An Analysis of Online Learning Method Design for Theological Education in the Digital Age: A Systematic Literature Review Approach

Anon Dwi Saputro[1], Hengki Wijaya[2]
[1]Sekolah Tinggi Teologi Indonesia Yogyakarta
[2]Sekolah Tinggi Filsafat Theologia Jaffray Makassar
Korespondensi: anondwi5@gmail.com[1], hengkilily1988@gmail.com[2]

Abstract

This study aims to analyse the development and design of an online curriculum for theological education in the digital era through a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) approach. Data was collected using Publish or Perish 8 software from Google Scholar, with the keywords "theological education in the digital era" and "online curriculum design" within the publication range of 2014 to 2024. From the initial 200 pieces of literature identified, a rigorous screening process was conducted based on title, abstract, and keywords, resulting in 23 relevant articles. Next, a thorough analysis of the full content of the articles was conducted based on predetermined inclusion and exclusion criteria, resulting in the selection of 11 articles suitable for further study. The results revealed various trends, challenges, and strategies in the development of online curriculum for theological education, including the integration of digital pedagogy, contextual theological frameworks, and learner-centred learning models. This study provides an integrated understanding of how theological education institutions are responding to digital transformation and provides a basis for future curriculum innovation.

Keywords: digital age; digital pedagogy; online curriculum design; systematic literature review; theological education

Pendahuluan

Theological education has long been an important pillar in forming spiritual and intellectual leaders. Theological education equips students with a deep understanding and practical relevance to the challenges of the times. However, with the advancement of digital technology in recent decades, the world of education in general, and theological education in particular, has undergone significant changes. The development of digital technologies, such as online learning platforms, artificial intelligence (AI)-based applications, and unlimited access to digital resources, provides great opportunities to access theological education more flexibly and inclusively. Digital power can also reshape the digital lives of youth and young adults in the realm of discipleship (Hunt, 2019). Digital technology allows seminaries to offer more extensive and accessible learning materials. Online learning platforms can introduce more interactive teaching methods, allowing students to learn at a pace that is more customized to their needs. However, along with these opportunities come new challenges. One of them is how to maintain the quality of education that not only meets academic standards but also touches on the spiritual and moral aspects that are the foundation of theological education itself (Wang et al., 2023).

In the midst of this transition, theological colleges need to design curriculum that are not only relevant to the development of digital technology but also able to maintain the theological values on which their education is based (Van Der Knijff, 2021). The curriculum must be able to respond to the needs of a rapidly developing digital world without losing the essence of holistic theological education. Theological education in the digital era requires a more dynamic and open approach to technological change without neglecting the basic principles underlying the study of religion. This involves understanding how digital technology can be integrated in the theological learning process, as well as how it impacts both challenges and opportunities to the overall quality of education (Ocampo & Gozum, 2024). Similarly, Oliver points out that technology offers support for teaching and learning, cuts costs, and offers solutions to a number of current issues related to the formation of effective pastors (Oliver, 2014). Furthermore, this research aims to examine the implementation of online curriculum in seminaries in the context of theological education.

The research gap lies in the lack of systematic studies on online curriculum design that accommodates the needs of academic and spiritual formation in a balanced manner. Most previous studies focus more on the technological and management aspects of online learning. At the same time, few emphasize specific needs in theological education, such as the strengthening of religious communities and the integration of spiritual experiences in online learning. Some of the problem formulations presented in this study include:1) How is online curriculum design applied in theological education in the digital era? 2) What challenges are faced in implementing online curriculum in theological education? 3) What opportunities can be utilized by improving the online curriculum in theological education? 4) What is the impact of using online curriculum on the quality of theological education?

The novelty value of this research lies in the approach used to identify key elements in online theological education curriculum design through a systematic literature review. This research aims to fill the gap by analyzing how various elements of existing online curricula can be adapted to meet the needs of theological education in the digital era. In addition, it will also assess how digital technologies, such as online learning platforms, video conferencing, and discussion forums, can be used to enrich the spiritual and intellectual

experiences of theological students. The research argues that online curriculum design for theological education in the digital age should be able to integrate academic aspects and spiritual formation in a balanced manner. With a systematic approach to the literature review, this study aims to identify key elements to consider in designing an effective online theological education curriculum that not only takes into account the accessibility and flexibility of learning but also supports community building and spiritual experiences of students.

