



Finding Harmony in the Digital Age : Integrating Spiritual Values for Balance

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Abstract *Advances in digital technology have changed the way of living and interacting in modern society. Although it provides many conveniences, technology also has the potential to disrupt the balance of life and cause alienation from the spiritual dimension. This research explores multidisciplinary approaches that can be applied to integrate spiritual values into digital lifestyles holistically and contextually. Through a literature review, several main approaches can be identified, namely digital theology, digital psychology, digital sociology, technology ethics, and integrative multidisciplinary approaches. The digital theology approach emphasizes the importance of presenting spirituality in a format relevant to the digital generation. Digital psychology examines the impact of technology on mental health and offers spiritual activity as a solution. Digital sociology looks at changes in community structure and opportunities for building virtual spiritual communities. Technology ethics considers the moral and spiritual implications of technological development. Lastly, an integrative multidisciplinary approach combines multiple perspectives to offer a comprehensive solution. By combining these approaches, this study seeks to find a balance between advances in digital technology and the appreciation of spiritual values in an online-connected society.*

Keywords: *Digital Technology, Spirituality, Multidisciplinary Approach, Virtual Community.*

1. INTRODUCTION

In this digital, connected era, we are faced with the challenge of finding a balance between technological progress and the appreciation of spiritual values. The digital revolution has changed the way we live, interact and view the world (Campbell, H. A., & Garner, 2016). Even though technology brings a lot of convenience and efficiency, it also has the potential to disrupt life balance and cause alienation from the spiritual dimension, (Spadaro, 2014).

In this context, the need arises to integrate spiritual values into digital lifestyles so that people are not trapped in excessive materialism and individualism. According to Pope Francis in the encyclical *Laudato Si'* (2015), technological progress must be accompanied by deep ethical considerations so as not to have a negative impact on humans and the environment.

Digital theology expert (Dorpinghaus, 2020) emphasizes the importance of translating faith teachings into language and media that can be understood by the younger generation born in the digital era. This involves efforts to present spirituality in a more interactive, visual form and integrating digital elements such as social media, mobile applications and virtual reality.

In a Christian perspective, life balance and the integration of spiritual values are an integral part of the search for greater meaning and purpose in life.

Theologian (Rahner, 1966) emphasized that Christian spirituality emphasizes human existential awareness of the calling to a relationship with the Divine. (Groome, 2018) also emphasized that Christian education must facilitate authentic spiritual experiences for faith

formation amidst contemporary cultural challenges. In the context of digital society, sociologist (Detweiler, 2013) observes an opposing tendency between individualism and the need to be socially connected. On the one hand, digital technology opens up opportunities for greater self-expression and individuality. But on the other hand, humans also seek deeper connections and meaning through interpersonal relationships and community.

Therefore, efforts to find harmony in the digital era must also consider aspects of community and social relations. A spiritual approach that is centered on the individual is not enough, but must be balanced with building a solid and mutually supportive community (Turkle, 2015).(Turkle, 2015)) emphasizes that digital technology can bring alienation and addiction if not used wisely. He advocates developing spiritual habits that involve self-discipline, deep reflection, and meaningful face-to-face interactions. From a sociological perspective, (Rainie, L., & Wellman, 2012) observed that the digital era has changed the structure and dynamics of communities. Communities are no longer limited to physical spaces but are also formed virtually through online networks. This opens up new opportunities to build spiritual communities that cross geographic boundaries.

Based on the description above, efforts to find harmony in the digital age require a multidisciplinary approach that integrates the perspectives of theology, spirituality, psychology, and sociology. This approach should consider the challenges and opportunities brought by digital technologies, as well as offer holistic and contextual solutions to achieve a healthy and meaningful life balance.

The research question that can be formulated based on this description is: How to find a balance between advances in digital technology and the appreciation of spiritual values in the context of an online connected society? What multidisciplinary approaches can be applied to integrate spirituality into digital lifestyles holistically and contextually?

