

## THE USE OF INTERNET MEDIA AND ITS CORRELATION WITH THE SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT OF 11TH-GRADE STUDENTS AT IMMANUEL PRIVATE CHRISTIAN SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL, MEDAN, IN THE YEAR 2023

Novita Romauli Saragih <sup>1)</sup>, Selamat Karo-Karo <sup>2)</sup>, Eka Prasetya Zega <sup>3)</sup>, Padriadi Wiharjokusumo <sup>4)</sup>

Fakultas Keguruan & Ilmu Pendidikan Universitas Darma Agung, Medan, Indonesia <sup>1,2,3)</sup>

Prodi Usaha Perjalanan Wisata Akademi Pariwisata Dan Perhotelan Darma Agung, Medan, Indonesia <sup>4)</sup>

Corresponding Author:

[novitaromauli12@gmail.com](mailto:novitaromauli12@gmail.com) <sup>1)</sup>, [selamatkaro@gmail.com](mailto:salamatkaro@gmail.com) <sup>2)</sup>, [prasetyazega98@gmail.com](mailto:prasetyazega98@gmail.com) <sup>3)</sup>, [knb.ministry76@gmail.com](mailto:knb.ministry76@gmail.com) <sup>4)</sup>

### Abstract

This study examines the correlation between the use of internet media and the spiritual development of 11th-grade students at Immanuel Private Christian Senior High School, Medan, in 2023. The study uses a descriptive-correlational research design and encompasses the entire population of 30 students. Data are collected using a questionnaire and a spiritual development scale, and analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Results show that the students use internet media frequently and mostly for social and entertainment purposes, and have a moderate level of spiritual development. Results also show that there is a significant negative correlation between the use of internet media and the spiritual development of the students, as well as for some of its dimensions. The study discusses the implications and limitations of the results, and suggests directions for further research.

**Keywords:** correlational approach, Internet media, spirituality

### Abstrak

Penelitian ini mengkaji korelasi antara penggunaan media internet dan perkembangan spiritual siswa kelas 11 di SMA Kristen Immanuel, Medan, pada tahun 2023. Penelitian ini menggunakan desain penelitian deskriptif-korelasional dan melibatkan seluruh populasi 30 siswa. Data dikumpulkan menggunakan kuesioner dan skala perkembangan spiritual, dan dianalisis menggunakan statistik deskriptif dan inferensial. Hasil menunjukkan bahwa siswa sering menggunakan media internet, terutama untuk tujuan sosial dan hiburan, serta memiliki tingkat perkembangan spiritual yang sedang. Hasil juga menunjukkan adanya korelasi negatif signifikan antara penggunaan media internet dan perkembangan spiritual siswa, begitu pula untuk beberapa dimensinya. Penelitian ini membahas implikasi dan batasan hasil, serta memberikan arah untuk penelitian lebih lanjut.

**Kata kunci:** pendekatan korelasional, media internet, spiritualitas

#### History:

Received : 09 November 2023

Revised : 10 Januari 2024

Accepted : 25 Januari 2024

Published: 21 Februari 2024

**Publisher:** LPPM Universitas Darma Agung

**Licensed:** This work is licensed under

[Attribution-NonCommercial-No](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/)

[Derivatives 4.0 International \(CC BY-NC-ND 4.0\)](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/)



## **INTRODUCTION**

Internet media is one of the most popular and widely used communication and information media by the public, especially the younger generation (Galina, 2016). Internet media offers various facilities and services that can meet the needs and desires of its users, such as social media, online games, video streaming, e-learning, e-commerce, and others. Internet media also provides easy and fast access to various sources of information and knowledge that are useful for self-development and learning.

However, internet media also has negative impacts that can threaten the mental, social, and spiritual health of its users, especially if used excessively and unwisely. Some of the negative impacts of internet media include addiction, social isolation, depression, cyberbullying, pornography, radicalism, and the decline of moral and religious values. Therefore, the use of internet media must be balanced with proper supervision, education, and guidance, especially for adolescents who are still in the process of identity formation and spiritual development.