Research Methods

This study used a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) approach, which is a synthesis research method that reviews research results related to a topic with a rigorous protocol to gather all the evidence on the research question and to support the development of evidence-based guidelines for practitioners (Kitchenham et al., 2009). Specifically, the type of SLR used in this study is the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA), whose stages include identification through data search, screening or screening of existing data, eligibility or assessment of data eligibility, and inclusion, namely the determination of data that is ready for review (Moher et al., 2009). Recently, many researchers have moved away from traditional literature review to SLR. Since SLR demands a strict protocol, the methods section of this research will detail the stages of the research.

The object of research in this article is literature that discusses Online Curriculum Design for Theological Education in the Digital Age, which consists of articles published in Indonesia by Indonesian authors during the period 2014-2024. The theological studies in question include theological education in the digital era and online curriculum design.

The data sought in this study are the results of research conducted by researchers specifically on the study of Online Curriculum Design in Theological Education in the Digital Age. The data search process was carried out using the Publish or Perish 8 computer application. The database source used was Google Scholar, considering that the data sought were publications published in the country. The keywords used to find relevant data were "Theological Education in the Digital Age" and "Learning Method Design". The period set for the data search was between 2014-2024, to identify relevant research within that period.

Data Search

The data searched were the results of Indonesian research that actually combined theological and psychological studies. The database used is Google Scholar only because the data sought are domestic publications. The keywords used to track down the desired data are "Theological Education in the Digital Age" and "Online Curriculum Design." The period set was 2014-2024 to see related research in that year range.
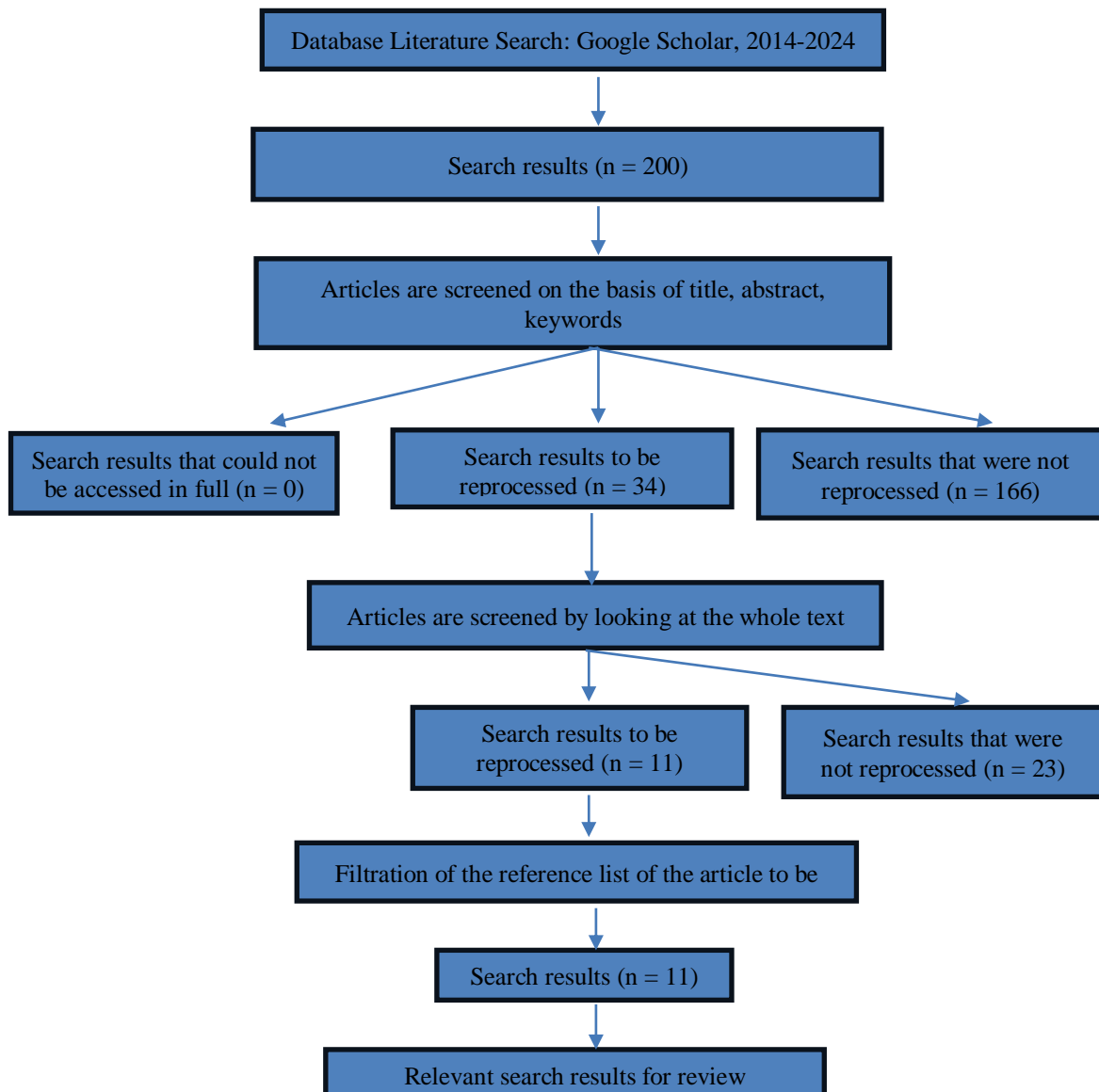
Data Screening and Assessment

