

Dynamics of Gadget Usage Behavior in Christian Religious Education Learning in Building Student Integrity in Grade XI of Isen Mulang High School, Palangka Raya

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Abstract

This study investigates the gap between Christian values taught in Christian Religious Education (CRE) and the digital behavior of Grade XI students at SMA Isen Mulang Palangka Raya, particularly regarding honesty, faithfulness, and responsibility. The issue was identified during the Field Experience Program (PPL), where organized academic dishonesty involving gadget use was observed. Using a descriptive qualitative approach, the research involved Grade XI students and a CRE teacher during the 2025/2026 academic year. Data were collected through classroom observations, in-depth interviews, and documentation, then analyzed using the Miles and Huberman interactive model. The findings reveal three patterns of gadget use: adaptive, distractive, and predominantly ambivalent. These patterns are shaped by internal factors, including motivation and self-control, and external factors such as teaching strategies, peer influence, and school policies. Gadgets simultaneously support biblical learning and create opportunities for dishonest behavior, reflecting the complexity of students' digital experiences. The study concludes that strengthening digital integrity requires Christian digital literacy, consistent value internalization, effective self-regulation, and a supportive faith-based learning environment rather than prohibition alone.

Keywords

Behavioral Dynamics, Gadget Use, Christian Religious Education, Student Integrity, Christian Digital Literacy, Self-Regulation



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INTRODUCTION

The rapid advancement of information and communication technology in the digital era has fundamentally transformed various aspects of human life, particularly education. Gadgets such as smartphones, tablets, and laptops have become indispensable tools for students, providing immediate access to information, digital learning resources, and communication platforms. Their integration into educational

settings has reshaped the way students learn, interact, and acquire knowledge. While gadgets create opportunities for more flexible and interactive learning, their inappropriate use may also contribute to negative behavioral outcomes and weaken students' moral development.

Within the context of Christian Religious Education (CRE), the increasing use of gadgets presents both opportunities and challenges. Gadget-use behavior is dynamic, encompassing varying levels of usage intensity, different learning and non-learning purposes, diverse psychological responses, and changing patterns of interaction with teachers and peers. These behavioral dynamics directly influence students' ability to internalize and practice Christian values in their daily lives. One of the most significant concerns is the influence of gadget use on student integrity. From a Christian perspective, integrity extends beyond honesty alone; it represents the consistency between faith, beliefs, and daily actions. Christian integrity includes honesty, responsibility, faithfulness, obedience to biblical principles, and commitment to living according to the example of Jesus Christ. Therefore, Christian Religious Education is expected not only to provide biblical knowledge but also to cultivate students' moral character and spiritual maturity.

Christian Religious Education plays a strategic role in shaping students' integrity. Digital technology offers numerous educational advantages, including access to digital Bibles, online sermons, interactive learning platforms, and various Christian educational resources. At the same time, however, unrestricted gadget use may encourage academic dishonesty, plagiarism, excessive dependence on digital entertainment, exposure to inappropriate content, and reduced engagement in meaningful face-to-face fellowship. These challenges require educators to develop learning strategies that integrate technology while preserving Christian values.

The phenomenon of gadget use among Indonesian students continues to increase significantly. According to the Indonesian Internet Service Providers Association (APJII), Indonesia's internet penetration reached 78.19% in 2023, with adolescents aged 13–18 representing one of the largest groups of internet users. This situation indicates that high school students spend considerable time interacting with digital devices for both educational and recreational purposes. Although gadgets can facilitate learning through online discussions, digital learning materials, and virtual worship services, they are also frequently misused for excessive gaming, social media, cyberbullying, and other activities that conflict with Christian ethical principles.

SMA Isen Mulang Palangka Raya, a public senior high school in Central Kalimantan, provides Christian Religious Education as a compulsory subject for Christian students to support the development of Christian character and integrity. Nevertheless, observations indicate that Grade XI students demonstrate diverse patterns of gadget use during CRE learning. Some students use gadgets responsibly as learning tools, while others become distracted by entertainment applications or misuse digital technology during classroom activities.

The urgency of this study emerged from the researcher's direct experience during the Field Experience Program (PPL) conducted at SMA Isen Mulang Palangka Raya from September to November 2025. During twelve classroom observations, the researcher integrated digital learning through applications such as the Digital Bible, YouTube sermons, and Quizizz to create more engaging learning experiences. However, repeated observations revealed organized academic dishonesty, where several students used Google to search for answers during online quizzes. Suspicious application activity logs and unusually perfect scores obtained within a very short period supported these findings. Despite continuous supervision and reminders based on biblical teachings, many students became increasingly skilled at circumventing classroom monitoring. These observations revealed a substantial gap between students' cognitive understanding of Christian values and their actual digital behavior.