2. METHOD

The literature review approach involves a comprehensive review of relevant literature from various disciplines such as theology, spirituality, psychology, sociology, and information technology. The first step is to identify and collect literature sources related to the research topic through systematic searches in academic databases. After that, a critical analysis of each source is carried out, evaluating strengths and weaknesses, and identifying patterns or themes. This research will focus on the challenges and opportunities in integrating spiritual values into the digital age. Furthermore, synthesis is carried out to produce a conceptual framework or

model of integration of spiritual values and digital technology. The final step is to present the findings and conceptual model in a comprehensive and systematic scientific article.

3. DISCUSSION

To find a balance between advances in digital technology and the appreciation of spiritual values in the context of an online connected society, a multidisciplinary approach is needed that integrates various perspectives and scientific disciplines. Several multidisciplinary approaches that can be applied to integrate spirituality into a digital lifestyle holistically and contextually:

Digital Theological Approach

The digital theology approach seeks to interpret and express the teachings of faith in the context of digital culture which increasingly dominates the lives of modern society. (Dorpinghaus, 2020) emphasizes the importance of translating faith teachings into language and media that can be understood by the younger generation born in the digital era. This involves efforts to present spirituality in a more interactive, visual form and integrating digital elements such as social media, mobile applications and virtual reality.

One concrete example of this effort is research conducted by (Spadaro, 2014). In his research, he explores the potential of digital media such as blogs, podcasts, and social media to promote spiritual dialogue and reflection. Spadaro proposed the concept of cyber spiritual space which can be utilized to build communities of faith and facilitate spiritual growth in a digital context. Through the use of digital media, faith communities can create virtual spaces that allow their members to share spiritual experiences, discuss religious issues, and support each other in their faith journey.

(Campbell, n.d.) study examines how churches and faith communities are adapting to the digital era through the use of technology such as online worship streaming, prayer applications, and virtual communities. In his research, Campbell observed that many churches and religious organizations have utilized digital technology to reach a wider audience, especially the younger generation who are familiar with the digital world. For example, online worship streaming allows people to participate in religious activities remotely, while prayer apps offer prayer guides and spiritual reflection in a format that is easily accessible via mobile devices.

Campbell also emphasized the importance of involving the younger generation in this adaptation process so that spiritual activities remain relevant and interesting for them. By engaging the perspectives and creativity of younger generations, faith communities can

develop content and approaches that are more engaging and appropriate to their digital lifestyles. This can include using social media to spread spiritual messages, developing applications or games that contain religious elements, or even creating spiritual experiences that integrate technology such as virtual reality or augmented reality.

A digital theological approach also provides an opportunity to open a dialogue between faith and digital culture. Through active involvement in the digital world, faith communities can bridge the gap between spiritual values and the reality of everyday life which is increasingly influenced by technology. By presenting the teachings of faith in a more relevant and accessible format, this approach can help individuals to experience spirituality in the context of modern, digital life.

However, it is important to note that a digital theological approach is not just about utilizing digital technology as a tool, but also involves deep reflection on how this technology can influence the way we understand and live the faith. As (Dorpinghaus, 2020) underlines, this approach must be critical and reflective, considering both the opportunities and challenges that digital culture brings to spiritual life.

Digital Psychology Approach

The digital psychology approach focuses on the impact of digital technology on human mental health, behavior and psychological well-being.(Turkle, 2015) examines the phenomenon of alienation and addiction resulting from unwise use of technology. In his research, Turkle revealed that although digital technology facilitates connectivity, it often makes individuals feel more isolated and less able to build deep relationships.

One of the key findings in Turkle's research is how excessive use of digital technology can interfere with humans' ability to engage in meaningful face-to-face interactions. He observed that many individuals, especially the younger generation, prefer to interact via digital devices rather than engaging in face-to-face conversations with others. This can lead to social isolation and difficulty building authentic, deep relationships.

As a solution, Turkle advocates developing spiritual habits that involve self-discipline, deep reflection, and meaningful face-to-face interaction. He emphasized the importance of setting aside time to disconnect from digital technology and engage in activities that can enrich spiritual and emotional life, such as meditation, contemplation, or simply chatting with those closest to you without the distraction of digital devices.