The data screening process is carried out by carefully reading the titles and abstracts of the collected literature. Then the researcher will determine whether the journal article is suitable for analysis or not. This determination is based on data exclusion and inclusion as listed below.

No	Criteria Inclusions	Criteria Eklusi
1	Indonesian language literature and articles	Literature in the form of final assignments, books, proceedings, book chapters or book reviews
2	The research content reflects Online Curriculum Design in Theological Education in the Digital Age	The research content only highlights one of the Online Curriculum Design in Theological Education in the Digital Age
3	Literature published in national journals	Literature published in overseas repositories, conferences and journals
4	Published 2014-2024	Published before 2014

Data Selection

PRISMA guidelines were used to obtain selected articles as SLR review material with good quality results. The following PRISMA flow will show the process of searching for data until the final selection to be reviewed in the results and discussion section.

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Database Literature Search: Google Scholar, 2014-2024
                          ↓
              Search results (n = 200)
                          ↓
   Articles are screened on the basis of title, abstract,
                        keywords
          ↙               ↓               ↘
Search results that    Search results to be    Search results that were not
could not be accessed  reprocessed (n = 34)    reprocessed (n = 166)
in full (n = 0)
                          ↓
   Articles are screened by looking at the whole text
                          ↓                    ↘
              Search results to be        Search results that were
              reprocessed (n = 11)        not reprocessed (n = 23)
                          ↓
   Filtration of the reference list of the article to be
                          ↓
              Search results (n = 11)
                          ↓
          Relevant search results for review
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Results and Discussion
Literature Analysis

The literature search process related to online curriculum design research for theological education in the digital era was conducted through Google Scholar, with a period between 2014 and 2024. The search used the keywords "theological education in the digital era, online curriculum design" through the Publish or Perish 8 application, resulting in around 200 documents. Next, an initial selection process was conducted based on a rigorous review of titles, abstracts and keywords, which resulted in 34 articles for further analysis. The next stage involved a thorough screening of the full content of the 34 articles to ensure their suitability to the focus of online curriculum design in the context of theological education in the digital age. Selection was made concerning the pre-determined inclusion and exclusion criteria. From this process, 11 articles were selected that were deemed to fulfil the criteria and have strong enough references to be used for a more in-depth study in the research. The selected articles were then documented in an inventory table.

No.	Author Name	Afiliasi	Article Title	Journal
1	Giawa, S., & Telaumbanua, A. (2023)	Sekolah Tinggi Teologi Anugerah Misi Nias Barat	The Urgency of Emotional Intelligence in Implementing Democratic Learning Models by Teachers in the Digital Age	Jurnal Teologi Dan Pendidikan Kristen
2	Hura, M. P., Laoli, S., & Gea, M. A. (2024)	Sekolah Tinggi Teologi Ekumene Jakarta	Transforming Christian Education Learning Methods in the Digital Age	Coram Mundo: Jurnal Teologi Dan Pendidikan Agama
3	Hutabarat, E., Hutabarat, A. N., Gaol, C. L., & … (2024)	Institut Agama Kristen Negeri Tarutung	Implementation of Web-based Learning to Improve Learning Effectiveness in the Digital Age	Jurnal Trust
4	Jonatan, J., & Waruwu, A. T. M. (2023)	STT Ekumene Jakarta	The Role of Digital Technology in the Development of Christian Learning in the Digital Age	ANTHOR: Education and Learning Journal
5	Judijanto, L., & Yulianti, S. D. (2024)	Universitas Linggabuana PGRI Sukabumi	Bibliometric Analysis of Competency-Based Curriculum Development in the Context of the Digital Age	Sanskara Pendidikan Dan …
6	Lasfeto, A., Runesi, A., Wafumilena, J. N., & … (2021)	STT Bethel Indonesia Jakarta	Discussion methods in the vortex of Christian education in the digital age	Edukasi: Jurnal Pendidikan Agama Kristen
7	Medy Martje Lobang, Yosua Feliciano Camerling (2021)	STT Levinus Rumaseb Sentani Jayapura	Learning Media and Curriculum for Congregational Education in Online-Based Churches to Face 21st Century Globalisation Changes	Jurnal Ilmu Teologi dan Pendidikan …
8	Prasetya, P. A., Siahaya, A., & Halamury, M. F. (2024)	Institut Agama Kristen Negeri, Ambon	Christian Religious Education Teacher's Creativity in Using Digital Technology as a Fun Learning Medium at SMK Wira Harapan	Jurnal Shanan
9	Rapa, A. A., & Bilo, D. T. (2024)	Sekolah Tinggi Teologi Injili Arastamar	The Role of Christian Religious Education Teachers in the Implementation of Technology-	Tri Tunggal: Jurnal Pendidikan Kristen Dan …