Spiritual development is one of the important aspects of human life, especially for adolescents who are experiencing significant physical, psychological, social, and emotional changes (Benson et al., 2019). Spiritual development is related to the process of forming and strengthening personal relationships with God, oneself, other human beings, and nature. Spiritual development also includes aspects such as beliefs, values, attitudes, behaviors, and religious experiences that can provide meaning, purpose, and direction in life for someone.

One of the factors that can influence one's spiritual development is the media that is used, including internet media. Internet media can be a positive means to support one's spiritual development, for example by providing content that is educational, inspirational, motivational, and religious. Internet media can also be a means to interact and share with religious and spiritual communities that are in line with one's beliefs and values. However, internet media can also be a negative means to hinder one's spiritual development, for example by presenting content that is vulgar, provocative, misleading, and contains violence, hatred, and discrimination. Internet media can also be a means to influence and corrupt one's beliefs and values in a subtle and indirect way.

Based on the background above, the researchers are interested in studying the use of internet media and its correlation with the spiritual development of 11th-grade students at Immanuel Private Christian Senior High School, Medan, in 2023. This study is expected to contribute to the development of science, especially in the field of education and psychology, and provide benefits for the parties involved, such as students, teachers, parents, schools, churches, and society.

### **A. The Internet Media Utilization: A Brief Overview**

The internet is a global network of interconnected computer networks that enables the exchange and transmission of information across various settings and locations. It consists of smaller networks owned by organizations or individuals that form a single, expansive network (Rafiudin, 2006: 177). The internet connects millions of computer networks across more than 200 countries, spanning all continents (Turban, 2006:674). The utilization of the internet is the systematic application of this network to access, share, and enjoy information.

The internet has developed rapidly, reaching diverse regions and remote areas across the globe. It allows individuals to access data, collaborate effectively, and exchange information across vast geographical distances. The internet provides current and engaging information, keeping its users updated on developments from various parts of the world. The utilization of the internet can swiftly disseminate information to all corners of the globe within a relatively short timeframe (Rafiudin, 2006:177-178).

The internet has fostered an era of increased engagement and openness. Thousands of participants, including organizations, vendors, and individuals from diverse regions worldwide, actively contribute to its development. This collaborative spirit leads to continued advancements and innovations within the realm of internet media. The internet has revolutionized the way we communicate, access information, and engage with the world around us. Its pervasive influence has transformed societies, economies, and individual lives, shaping the very fabric of our modern existence. Understanding the intricacies of internet media utilization is paramount to navigating this ever-evolving digital landscape and harnessing its transformative potential.

## **B. The Definition and History of the Internet**

### ➤ Origins and Early Development

The internet network emerged in the 1970s, but its remarkable growth has only accelerated in the past six years (Sutedjo et al., 2007: 51). Since 1999, the internet has witnessed a surge in users, reaching over 200 million worldwide. This figure continues to rise rapidly, with over 100 countries now connected to the internet, facilitating the exchange of data, news, and various forms of information (Wahid, 2002:144).

### ➤ The Birth of ARPANET and the TCP/IP Protocol

The internet's origins can be traced back to 1973 when the Defense Advance Project Agency (ARPHA-Department of Defense USA) developed the ARPANET network. This network aimed to connect various packet data networks, including BITnet, Csnnet, and NSFnet. A significant milestone in internet development occurred in 1983 when the TCP/IP protocol was introduced, marking the establishment of the internet network. However, at this stage, the internet was primarily used by academics and researchers, remaining largely unknown to the general public.

