), pp. 3–26.



development of a reflective attitude toward life. It aligns with the idea de Diego-Cordero that technology, when used wisely, can be a vehicle for deepening spiritual formation³⁰.

Within the framework of educational theology, this brings back the call to spiritual transformation as conveyed in Romans 12:2, that proper faith education is the renewal of the mind and the formation of a Christocentric spiritual identity.

These findings also reveal the practical context in Christian schools and catechism classes. In some of the schools studied, teachers used short reflective videos at the beginning of lessons to spark faith discussions, or shared project-based assignments through digital platforms that connected biblical themes to students' life contexts. This practice broadens the meaning of educational transformation not only in the transfer of knowledge, but also in the formation of spirituality and the mission of Christian life in the digital world.³¹ In this case, digital media is no longer seen as merely a tool, but as a space where faith, identity, and technology engage in creative and profound dialogue.

The theory of new media and transformative learning in this context is not only confirmed but also expanded. Digital media not only increases student engagement but also functions as a transcendental space that mediates spiritual experiences³². Teachers who apply a faith-based pedagogical approach that touches on cognitive, affective, and practical aspects show that educational transformation is not only about content but also touches on the existential realm of students. It is in line with Berkhof's thoughts on the theology of education and Gardner's thoughts on multiple intelligences that religious education must touch all aspects of humanity³³.

Thus, the findings of this study make a significant contribution to the development of transformative learning theory, particularly in addressing the existing gap between technology and spirituality. Through a reflective, contextual, and participatory pedagogical-theological approach, the integration of technology in Christian Religious

³⁰ DIEGO-CORDERO, R., SUÁREZ-REINA, P., BADANTA, B., LUCCHETTI, G., VEGA-ESCAÑO, J., «The Efficacy of Religious and Spiritual Interventions in Nursing Care to Promote Mental, Physical and Spiritual Health: A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis», in *Applied Nursing Research* 67 (2022), p. 151618.

³¹ ZALUCHU, S. E., «Theological Insight of Digital Religion», in *Bogoslovni Vestnik* 83 (2023), pp. 597–610.

³² GAO, J., JIN, X., LI, T., NGUYEN, T., «The Effect of Digital Technology Adoption on Managerial Myopia: An Empirical Discovery Based on Machine Learning», in *International Review of Economics and Finance* 98 (2025), p. 103849.

³³ ANDREI, O., «Enhancing Religious Education through Emotional and Spiritual Intelligence», cit., pp. 1–7.

Education can create a learning space that is not only informative but also transformative, shaping a vibrant spirituality and awakening students to their calling to faith in the digital age.

8.2. The Era of Digital Technology in the Context of Christian Religious Education

The development of digital technology has revolutionized the way humans interact with the world, including in spirituality and religious education. In the context of Christian Religious Education, technology is not merely a tool but has become a new cultural space that shapes how students think, feel, and experience their faith.

The findings in this study indicate that teachers actively use various forms of digital media, such as spiritual podcasts, inspirational videos, viral Christian narratives, and even cyberbullying cases as entry points to convey Gospel values in a more contextual and relevant way to students' lives. This phenomenon strengthens the idea in New Media Theory³⁴. Digital media is not neutral but brings with it new cultural logic and values that help shape the meaning and spiritual understanding of students.

For example, when teachers use cyberbullying as a reflection on the values of love and forgiveness in Jesus' teachings, students not only learn cognitively but also experience contextual, affective, and moral learning. It demonstrates that digital media not only conveys information but also creates a dialogical space between students' faith experiences and their digital lives, in line with the concept of contextual theology³⁵. These findings directly support and extend the theory, as they show that reinterpreting biblical texts in contemporary situations, such as social media, can deepen students' theological reflection.

Furthermore, these findings highlight the tension between materiality and spirituality, an area that has been underexplored in previous literature. When the aesthetic and entertainment elements of digital media become too dominant, there is a risk of diminishing spiritual meaning, where Gospel values are couched in a form that is too light or even superficial. Furthermore, these findings highlight the tension between materiality

³⁴ MEKHEIMER, M., «Challenges in the Preparation of EFL Students in Faculties of Education in Egypt», in *Social Sciences and Humanities Open* 11 (2025), p. 101517.

³⁵ BINGAMAN, K. A., «Religion in the Digital Age: An Irreversible Process», in *Religions* 14 (2023), pp. 1–14.



and spirituality, an area that has been underexplored in previous literature. When the aesthetic and entertainment elements of digital media become too dominant, there is a risk of diminishing spiritual meaning, where Gospel values are couched in a form that is too light or even superficial. These findings reinforce concerns that uncritical digital education can become trapped in a current of edutainment that obscures the goal of spiritual character formation³⁶.