			Based Interactive Learning to Increase Student Learning Motivation	
10	Subay, M. (2024)	STAK Lentera Bangsa Manado	Using Digital Media for Interactive Learning Activities in Christian Religious Education	Euanggelion: Jurnal Teologi Dan Pendidikan ...
11	Supit, S. (2023)	Institut Agama Kristen Negeri Manado	Multiple intelligences learning model of Christian religious education for children in the era of society 5.0	KURIOS: Jurnal Teologi dan Pendidikan Agama ...

Code article	Research Methods	Learning Methods	Findings
A1	Qualitative-descriptive with literature study	Democratic learning model	Teachers' emotional intelligence plays an important role in democratic learning in the digital era.
A2	Qualitative literature/descriptive study.	Learning methods and systems supported by digital technology	Learning methods that Christian Religious Education can use in this increasingly sophisticated digital era. The implication is that there is better accessibility in learning.
A3	Quantitative approach with experimental design	Web-based Learning	When implemented effectively, web-based learning not only improves content delivery but also facilitates a collaborative learning environment where students can interact and engage with the material in real-time.
A4	Qualitative method with literature study approach	Use of learning videos, multimedia-based digital resources, and interactive simulations	By utilising digital technology wisely, Christian learning can become more dynamic, interactive, and relevant in the digital era.
A5	Analisis bibliometrik	Digital technology integration	Despite significant progress in the implementation of the competency-based curriculum, there are still research gaps, especially in the application of technology in pedagogy and distance learning.
A6	Qualitative with a literature study approach	Collaborative Learning	Discussion methods and technology increase student engagement.
A7	Descriptive qualitative method	Online learning media through live streaming worship and other online learning such as WhatsApp, e-Learning, Google Classroom, Youtube or Zoom Meeting and several similar applications such as Google Meet, Microsoft Teams, Jitsi	The church innovates in education by utilising the times. Some of the things that churches can do are using online learning media through live streaming worship and other online learning such as WhatsApp, e-Learning, Google Classroom, Youtube and Zoom Meeting and several similar applications such as Google Meet,

		Meet and others.	Microsoft Teams, Jitsi Meet and others.
A8	Qualitative research methods.	Digital Technology-based Learning Methods	This research results in: First, teachers' creativity in using digital technology as learning media needs to be improved and trained. Because, teacher creativity really helps the learning process become more enjoyable. Second, the form of learning media as a hypothetical model of digital technology, including: animated power point-based learning media; internet by making ebooks and teaching materials in the form of posters through the canva application; audio-visual-based media through plotagon; and adroid-based learning media. Third, factors inhibiting teacher creativity include: age factor; lack of ability or skill of teachers to use digital technology, learning atmosphere in the classroom and shorter learning time allocation.
A9	Qualitative design with a case study approach	Technology-based interactive learning	Teachers need to select and adapt the content of Christian materials to suit the needs of students while utilizing interactive features to increase student engagement. Challenges such as limited access to technology, lack of technology skills, and resistance to change are also discussed as part of the implementation of technology in Christian learning.
A10	Study Library Research	Interactive Learning	Learners feel bored and very quickly bored when learning independently at home and are faced with many tasks at hand. This is very much related to the morale or character of the learner while the learner is learning from home. Learners are not very creative in doing assignments, do not have enthusiasm when learning independently at home, do not have discipline, or are not responsible for completing tasks that have been given by their teachers.
A11	Qualitative descriptive with a literature review approach	Multiple intelligences	The contribution of multiple intelligences learning presents critical, creative and innovative

		work as the capital of Christian religious education equipped with digital technology skills without having to leave the essence of education. education.