Grade XI students were selected as the focus of this research because adolescence represents a critical stage of identity and character formation. At this developmental period, students possess greater cognitive maturity for reflection and moral reasoning but remain highly susceptible to peer influence and digital culture. As they prepare for adulthood and future educational pathways, strengthening integrity becomes increasingly important. Therefore, this study on the dynamics of gadget-use behavior in Christian Religious Education learning and its contribution to student integrity at SMA Isen Mulang Palangka Raya is both timely and significant. It is expected to provide a deeper understanding of the interaction between digital technology, Christian education, and character formation while offering practical recommendations for developing faith-based digital literacy and strengthening integrity in Christian Religious Education within the digital era.

METHODS

This study employed a descriptive qualitative research design to explore the dynamics of gadget use among Grade XI students during Christian Religious Education (CRE) learning and its implications for the development of student

integrity. A qualitative approach was considered appropriate because the study sought to obtain an in-depth understanding of participants' experiences, behaviors, perceptions, and interactions within their natural educational setting rather than to measure variables statistically. The descriptive design enabled the researcher to portray the phenomenon comprehensively while maintaining its original context.

The research was conducted at SMA Isen Mulang Palangka Raya, Central Kalimantan, Indonesia. The school was selected because it provides a unique educational environment in which Christian Religious Education is implemented within a public school setting characterized by religious diversity. Although students come from different religious backgrounds, Christian students constitute the majority in the selected Grade XI class, making the school an appropriate context for investigating the relationship between gadget use and Christian character formation.

Participants were selected using purposive sampling based on their relevance to the research objectives. The primary participants consisted of Grade XI Christian students representing different patterns of gadget use and one Christian Religious Education teacher. Students were chosen to reflect diverse behavioral characteristics, including productive educational use of gadgets, excessive or distractive use, balanced usage, and limited gadget use. This variation enabled the researcher to obtain comprehensive perspectives regarding digital behavior and integrity development. The Christian Religious Education teacher served as a key informant because of direct involvement in classroom instruction and character education. Secondary data were obtained from school documents, curriculum materials, lesson plans, school policies concerning gadget use, photographs, and relevant literature.

Data were collected through classroom observations, semi-structured interviews, and documentation. Observation was conducted during twelve learning sessions to examine students' gadget-use behavior, classroom interactions, learning participation, and manifestations of Christian values such as honesty, responsibility, discipline, and cooperation. Field notes were prepared to record significant events and contextual information. Semi-structured interviews were conducted individually with selected students and the Christian Religious Education teacher to explore experiences, perceptions, motivations, challenges, and strategies related to gadget use in learning. The flexible interview format allowed participants to express their views openly while ensuring that the discussion remained aligned with the research objectives. Documentation was used to complement observational and interview findings by examining school records, instructional documents, photographs, and other relevant materials that supported data triangulation.

In qualitative research, the researcher served as the primary research instrument, responsible for planning the study, collecting data, interpreting findings, and preparing the research report. Supporting instruments included interview guidelines, observation sheets, field notes, audio recording devices, and digital cameras. All recordings and documentation were obtained with participants' consent and were used solely for research purposes while maintaining confidentiality.

Data analysis followed the interactive model of Miles and Huberman (1994), consisting of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing with verification. Data reduction involved transcribing interviews, organizing field notes, coding meaningful statements, and categorizing emerging themes. Data display was conducted through descriptive narratives, thematic matrices, and selected verbatim quotations to facilitate interpretation. Finally, conclusions were drawn by identifying patterns, relationships, and meanings emerging from the data while continuously comparing findings across different sources. To enhance the trustworthiness of the findings, the study employed source triangulation, member checking, prolonged engagement, and continuous verification, ensuring that the interpretations accurately reflected participants' experiences and the realities of Christian Religious Education learning at SMA Isen Mulang Palangka Raya.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Discussion of the General Overview of the Forms of Gadget Use Behavior by Students in Learning in Class XI of SMA Isen Mulang Palangkaraya

Research findings on General description of the form of gadget usage behavior of students in PAK learning in class XI SMA Isen Mulang Palangkaraya reveal a complex and multidimensional reality. Overall, the dynamics discovered illustrate the ongoing tension between the potential of gadgets as effective learning tools, on the one hand, and their threat to students' concentration and integrity, on the other. The following discussion will explore the meaning of these findings based on the theoretical framework developed in the literature review.

First, the identification of three patterns of gadget use (adaptive, distractive, and ambivalent) aligns with the categorization proposed by Siahaan (2021) in his study of the dynamics of Christian Religious Education (PAK) learning in the digital era. The adaptive patterns found among a number of students demonstrate that gadgets have enormous potential as contextual and relevant Christian Religious Education (PAK) learning media. The ability to instantly access a variety of Christian learning resources, from Bible texts in various versions to theological interpretations, opens up learning horizons far beyond the limitations of conventional textbooks.

From Sitompul's (2020) perspective, the planned and directed integration of gadgets into Christian Religious Education (PAK) learning can significantly increase student learning motivation and active engagement.