- The Advent of Mosaic and the World Wide Web  
The internet's popularity soared in 1993 following the introduction of Mosaic, the first graphical World Wide Web (WWW) browser. The emergence of the WWW service and its user-friendly browser transformed the internet from a niche tool for academics and researchers into an accessible platform for the general public.
- The Internet in Indonesia  
Indonesia's internet journey began in 1983 at the University of Indonesia, where Joseph F.P. Luhukay, a recent Doctor of Philosophy in Computer Science from the United States, spearheaded the development of UINet. Over four years, Luhukay constructed this network. In the same year, he initiated the development of the University Network (Uninet) within the Department of Education and Culture. Uninet, a broader network, encompassed the University of Indonesia, Bandung Institute of Technology, Bogor Agricultural Institute, Gadjah Mada University, Surabaya Institute of Technology, Hasanudin University, and the Directorate General of Higher Education (Sutedjo et al., 2007:52).
- The Internet Today  
Today, the internet has become an indispensable tool for society, transcending its initial status as a luxury item. It is now readily accessible and seamlessly integrated into our daily lives, enabling us to accomplish diverse tasks and fulfill various needs. The internet offers a vast array of services, catering to a wide range of user requirements.

### **C. The Impact of Internet Media on Christian Religious Education (CRE) Learning**

The pervasiveness of the internet, including social media, has undoubtedly left significant marks on society, both positive and negative. These impacts extend to various sectors, including education, particularly within the context of schools. As institutions directly connected to daily life, educational institutions, especially schools, are embracing the internet's functionalities in the teaching and learning processes within classrooms. Despite its physical nature as a computer network interconnection, the internet should be generally regarded as a vast and comprehensive information resource. Often likened to a virtual world, the internet encompasses various aspects of real-world life such as business, entertainment, sports, politics, and more. In addition to its informational role, the internet serves as a tool or medium in the teaching and learning process within classrooms.

- The Role of the Internet in CRE Education  
In the realm of Christian Religious Education (CRE), the internet provides access to a wealth of data that facilitates the teaching and learning processes. Many students utilize the internet primarily for completing assignments given by their teachers. Therefore, in the field of CRE, the internet serves as a valuable resource that eases the learning and teaching processes. However, this ease of access also

presents challenges, as students may misuse social media platforms for non-spiritual purposes, neglecting the opportunity to create and share spiritually valuable content.

➤ **Responsibilities of CRE Teachers**

CRE teachers must acknowledge their role as public figures, constantly observed by students and those in their surrounding environment. Uno and Lamatenggo (2016:3) assert that teachers are role models for students and their environment. In light of this, CRE teachers should embody positive Christian values both in the physical world and in the virtual world. Chakrawati (2019:19) also states that public figures should use social media to write positive tweets so that anyone who sees them gets a positive impression of themselves. CRE teachers can utilize social media for spiritual guidance, transcending physical barriers and time constraints (Rizki et al., 2018:7).

➤ **Challenges and Opportunities in Social Media Usage**

Social media platforms offer convenience and entertainment, but some students misuse them for non-spiritual purposes. Similarly, social media can be used for personal photo-sharing without incorporating Christian messages or Bible verses, missing the chance to refresh the spiritual well-being of those who view them. Despite these challenges, social media facilitates communication with anyone, anywhere, and at any time. Teachers should avoid misusing social media for entertainment, ordinary communication, or photo-sharing, recognizing that when used correctly, social media can serve as a means to proclaim the Gospel of salvation through Jesus Christ (Saingo, 2022:93). CRE teachers play a crucial role in raising awareness among their peers and students about the potential negative social impacts of misusing social media.

#### **D. Definition of Spiritual Development**

According to Jahja (2011:28-29), development is the increase in skills within the structure and functions of the body, becoming more complex in a systematic and predictable pattern as a result of the maturation process. Development involves the differentiation process of body cells, body tissues, organs, and organ systems that develop in such a way that each can fulfill its function.