Similar findings were also revealed by (Ventriglio., et.al, 2024). In their research, they showed that excessive social media use can increase the risk of depression, anxiety, and low life satisfaction. This is due to several factors, such as the phenomenon of comparing or

comparing oneself to other people's lives that seem perfect on social media, as well as the lack of deep and meaningful face-to-face interactions.

(Antonio, Ventriglio., F., Ricci., Julio, Torales., João, Mauricio, Castaldelli-Maia., Abdulbari, Bener., Alexander, Curry, Smith., Michael, 2024) suggest limiting social media time and developing spiritual activities such as meditation and contemplation to improve mental health. They believe that spiritual activity can help individuals to better connect with themselves, increase self-awareness, and achieve better emotional balance.

In addition, other research in the field of digital psychology also explores the impact of digital technology on human attention, concentration, and cognitive abilities. For example, a study from (Wilmer, H. H., Sherman, L. E., & Chein, 2017) found that excessive use of digital media can lead to a decrease in the ability to maintain attention and concentration. This is due to the tendency to constantly switch between tasks and get distracted by notifications or other digital content.

To overcome this problem, digital psychology experts recommend developing attention and concentration management strategies, such as mindfulness or meditation practices. Spiritual activities such as these can help individuals be more present in the present moment, reduce the tendency to become distracted, and increase the ability to maintain focus on the task at hand.

Overall, digital psychology approaches offer important insights into how digital technologies can influence people's mental health, behavior, and psychological well-being. By identifying challenges faced, such as alienation, addiction, and attention disorders, this approach provides practical recommendations for integrating spiritual activities into daily life as a way to overcome the negative impacts of unwise technology use.

Digital Sociology Approach

The digital sociology approach examines the impact of digital technology on social structure, interaction patterns, and community formation in modern society. (Wilmer, H. H., Sherman, L. E., & Chein, 2017) observe that the digital age has significantly changed the structure and dynamics of communities. In their research, Rainie and Wellman revealed that communities are no longer limited to physical space, but are also formed virtually through online networks. This opens up new opportunities to build spiritual communities that cross geographical boundaries.

Before the digital age, communities tended to form based on physical and geographical proximity. People gather and interact with other individuals who live around them, such as neighbors, co-workers, or members of the local church. However, with the advent of digital

technologies such as the internet, social media, and instant messaging apps, these geographical boundaries have become less relevant.

Rainie and Wellman refer to this phenomenon as networked individualism, where individuals can form communities and build social relationships without being tied to a specific physical location. Through digital platforms, people can connect with other individuals who share similar interests, values, or identities, regardless of the geographical distance that separates them.

This opens up new opportunities to build spiritual communities that cross geographical boundaries. For example, an individual in Indonesia can join an online prayer community involving members from different parts of the world. They can share spiritual experiences, discuss religious issues, and support each other in their respective faith journeys through digital platforms.

A study from (Setiawan, 2022) further explored the role of social media in shaping spiritual identity and faith communities among the younger generation. In his research, Setiawan found that social media can be an effective means of sharing spiritual experiences, building support networks, and promoting spiritual engagement.

The younger generation, who grew up with digital technology, tends to be more comfortable expressing their spirituality through social media platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, or YouTube. They can share scripture quotes, personal reflections, or even visual content such as videos or images related to their faith. This allows them to connect with other individuals who share similar spiritual interests, regardless of geographic boundaries or religious denomination.

Additionally, social media also facilitates the formation of virtual faith communities, where members can support each other, share resources, and participate in discussions on spiritual topics. Setiawan observes that these online faith communities can provide a sense of belonging and identity for young people who may feel underrepresented or disconnected to traditional faith communities.

However, the digital sociology approach also recognizes the challenges and risks that arise from the formation of virtual communities. One of the main issues is the potential for polarization and the formation of filter bubbles where individuals are only trapped in community circles that reinforce their own beliefs and values without being exposed to different perspectives.