Analyse Research Methods

The majority of the research relies on a qualitative approach. This shows that researchers focus more on in-depth exploration of the phenomenon of Christian Religious Education (PAK) learning in the digital era, such as teachers' perceptions, learning strategies, and the impact on students. This method is suitable for exploring the meaning and context of the use of technology in learning. Only one article (A3) uses a quantitative approach with an experimental design. This shows that experimental or statistical data-based studies in the context of PAK learning are still very limited, even though this approach can provide stronger empirical validation of the effectiveness of technology in learning. One article (A5) used a bibliometric analysis approach, which serves to map research trends and maps. This approach is very useful in providing an overview of how far the competency-based curriculum has progressed in digital technology.

Method	Number of Articles	Description
Qualitative (descriptive/case study)	9	The majority of the research used a qualitative approach.
Kuantitatif	1	Only one study used an experimental approach (A3).
Analisis Bibliometrik	1	One article used a bibliometric analysis approach (A5).

Analyse Digital Age Learning Methods

Learning Methods	Article	Summary
Democratic Learning	A1	Focus on teacher emotional intelligence.
Web-based	A3	Enhance real-time interaction and student collaboration.
Interactive Multimedia, Video, Simulation	A4, A8	Makes learning more dynamic and fun.
Collaborative (Discussion)	A6	Increase student engagement and understanding.
Interactive (technology-based)	A9, A10	Material adaptation and increased student motivation.
Multiple Intelligences	A11	Helps students' critical and creative development.
Curriculum Integration and Digital Technology	A5	Expanding teachers' digital competencies and pedagogical integration.
Use of Online Church Media	A7	Through streaming, WhatsApp, Zoom, etc.

From the table, there are 8 different learning methods used in the context of digital education. Interactive Multimedia and technology-based Interactive appear more than once, signalling a trend or higher focus on these two approaches. Interactive, collaborative, and adaptive methods are the common threads in this digital era. Interactivity and technology are keywords that appear frequently. This shows that the digital approach encourages teachers to deliver material and actively engage students. Multimedia and simulation have been widely adopted due to their visual and dynamic nature, perfectly suited to the learning

style of the digital generation. Multiple Intelligences suggests a more holistic and personalized approach, tailoring learning methods to students' characteristics. Online platforms such as Zoom and WhatsApp are being utilized even in religious spaces, demonstrating the flexibility and penetration of digital technology in various educational contexts.

The digital age has fuelled the emergence of various learning methods that incorporate technology as the main teaching tool. Emphasizing active student engagement, whether through discussion, interactive media, or online collaboration. Make room for personalized learning, with approaches such as multiple intelligences. Enhancing the role of the teacher not only as a content deliverer but as an emotionally sensitive and technology-adaptive facilitator and mentor.

Research Analysis by Year

The development of the times characterized by advances in digital technology has had a major influence on approaches in the world of education, including in the realm of Christian Religious Education. This is reflected in the increasing number of scientific publications that discuss digital-based learning methods from year to year. In 2021, there were only two articles that specifically discussed digital learning methods. The themes raised in this period are still preliminary and tend to be exploratory, focusing on responses to the need for digitization of education - especially as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic that requires distance learning. These studies included the utilization of online church media and the use of discussion as a learning method in the context of Christian Religious Education, as a first step in the integration of technology in spiritual education. The year 2023 saw an increase in the number of articles to three publications. This increase indicates the growing interest and wider awareness of the importance of updating digital learning methods. Researchers began to explore new methods, such as democratic learning models that emphasize strengthening teachers' emotional intelligence, as well as the application of technology in general in creating learning experiences that better suit the needs of modern students.

The most significant increase occurred in 2024 when there were six articles on the topic. This year reflects a surge in attention to research in the area of digital learning methods. Some of the new approaches in focus include web-based learning, interactive learning, multiple intelligences theory, and integration between curriculum and digital technology. Not only the effectiveness of the methods of concern, but also the creativity of teachers, the challenges of implementing technology, and its effect on student motivation and engagement are also highlighted. This upward trend also reflects the new direction of education globally, which increasingly emphasizes flexible, individualized, and digital learning. The academic world and educational institutions are now increasingly recognizing the urgency of developing approaches that can adapt to the times while remaining rooted in the formation of character and spiritual values of students in a contextual manner.