Furthermore, some teachers feel they are not fully prepared theologically and pedagogically to utilize digital media effectively. It reveals a second gap: the lack of literature discussing institutional responses and the preparedness of Christian teachers and parents to the digital transformation of religious education. Despite individual creativity, there are still limitations in providing systematic training, policies, and support to help teachers fulfill their dual role as faith facilitators and navigators of the digital world³⁷. Thus, the responsibility lies not only with individual teachers but also with Christian educational institutions to respond strategically to the needs of this era.

On the other hand, the findings also show reflective and participatory practices that indicate the need for a holistic pedagogical-theological approach, namely an approach that not only prioritizes technological efficiency but also pays attention to the depth of spirituality and Christian character formation³⁸. Teachers who combine popular media with Bible-based theological discussions demonstrate how digital transformation can be directed to enrich the transformative dimensions of religious learning. It follows the transformative learning principle conveyed by Wilson, where changes in students' understanding and life orientation begin with disorienting experiences that are managed through critical reflection and value dialogue³⁹.

Thus, it can be concluded that the findings of this study not only support existing theories but also broaden and deepen our understanding of the dynamics of Christian

³⁶ MANCINI, C. J., QUILLIAM, V., CAMILLERI, C., SAMMUT, S., «Spirituality and Negative Religious Coping, but Not Positive Religious Coping, Differentially Mediate the Relationship between Scrupulosity and Mental Health: A Cross-Sectional Study», cit., p. 100680.

³⁷ MARTÍNEZ-MORENO, J., PETKO, D., «What Motivates Future Teachers? The Influence of Artificial Intelligence on Student Teachers' Career Choice», in *Computers and Education: Artificial Intelligence 7* (2024), p. 100296.

³⁸ FIDELIS, A., CARRIZO MOREIRA, A., VITÓRIA, A., «Multiple Perspectives of Spiritual Intelligence: A Systematic Literature Review», in *Social Sciences and Humanities Open 9* (2024), p. 100879.

³⁹ WILSON, B. B., «Disorientation as a Learning Objective: Applying Transformational Learning Theory in Participatory Action Pedagogy», in *Journal of Planning Education and Research 44* (2024), pp. 457–468.

religious learning in the digital age. It demonstrates that digital media can be a contextual medium for conveying spiritual values, provided a strong theological and pedagogical framework accompanies it. Furthermore, technological developments can be dangerous if used without spiritual awareness, as they shift the focus from spiritual character formation to mere entertainment. Therefore, this research provides theoretical and practical contributions in formulating a new direction for Christian Religious Education that is reflective, contextual, and transformative amidst contemporary digital realities.

8.3. Balance between Materiality and Spirituality

The advent of the digital era presents an ambivalent reality for Christian Religious Education. On the one hand, digital technology brings efficiency, broad access to knowledge, and new pedagogical opportunities. However, it brings negative impacts such as the commodification of information, media consumerism, and challenges to students' spiritual formation. The concepts of materiality and spirituality, traditionally considered as two separate dimensions, are now complexly intertwined in the digital space of education⁴⁰. Theoretically, materiality in education refers to an interest in tangible and quantifiable aspects, such as academic achievement, instructional technology, and learning productivity.⁴¹ Meanwhile, spirituality encompasses the deepest dimensions of humankind: relationship with God, the search for the meaning of life, moral values, and the practice of faith⁴². The tension between these two poles presents a real challenge that has not been explored in depth, particularly in the context of Christian Religious Education in Indonesia. This is where the gap lies, the lack of research on the tension between materiality and spirituality in Christian education in the digital era.

The findings of this study explicitly contribute to this discourse. Most teachers acknowledge that the use of digital technology in religious learning carries both benefits and risks. For example, teachers observed that students were more enthusiastic when working on video-based assignments, podcasts, or digital projects. However, this

⁴⁰ BERGER, H., DASRÉ, A., «Religious Affiliation, Education, and Fertility in Sub-Saharan Africa», in *World Development* 184 (2024), p. 106723.

⁴¹ DIETZE, J., «Influence of Digital Technologies on Hikers' Spatial Behaviour and Perception», in *Journal of Outdoor Recreation and Tourism* 50 (2025), p. 100897.

⁴² YANG, C. Y., CHIANG, Y. C., WU, C. L., HUNG, S. K., CHU, T. L., HSIAO, Y. C., «Mediating Role of Spirituality on the Relationships between Posttraumatic Stress and Posttraumatic Growth among Patients with Cancer: A Cross-Sectional Study», in *Asia-Pacific Journal of Oncology Nursing* 10 (2023), p. 100221.



enthusiasm did not always translate into spiritual depth. It is in line with research conducted Bellous, which states that reflection on love in action is still shallow and more oriented towards social image than moral sincerity⁴³. It suggests that the dominance of digital materiality, such as the trends, needs to appear, gain likes, and can overshadow spiritual substance if not balanced with reflective guidance. It means that the research findings can both strengthen and expand the theory of material-spiritual dualism, namely that technology does not automatically reinforce values but becomes an arena for conflict between the two. Therefore, a holistic pedagogical-theological approach is needed, namely the need for learning strategies that are not only digitally adaptive but also spiritually profound.