To overcome this challenge, several researchers such as (Hampton, 2016) emphasize the importance of maintaining face-to-face relationships and community interactions in the real

world, while utilizing digital technology as a supporting tool. In this way, spiritual communities can harness the power of virtual networks to expand reach and facilitate connections, yet maintain a physical dimension and authenticity in interactions between members.

Overall, the digital sociology approach provides valuable insights into how digital technology has changed the way humans interact, build communities, and express identities, including spiritual identities. By understanding the dynamics and opportunities offered by the digital era, spiritual communities can develop effective strategies to engage with modern society, especially the younger generation, while maintaining the essence and spiritual values that are at the core of the community.

Technology Ethics Approach

The technology ethics approach considers the ethical implications of advances in digital technology and how to ensure their application is carried out in a responsible and moral manner. Along with the rapid development of digital technology, concerns have emerged about the potential negative impacts that could arise if this technology is not managed properly.

In the encyclical *Laudato Si'* (2015), Pope Francis emphasized the importance of deep ethical considerations so that technology does not have a negative impact on humans and the environment. He called for technological progress to be balanced with moral and spiritual wisdom, so that technology can truly improve the quality of human life and preserve the earth.

One of the important studies in the field of technology ethics was conducted by (Dobrik, 2018). In his research, Dobrik examines the ethical challenges faced by individuals and organizations in the digital era, such as data privacy, cybersecurity, and the impact of technology on the environment. He observed that the rapid development of digital technology often precedes ethical thinking and the regulations that govern it, resulting in the risk of misuse or undesirable negative impacts.

To address these challenges, Dobrik offers an ethical framework that integrates spiritual principles and human values into the development and application of technology. He stressed the importance of respecting human dignity, maintaining privacy, and ensuring that technology is used for good purposes and does not harm other people or the environment.

One of the main focuses in the technology ethics approach is the ethical issue of artificial intelligence (AI). With rapid advances in the field of AI, concerns have emerged about how to ensure that AI systems are developed and used in a manner that is fair, responsible, and in accordance with moral and spiritual values.

A study from (Gordon, J.S, 2021) explores AI ethics and how to ensure that AI systems are developed with moral and spiritual values in mind, such as justice, equality, and respect for

human dignity. In his research, Gordon identified several ethical risks associated with the use of AI, such as algorithm bias, lack of transparency, and potential misuse for unethical purposes.

To address these risks, Gordon proposes an AI ethics framework based on principles such as fairness, accountability, transparency, and respect for privacy and human dignity. He also emphasized the importance of involving stakeholders from various disciplines, including ethicists, philosophers, and spiritual leaders, in the process of AI development and regulation.

In addition, the technology ethics approach also addresses issues such as cyber security, data privacy, and the impact of technology on the environment. Research from (Denitsa, Kozhuharova., Atanas, Kirov., Zhanin, 2022) explores the ethical challenges of maintaining cyber security and protecting personal data from threats such as hacking, data theft, and misuse of information. He emphasized the importance of transparency and accountability in data management, as well as the need for adequate regulations to protect individual privacy rights.

In the context of environmental impacts, a study from (Truong, 2022) examines how developments in digital technology, such as data centers, mobile devices, and network infrastructure, contribute to increased carbon emissions and consumption of natural resources. Truong advocates for a more sustainable approach in the development and implementation of technology, taking into account aspects such as energy efficiency, recycling and responsible use of resources.

Overall, the technology ethics approach offers an important framework for ensuring that advances in digital technology are balanced with deep moral and spiritual considerations. By integrating values such as respect for human dignity, justice, accountability, and environmental sustainability, this approach seeks to maximize the benefits of technology while minimizing possible negative impacts. Collaboration between technologists, ethicists, and spiritual leaders is needed to ensure that digital technologies develop in harmony with ethical principles and universal human values.

Integrative Multidisciplinary Approach

An integrative multidisciplinary approach seeks to combine various perspectives from disciplines such as theology, psychology, sociology, and technology ethics in one holistic framework. This approach recognizes the complexity of the challenges faced in the digital era and tries to offer comprehensive solutions. By combining insights from various scientific disciplines, this approach seeks to provide a deeper understanding and more effective solutions in dealing with problems related to digital technology and spirituality.