Research by Year
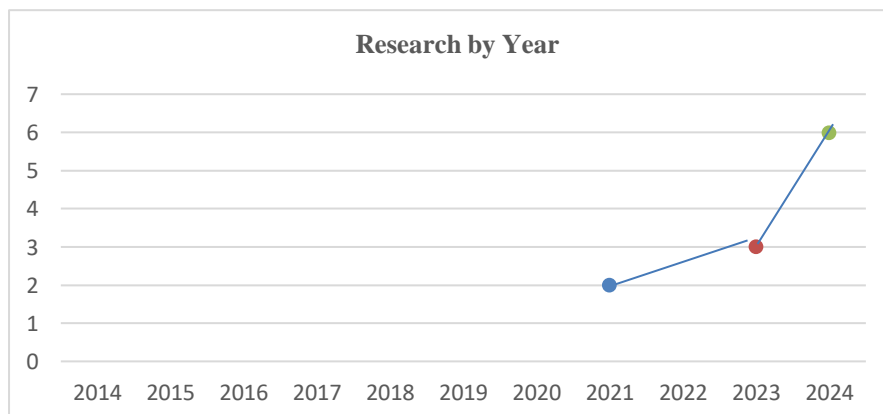
Discussion of Relevant Articles

Digital transformation has had a significant impact on the world of education, including in the scope of Christian Religious Education (PAK). Technological advances have not only influenced changes in learning media but also opened up space for the birth of new pedagogical strategies, innovative learning methods, and increased learner involvement in a more interactive manner. To understand these dynamics more comprehensively, this article analyses eleven scientific articles published between 2014 and 2024. The purpose of this analysis is to identify the approaches, challenges, and innovations that are evolving in the application of digital learning methods in the context of PAK.

One interesting study came from Giawa and Telaumbanua who highlighted the important role of teachers' emotional intelligence in the implementation of democratic learning models in the digital era (Giawa & Telaumbanua, 2023). Through a qualitative-descriptive approach based on a literature study, they asserted that teachers with high emotional intelligence tend to be more capable of creating an open, inclusive, and participatory learning atmosphere - characteristics that are highly relevant in the dynamic and challenging digital education ecosystem. Similarly, Hura, Laoli, and Gea examine the transformation of PAK learning systems and methods through digital technology support. Using a descriptive qualitative literature-based approach, they explain that digitization allows for expanded access to teaching materials and flexibility in the student learning process. This study emphasizes that technology is not just a tool, but also a strategic means to enrich teaching methods. (Hura et al., 2024).

Furthermore, an experimental quantitative approach was used by Hutabarat to evaluate the effectiveness of web-based learning. The results of his research show that this method is not only able to improve content delivery but also create a collaborative and interactive learning environment, allowing students to participate in real time (Hutabarat et al., 2024). Meanwhile, Jonatan and Waruwu examined the use of interactive digital media such as video, simulation, and multimedia. Through a qualitative approach, they found that the integration of digital media makes the Christian learning process more dynamic, contextualized, and engaging. Meanwhile, Judijanto and Yulianti used bibliometric analysis to explore the literature related to competency-based curriculum development (Judijanto & Yulianti, 2024). Despite these advances, they highlighted gaps in the utilization of digital technologies in the context of pedagogy and distance learning, posing challenges to the curriculum reform process.

From a learning methods perspective, Lasfeto et al. pointed out the importance of using discussion methods as a collaborative approach in PAK. Through a literature study with a qualitative approach, they found that discussion combined with digital technology can significantly increase student participation and engagement (Lasfeto et al., 2021). In the realm of congregational education, Lobang and Camerling show that the church has also adapted to technological developments through the utilization of digital platforms such as Zoom, WhatsApp, and YouTube as learning media. This approach not only responds to the needs during the pandemic but also reflects the church's active role in supporting the transformation of the congregation's spiritual education digitally (Lobang & Camerling, 2021).

In terms of teacher professionalism, Prasetya, Siahaya, and Halamury highlighted the importance of teacher creativity in using digital technology as a learning medium (Prasetya et al., 2024). Their research shows that teachers need to be trained to utilize various platforms such as Canva, Plotagon, and Android-based applications to make the learning process more fun and attractive. In line with this, Rapa and Bilo through a case study examined the implementation of technology-based interactive learning by PAK teachers. The results show that teachers need to adapt teaching materials to the context of learners and be able to

overcome challenges such as limited access to technology, limited digital skills, and resistance to change (Franklin & Bilo, 2024).