Furthermore, teachers play an essential role as spiritual mediators in the rapid digital era. Research Saoke emphasizes that teachers' personal and relational competencies are the focal point in maintaining this balance.⁴⁴ Thus, the findings in this article support this theory by showing that students who have good relational relationships with their teachers tend to be more open to spiritual reflection and are less focused on external appearances. For example, teachers who regularly provide spiritual feedback on students' vlog assignments or digital journals successfully trigger more profound reflections, such as awareness of honesty, forgiveness, and empathy.

However, the findings also revealed institutional gaps: some teachers admitted to not having adequate guidelines or training to integrate spiritual values into digital platforms. It indicates a lack of literature and practice on institutional readiness and the active role of Christian parents and teachers in responding to value disruption due to digitalization. Some teachers expressed confusion in navigating viral content that is popular but not always aligned with religious values⁴⁵. This condition emphasizes the importance of a systemic response from educational institutions and churches in supporting teachers strategically and theologically.

⁴³ BELLOUS, J. E., «Congregational Care: Philosophical Reflection on a Case Study», in *Religions* 14 (2023), pp. 1–28.

⁴⁴ SAOKE, V. O., MUSAFIRI, C. M., NDWIGA, Z. N., GITHAIGA, P. W., «The Christian Religious Education Teachers' Attitudes toward the Five-Stage Lesson Plan Framework in Kenya: A Gender-Based Analysis», in *Heliyon* 9 (2023), p. e19104.

⁴⁵ BARROT, J. S., ACOMULAR, D. R., «How University Teachers Navigate Social Networking Sites in a Fully Online Space: Provisional Views from a Developing Nation», in *International Journal of Educational Technology in Higher Education* 19 (2022), pp. 1–19.

Implicitly, these findings also align with transformative learning theory, particularly regarding how students experience value change through a reflective process. Spiritual vlog projects, digital daily journals, or online discussions about cyberbullying and love in a digital context become media that are not only informative but also formative⁴⁶. One student wrote in her digital journal about forgiving a friend who defamed her on social media and related it to Jesus' teaching about loving one's enemies⁴⁷. It demonstrates the existence of an actual and contextual spiritual transformation, expanding the scope of transformative learning into the domains of faith and digital ethics.

From a pedagogical perspective, this approach encourages contextual, reflective, and transformative learning. These results emphasize that spirituality need not be removed from the digital world but can be creatively integrated. Digitally skilled and theologically reflective teachers play a strategic role in reframing technology as a medium for spirituality, not just a medium for information, but teachers become key actors as learners, mentors, and role models who bring harmony between the use of technology and the formation of students' spirituality. In this way, education can truly be a transformative process that produces a generation that is intellectually intelligent, emotionally mature, and spiritually mature.

9. CONCLUSION

Based on the findings obtained, the researcher concluded that the integration of digital technology in Christian Religious Education provides significant benefits in terms of increasing student participation, expanding access to learning, and delivering more contextual and interactive teaching materials.

⁴⁶ HYDE, B., «Critical Discourse and Critical Reflection in Mezirow's Theory of Transformative Learning: A Dialectic Between Ontology and Epistemology (and a Subtext of Reflexivity Mirroring My Own Onto-Epistemological Movement)», cit., pp. 373–388.

⁴⁷ KIM, J. J., ENRIGHT, R. D., «Differing Views on Forgiveness: How Do Graduate-Level Theology Students in South Korea Perceive Divine and Human Forgiveness?», cit., pp. 220–230.



However, this digital transformation also brings serious challenges to the formation of students' spirituality, primarily due to the dominance of materialistic culture and low digital theological literacy among teachers.

Specifically, this study emphasizes the importance of balancing material aspects (technology mastery and information access) with spiritual aspects (faith depth and Christian character formation) in digital learning. Learning models that combine digital technology with regular spiritual reflection have proven more effective in maintaining students' spiritual depth. However, it was found that teachers' competence in integrating digital media with a theological approach is still limited and requires intensive training.

The primary theoretical contribution of this research is the proposal of a new conceptual framework, a pedagogical approach based on spiritual-material balance in digital Christian religious education, which has not been widely discussed in previous literature. Meanwhile, the resulting practical contributions include recommendations for developing a curriculum based on digital faith reflection and designing teacher training that emphasizes the integration of digital literacy, theological understanding, and the formation of students' spiritual character.

This research successfully answered the objectives and problem formulation that had been set. It opened up space for further studies, particularly through a longitudinal approach to examine the long-term impact of the balance of these values on students' learning achievements and spiritual growth.