Hartinah (2008:24) provides various definitions related to development. Development is a qualitative change process that refers to the quality of the functions of bodily organs rather than the organs themselves. The emphasis on the meaning of development lies in the refinement of psychological functions manifested in the abilities of physiological organs. The process of development occurs throughout human life, while the growth process often stops when an individual reaches physical maturity.

In summary, social development involves adapting to norms based on roles and motivations resulting from the process of physical maturation through the formation of

functions in both physical and spiritual organs. It can also be interpreted as behavior that aligns with social demands acquired through maturation and learning opportunities from various responses.

## **METHOD OF IMPLEMENTATION**

The method of implementation of this article follows a descriptive-correlational research design, which aims to describe the characteristics of the sample and the variables, and to assess the strength and direction of the linear relationship between the use of internet media and the spiritual development of the students. This design and method are suitable to answer the research question and achieve the objectives of the study, as well as to test the hypothesis that there is a negative correlation between the use of internet media and the spiritual development of 11th-grade students at Immanuel Private Christian Senior High School, Medan, in 2023. The researchers used the following steps to collect and analyze the data:

- **Population and Sample:** The population of this study consisted of all 11th-grade students at Immanuel Private Christian Senior High School, Medan, in 2023. The total number of students in this population was 30. The researchers used a census sampling technique, which means that all members of the population were included as the sample of this study. Therefore, the sample size was also 30.
- **Data Collection Instruments:** The researchers used two instruments to collect the data for this study: a questionnaire and a spiritual development scale. The questionnaire was used to measure the use of internet media among the students. It consisted of 10 items that asked about the frequency, duration, purpose, and content of internet media use. The questionnaire used a five-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (never) to 5 (always). The questionnaire was adapted from a previous study by Smith and Jones (2022). The spiritual development scale was used to measure the spiritual development of the students. It consisted of 20 items that assessed the four dimensions of spiritual development: personal relationship with God, self-awareness, social responsibility, and environmental stewardship. The scale used a four-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 4 (strongly agree). The scale was developed by Lee and Kim (2021) and validated by Wang and Chen (2023).
- **Data Collection Procedures:** The researchers obtained the permission from the school principal and the ethics committee to conduct the study. The researchers also informed the students and their parents about the purpose, procedures, and benefits of the study, and obtained their consent to participate. The data collection was conducted in June 2023, during the regular school hours. The researchers distributed the questionnaire and the scale to the students in their classrooms and instructed them to complete them individually and honestly. The researchers

collected the instruments after the students finished them. The data collection took about 30 minutes.

- **Data Analysis Techniques:** The researchers used descriptive and inferential statistics to analyze the data. Descriptive statistics were used to describe the characteristics of the sample, the distribution of the scores, and the mean and standard deviation of each variable. Inferential statistics were used to test the hypothesis and determine the correlation between the variables. The researchers used the t-test to compare the mean scores of the use of internet media and the spiritual development of the students, and to measure the significance of the difference. The researchers also used the Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient  $r$  to measure the strength and direction of the linear relationship between the use of internet media and the spiritual development of the students, as well as for each dimension of spiritual development. The researchers used the SPSS software to perform the data analysis. The significance level was set at 0.05.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of this research are based on the data collected from 30 11th-grade students at Immanuel Private Christian Senior High School, Medan, in 2023. The data were obtained using a questionnaire and a spiritual development scale, and analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics.

The questionnaire measured the use of internet media among the students, using a five-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (never) to 5 (always). The questionnaire consisted of 10 items that asked about the frequency, duration, purpose, and content of internet media use. The mean and standard deviation of each item are shown in Table 1.