However, the use of technology in learning does not always go without a hitch. Subay highlighted the impact of digital self-learning on student character (Subay, 2024). He found that learners tend to lose motivation, become less responsible, and get bored quickly when learning independently at home. This underscores the importance of integrating character-based pedagogical approaches and digital technology. As a more comprehensive solution, Supit proposes the application of the multiple intelligences model in PAK learning. This approach is seen as capable of fostering creativity and 21st century skills, without compromising the essential values of Christian faith education. (Supit, 2023). This model emphasises that the development of spirituality must go hand in hand with technological mastery and character building.

Research Findings

The development of digital technology has brought significant changes in the world of education, including in the realm of Christian Religious Education (PAK). Based on the analysis of eleven scientific articles reviewed through the Systematic Literature Review (SLR) approach, it was found that the transformation of PAK learning in the digital era involves various aspects such as learning methods, utilization of digital media, increasing teacher competence, and strengthening spiritual values in the midst of the digital era.

The majority of studies show that the use of digital technology not only expands access to learning materials but also encourages innovation in learning methods. Hutabarat et al. (A3) showed that web-based learning can create a collaborative environment and improve student interaction (Hutabarat et al., 2024). Meanwhile, research by Jonatan & Waruwu (A4) and Prasetya et al. (A8) emphasize the importance of using interactive media such as videos, digital simulations, and modern learning applications (Canva, Plotagon, Google Classroom) to increase the attractiveness and effectiveness of Christian Education learning (Prasetya et al., 2024). In addition, Supit (A11) highlighted the multiple intelligences method as a relevant pedagogical approach to developing student's creativity, criticality, and innovation without neglecting the essence of spirituality in Christian learning. This finding shows that the transformation of teaching methods is closely related to the profound use of digitalization.

Teachers are key actors in the transformation of digital education. Giawa & Telaumbanua (A1) underline that teachers' emotional intelligence is crucial in implementing democratic learning models, especially in a digital context that demands greater adaptation and empathy for students' needs. On the other hand, research by Rapa & Bilo (A9) and Prasetya et al. (A8) mentioned that teachers' creativity and ability to choose and use digital media determine the extent to which learning can take place in an interesting and meaningful way. However, there are also significant challenges to be faced. These include teachers' digital skills gaps, limited access to technology, and resistance to change (A9). This indicates the need for training and mentoring programs to improve PAK teachers' digital literacy to meet the needs of the times.

While digitization offers flexibility, the implementation of distance learning also presents moral and psychological challenges for students. Subay (A10) found that learners experienced boredom, lack of enthusiasm, and decreased responsibility during the self-study process at home (Subay, 2024). This situation underscores the importance of interactive learning strategies and pedagogical approaches that take into account the character and emotional needs of students. In addition, churches also play an important role in supporting congregational education through digital innovation. Research by Lobang & Camerling (A7) revealed that churches have started using various digital platforms to conduct worship and

learning, such as Zoom, Google Meet, and YouTube, which have become important tools amid globalization (Lobang & Camerling, 2021).

Judijanto & Yulianti (A5), through bibliometric analysis, identified gaps in research related to technology integration in pedagogy and distance learning (Judijanto & Yulianti, 2024). This shows that despite the widespread implementation of technology, a deeper understanding of how technology is reshaping pedagogical processes in the context of Christian theology and spirituality is still limited. This opens up opportunities for further research that is more focused on developing holistic and contextualized technology-based learning models.

Digital transformation in Christian Religious Education learning brings many benefits, from increasing access, and flexibility, to strengthening student engagement. However, the success of this transformation is highly dependent on teacher readiness, adaptive curriculum design, and adequate technological support. In addition, a balanced approach is needed so that spiritual values are not reduced in the digitalization process. Therefore, teacher capacity building, learning innovation, and the utilization of relevant digital media are the main agenda in welcoming contextualized Christian religious education in the digital era.

Implications

In the digital era, online curriculum design in theological education is a deliberate process aimed at creating learning experiences that are not only theologically robust but also pedagogically effective within virtual and hybrid learning contexts. This approach requires the integration of academic content delivery with the holistic development of learners, encompassing intellectual, spiritual, and character dimensions. Thus, an online theological curriculum does not merely focus on cognitive aspects but also facilitates faith development, spiritual depth, and critical theological reflection—all of which are core objectives of theological education. Such a curriculum must be designed with careful consideration of learners' contextual needs, the current dynamics of ministry, and the use of educational technologies that support active, collaborative, and transformative engagement. Through this approach, theological education in the digital age can remain relevant and impactful, while also addressing the challenges and opportunities of an increasingly digitalized world.