One example of research that uses an integrative multidisciplinary approach is a study conducted by (Groome, 2018). In his research, Groome proposes a Christian education model

that integrates spiritual, cognitive and social-emotional aspects in a digital context. This model involves the wise use of digital technology to facilitate authentic spiritual experiences, critical reflection, and the building of mutually supportive communities.

Groome combines perspectives from theology, developmental psychology, and sociology to develop a holistic educational model. From a theological perspective, he emphasizes the importance of instilling spiritual values and facilitating authentic experiences of faith. Meanwhile, from a developmental psychology perspective, it considers the stages of an individual's cognitive and emotional development, as well as how digital technology can influence this process. Then, from a sociological perspective, he recognizes the role of community and social interaction in the formation of spiritual values and identity.

By integrating these multiple perspectives, Groome proposes an approach that involves the use of digital technology to create learning environments that are interactive, visually engaging, and facilitate discussion and critical reflection. However, the use of this technology must be balanced with activities that encourage face-to-face interaction, community building, and authentic spiritual experiences.

Another study that adopts an integrative multidisciplinary approach is the study from (Detweiler, 2013). In his research, Detweiler examines the potential of digital media such as film, games, and virtual reality to convey spiritual messages and promote character building. It offers an approach that combines theology, psychology, art, and technology to create spiritually meaningful digital content.

Detweiler integrates insights from theology to understand narratives and spiritual symbols that can be expressed through digital media. From a psychology perspective, she explores how digital media can influence individual perceptions, emotions, and behaviors, as well as how digital content can be designed to promote positive character growth. Furthermore, from an art point of view, it considers aspects such as aesthetics, narrative, and creativity in creating engaging and meaningful digital content.

By combining these disciplines, Detweiler offers an innovative approach to harnessing the potential of digital media to convey spiritual messages and promote positive values. For example, it explores how virtual reality games or apps can be designed to bring about immersive spiritual experiences, or how movies can explore existential and encouraging themes self-reflection. Based on the description above, it can be seen that efforts to find a balance between advances in digital technology and the appreciation of spiritual values require a multidisciplinary approach involving various disciplines such as theology, psychology,

sociology, ethics, and technology. This approach should be integrative, taking perspectives from each discipline and combining them into holistic and contextual solutions.

Previous studies using an integrative multidisciplinary approach have made significant contributions in exploring the challenges and opportunities brought by the digital age, as well as offering approaches and strategies to effectively integrate spirituality into digital lifestyles. By combining insights from various disciplines, this approach is able to provide a deeper understanding and more comprehensive solutions in dealing with complex problems related to digital technology and spirituality.

4. CONCLUSION

Efforts to find a balance between advances in digital technology and the appreciation of spiritual values in the context of an online connected society require a comprehensive and integrative multidisciplinary approach. Through literature searches, there are several main approaches that can be combined to offer a holistic solution.

First, the digital theology approach emphasizes the importance of translating faith teachings into languages and media that are relevant for the digital generation. This involves using social media, mobile apps, and technology such as virtual reality to present spirituality in a more interactive and visual form. This approach provides an opportunity for faith communities to actively engage in digital culture and bridge the gap between spiritual values and the technology-influenced realities of everyday life.

Second, the digital psychology approach examines the impact of technology on human mental health, behavior and psychological well-being. Studies reveal that excessive use of technology can lead to isolation, addiction, attention disorders, and other emotional problems. The solution offered is to develop spiritual habits such as meditation, self-reflection and meaningful face-to-face interaction to enrich emotional and spiritual life.

Third, the digital sociology approach observes changes in community structure and dynamics in the digital era. Communities are no longer limited to physical spaces, but are also formed virtually through online networks. This opens up opportunities to build spiritual communities across geographic boundaries, but also presents challenges such as polarization and alienation from the real world. Therefore, this approach emphasizes the importance of maintaining face-to-face interactions and authenticity in spiritual communities.

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