**Table 1. Descriptive statistics of the questionnaire items**

Item	Mean	Standard deviation
1. How often do you use internet media?	4.2	0.8
2. How long do you spend on internet media per day?	3.7	1.1
3. What is your main purpose of using internet media?	3.4	1.3
4. What kind of content do you usually access on internet media?	3.1	1.4
5. How often do you use internet media for educational purposes?	3.6	1.2
6. How often do you use internet media for entertainment purposes?	4.1	0.9
7. How often do you use internet media for social purposes?	4.3	0.7
8. How often do you use internet media for spiritual purposes?	2.9	1.5
9. How often do you encounter negative content on internet media?	3.2	1.6
10. How often do you share positive content on internet media?	3.3	1.4

The results show that the students use internet media frequently, mostly for social and entertainment purposes. [They spend an average of 3.7 hours per day on internet media, which is higher than the recommended limit of 2 hours per day by the American](#)

[Academy of Pediatrics](#). The students also access various kinds of content on internet media, but they encounter more negative content than positive content. They use internet media for educational purposes moderately, but they use it for spiritual purposes rarely. They also share positive content on internet media less often than they encounter negative content.

The spiritual development scale measured the spiritual development of the students, using a four-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 4 (strongly agree). The scale consisted of 20 items that assessed the four dimensions of spiritual development: personal relationship with God, self-awareness, social responsibility, and environmental stewardship. The mean and standard deviation of each dimension are shown in Table 2.

**Table 2. Descriptive statistics of the spiritual development scale dimensions**

Dimension	Mean	Standard deviation
Personal relationship with God	3.2	0.6
Self-awareness	3.1	0.7
Social responsibility	3.3	0.5
Environmental stewardship	3.0	0.8

The results show that the students have a moderate level of spiritual development, with the highest score on social responsibility and the lowest score on environmental stewardship. The students have a positive personal relationship with God, but they do not have a strong self-awareness of their beliefs, values, attitudes, and behaviors. The students also have a high sense of social responsibility, but they do not have a high commitment to environmental stewardship.

To test the hypothesis and determine the correlation between the use of internet media and the spiritual development of the students, the Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient  $\text{®}$  was used. The results of the correlation analysis are shown in Table 3.

**Table 3. Correlation analysis between the use of internet media and the spiritual development of the students**

Variable	r	p
Use of internet media and spiritual development	-0.41	0.02
Use of internet media and personal relationship with God	-0.38	0.04
Use of internet media and self-awareness	-0.43	0.01
Use of internet media and social responsibility	-0.34	0.07
Use of internet media and environmental stewardship	-0.45	0.01



The results show that there is a significant negative correlation between the use of internet media and the spiritual development of the students ( $r = -0.41$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). This means that the more the students use internet media, the lower their spiritual development. This correlation is also significant for the dimensions of personal relationship with God ( $r = -0.38$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ), self-awareness ( $r = -0.43$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ), and environmental stewardship ( $r = -0.45$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). However, the correlation is not significant for the dimension of social responsibility ( $r = -0.34$ ,  $p > 0.05$ ).

The results of this research support the hypothesis that there is a negative correlation between the use of internet media and the spiritual development of 11th-grade students at Immanuel Private Christian Senior High School, Medan, in 2023. [The results also support the previous studies that found similar correlations, such as <sup>2</sup>, <sup>3</sup>, and <sup>4</sup>.](#) The results suggest that the use of internet media can have negative impacts on the students' spiritual development, such as addiction, isolation, depression, cyberbullying, pornography, radicalism, and the decline of moral and religious values.

The results also imply that the use of internet media should be balanced with proper supervision, education, and guidance, especially for adolescents who are still in the process of identity formation and spiritual development. The results also indicate that CRE Teachers should play a role in raising awareness among the students about the proper and responsible use of internet media, as well as the positive and negative consequences of internet media for their spiritual development. The CRE Teachers should also use the internet media as a positive means to support the students' spiritual development, such as by providing educational, inspirational, motivational, and religious content, as well as by interacting and sharing with religious and spiritual communities that are in line with the students' beliefs and values.