Challenges in Design Implementation Learning Methods in the Digital Age

Theological education in the digital era faces unique challenges that require adjustments to the design of learning methods to remain relevant and effective. In many regions, especially in remote areas, infrastructure limitations such as unstable internet access and lack of technological devices are significant barriers to the implementation of digital learning. Sari et al highlighted that inadequate infrastructure hinders the equitable application of technology (Sari et al., 2024), Sucipto found that 65% of respondents considered unstable internet connectivity as the biggest obstacle in technology-based learning (Sucipto, 2024).

The lack of skills in using digital technology among educators and students reduces the effectiveness of digital learning. Sari et al. note that low digital literacy reduces the effectiveness of technology use in learning and education administration (Sari et al., 2024). Some educators and educational institutions show resistance to change and the adoption of new technologies. Sari et al identified resistance to change as one of the main challenges in the implementation of technology in education management in the digital era (Sari et al., 2024).

Ineffective digital learning course design can reduce learning effectiveness. One of the biggest challenges in instructional design is designing and developing effective digital

learning courses, which requires setting clear learning objectives, a logical structure, and appropriate educational technologies. Lack of in-depth understanding of digital curriculum can hinder the implementation of effective learning method design. Sari et al. found that despite significant progress in implementing competency-based curricula, there are still research gaps specifically in the application of technology in pedagogy and distance learning (Sari et al., 2024).

The Impact of Learning Methods in the Digital Age on the Quality of Theological Education

One of the most prominent positive impacts of digitisation in theological education is increased accessibility to learning resources. Hura et al. (A2) emphasise that the transformation of digital-based learning methods allows wider access to teaching materials, especially for students in remote areas (Hura et al., 2024). This reinforces inclusivity in theological education and supports the sustainability of the learning process despite physical and geographical limitations.

Learning methods in the digital era have had a significant impact on the quality of theological education, both in terms of accessibility, teaching creativity, and student involvement. However, this positive impact must be balanced with the readiness of human resources, careful curriculum design, and strengthening of spiritual values so that the essence of theological education is maintained. Successful implementation depends not only on technological sophistication but also on the extent to which theological values remain at the center of the educational process.

Future Development Opportunities Learning Methods in the Digital Age

One of the main opportunities is the integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) to create a more personalized learning system. Using AI, learning methods can be customized to suit learners' individual learning styles, pace, and needs. The system can recommend learning materials, identify student difficulties, and provide automatic evaluation. (Radianti et al., 2020).

The digital era opens up a vast space for the development of more sophisticated, inclusive, and transformative learning methods. AI, VR, global collaboration, and adaptive curriculum are opportunities that must be utilized smartly and wisely. However, this development needs to be balanced with a strong understanding of ethics, values, and educational identity, especially in theological education, so that technology does not shift spiritual substance, but rather strengthens it.

The results of the study in this article have several important implications, both in academic and practical contexts in theological education in the digital era. This study enriches the literature on the design of online learning methods in theological education, which is still limited. With a systematic literature review approach, this article provides a strong conceptual and theoretical foundation for future research on digital transformation in theological education. For theological education institutions, the results of this analysis provide practical guidance in designing and implementing effective online learning methods. Aspects such as interactivity, integration of spiritual values, and technological adaptation are important points that must be considered by educators and curriculum developers.

Conclusions

Online curriculum design in theological education in the digital age is implemented through an intentional and integrated approach, combining strong theological elements with pedagogical strategies suitable for virtual and hybrid learning. The curriculum is designed to create learning experiences that are contextual, and flexible, and support active student

engagement through the utilization of educational technology, Learning Management System (LMS) platforms, as well as project-based learning models and reflective discussions.

However, the effectiveness of online learning is not only determined by technological sophistication, but also by thoughtful pedagogical design, contextualisation of theological material, and the formation of spirituality that remains relevant even in virtual spaces. Methods involving discussion forums, synchronous learning, and the utilization of creative digital media have proven to support doctrinal understanding, critical thinking, and meaningful shared learning experiences. On the other hand, challenges encountered include the lack of digital literacy among lecturers, technological gaps, lack of spirituality in online formats, and limitations in contextualized curriculum development. If not addressed, these challenges may hinder the quality and depth of theological education in the digital era. Therefore, future development should lead to a hybrid model that combines the power of digital technology with a direct theological coaching approach. Theological institutions also need to invest in lecturer training, curriculum redesign, and building digital-based models of spiritual formation that remain rooted in the values of faith and service.

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