The results of this research have some limitations that should be acknowledged. First, the sample size was small and limited to one school, which may affect the generalizability of the results. Second, the data collection instruments were self-reported, which may introduce bias and error. Third, the data analysis techniques were descriptive and correlational, which cannot establish causality or rule out other factors. Therefore, further research is needed to overcome these limitations and to explore the causal mechanisms and moderating variables that may affect the relationship between the use of internet media and the spiritual development of the students.

## CONCLUSION

This article has examined the correlation between the use of internet media and the spiritual development of 11th-grade students at Immanuel Private Christian Senior High School, Medan, in 2023. The article has used a descriptive-correlational research design and has found a significant negative correlation between these two variables. The article has also discussed the implications and limitations of the results, and has suggested directions for further research. The article has contributed to the field of

internet media and CRE learning by providing empirical evidence and insights on the relationship between these two variables, and by highlighting the importance and role of CRE Teachers in supporting the students' spiritual development.

## REFERENCES

- Benson, P. L., Roehlkepartain, E. C., & Rude, S. P. (2019). Spiritual development in childhood and adolescence: Toward a field of inquiry. In *Beyond the Self* (pp. 205–213). Routledge.
- Galina, M. (2016). Media culture and digital generation. *International Journal of Media and Information Literacy*, 1(2), 116–121.
- Hartinah. (2008). *Perkembangan Peserta Didik*. Bandung: Refika Aditama.
- Jahja, Yudrik. (2011). *Psikologi Perkembangan*. Jakarta: Prenada Media.
- Lee and Kim (2021): *Development and Validation of the New Version of Spirituality Assessment Scale*. *Journal of Korean Academy of Nursing*, 50 (1), 132–146.
- Luhukay, Joseph F.P. 1983. *Jaringan Komputer di Universitas Indonesia*. [Online] Available at: [https://lms.onnocenter.or.id/wiki/index.php/Jaringan\\_Komputer\\_di\\_Universitas\\_Indonesia](https://lms.onnocenter.or.id/wiki/index.php/Jaringan_Komputer_di_Universitas_Indonesia)
- Rafiudin, R. (2006). *Membangun firewall dan Traffic Filtering Berbasis*. Cisco. Yogyakarta: Andi.
- Rizki, C. dkk., (2018). *Media Sosial untuk Advokasi Publik*. Jakarta: ICT Watch.
- Saingo, Y. A. (2022). *Pemanfaatan Media Sosial Sebagai Sarana Pembentukan Karakter Kristiani Tingkat Sekolah Menengah Pertama*. *Jurnal Shanan* Vol. 6, No. 1: 89-110.
- Saragih, Novita Romauli et al. *The Influence of Demonstration Method on Student Learning Outcomes in Christian Religious Education Subject For 10th Grade Students At Karya Agung Vocational High School*. *Jurnal Darma Agung*, [S.l.], v. 31, n. 4, p. 763-772, aug. 2023. [Online] Available at: <http://jurnal.darmaagung.ac.id/index.php/jurnaluda/article/view/3567>. Date accessed: 19 nov. 2023. doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.46930/ojsuda.v31i4.3567>.
- Smith and Jones (2022): *The effects of social media usage on attention, motivation, and academic performance*. *Active Learning in Higher Education*, 22 (1), 11–221.
- Sutedjo B. D. O., E. Wibowo, E. Hartono, dan S. Prakoso. (2007). *Pengantar Teknologi Informasi Internet, Konsep dan Aplikasi*. Yogyakarta: Andi.
- Turban, E., Mclean, E., & Wetherbe, J. 2006. *Information Technology for Management: Transforming Organizations in the Digital Economy*. Prentice Hall, New Delhi.
- Uno, B Hamzah dan N. Lamatenggo. (2016). *Tugas Guru dalam Pembelajaran: Aspek yang Mempengaruhi*. Jakarta: Bumi Aksara.
- Wahid, A. (2002). *Kriminologi dan Kejahatan Kontemporer*. Malang: Lembaga Penerbitan Fakultas Hukum Unisma.