However, the dominance of ambivalent patterns and the presence of distractive patterns indicate that the potential of these gadgets has not been fully optimized in the learning context at Isen Mulang High School. This indicates the need for a more structured and systematic approach in integrating gadgets into the Catholic Religious Education (PAK) learning process. Davis (1989) through the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) explains that technology use behavior is influenced by perceptions of usefulness and ease of use. When students view gadgets as more useful for entertainment than for learning in a particular context, they will naturally direct their use there. Therefore, the task of Catholic Religious Education teachers is to create learning conditions in which students consistently experience and feel the usefulness of gadgets as meaningful PAK learning instruments.

Second, the variation in the intensity of gadget use influenced by learning design confirms Panjaitan's (2018) argument that Catholic Religious Education teachers must be able to develop contextual and relevant learning approaches to students' digital world. The finding that interactive, technology-based learning sessions resulted in more productive gadget use provides clear practical implications: structured gadget integration in lesson plans is not only possible, but a pedagogical imperative to maximize gadget benefits while minimizing their risks.

Third, identifying factors influencing both internal and external behavioral dynamics enhances understanding of the complexity of the phenomenon under study. The finding that intrinsic motivation, self-control, and personal values are the most important internal determinants aligns with Albert Bandura's (2021) perspective on social learning theory, which emphasizes the role of cognitive and emotional factors in shaping individual behavior. In the context of Christian Religious Education (PCE) learning, this suggests that building strong character within students, including internalizing Christian integrity values, is the most effective long-term strategy for positively guiding gadget use.

The discovery of the powerful influence of peers in shaping norms of gadget use in the classroom has important implications for Christian Religious Education (PAK) learning strategies. The group dynamics that encourage or hinder productive gadget use demonstrate the need for Christian Religious Education (PAK) teachers to pay attention not only to the individual but also to the communal dimension of character formation. From a Christian perspective, this aligns with the concept of a

community of faith, which emphasizes that character growth does not occur in individual isolation, but in the context of a community that supports, reminds, and holds each other accountable. Nainggolan (2020) emphasized that authentic Christian Religious Education (PAK) learning must be able to create a community of faith in the classroom that functions as a social environment that supports the growth of each student's Christian character.

Fourth, the gap between formal school policies and their implementation in the field is a crucial finding and requires serious attention from stakeholders. Inconsistent enforcement of gadget usage rules creates a situation where students lack clear and consistent guidance on how they should use gadgets in learning. This situation indirectly places the burden of responsibility for gadget management entirely on individual students, who may not have sufficient character maturity to manage themselves optimally. Therefore, synergy between school policies, teacher strategies in the classroom, and parental guidance at home is crucial, as emphasized by Hutahaean (2021) in his study on the implementation of Christian values in character education.

This policy-implementation gap needs to be read in conjunction with the second gap identified in this study, namely the gap between students' cognitive knowledge of integrity values and their actual practices in gadget use (character-behavior gap). These two gaps are mutually reinforcing: unclear external regulations (policy gap) leave students without consistent guidelines for practicing responsibility, while the predominantly knowledge-driven nature of Catholic Religious Education (PCE) learning (cognitive-behavior gap) does not adequately equip students with the internal capacity to fill this gap independently. As a result, students are doubly vulnerable: without clear external boundaries and without a fully solid internal foundation, leading to ambivalence as the most likely response. These findings emphasize that strengthening students' digital integrity cannot be done in a piecemeal manner. Interventions that solely target school policies without strengthening PCE learning in the affective and behavioral dimensions, or conversely, interventions that focus on PCE learning without consistent policy support and supervision, both risk failing to change the behavioral patterns identified in this study.

Discussion of the Dynamics of Gadget Usage Behavior in the Formation of Student Integrity in Grade XI

Research findings on the dynamics of gadget use behavior in shaping student integrity reveal a dialectical relationship: gadgets have the potential to be a good

instrument for strengthening integrity, but they also become an arena where integrity is tested and often eroded. The following discussion will comprehensively analyze these findings based on the theoretical framework of Christian integrity and the theories of character education presented in the literature review.

First, in terms of honesty, research findings confirm that the ease of access to information provided by gadgets creates a very real and massive temptation for academic cheating. This phenomenon aligns with Kurnia's (2020) analysis, which identified integrity challenges as one of the main implications of gadget use in Christian Religious Education (PAK) learning. The ease of instantly finding answers through search engines, which can technically be done in seconds without the teacher's knowledge, has transformed the landscape of academic cheating from a previously high-risk situation (cheating from books or friends) to a low-risk situation with serious impacts on character development.

Of particular concern is not just the practice of cheating itself, but the normalization of cheating that occurs when such behavior is carried out collectively and without consistent consequences. Wibowo (2020) explains that honest integrity requires moral courage to do what is right even when the social environment supports dishonest behavior. The finding that some students rationalize their cheating with the argument "everyone does it" (as expressed by PS-2) indicates the need for strengthening not only the individual level but also the classroom culture and the overall school ethical climate.

The positive aspect also found, that spiritual deepening through gadgets can strengthen commitment to honesty (as experienced by PS-2), has important pedagogical implications. This suggests that the best strategy is not to prohibit gadget use outright, but rather to direct its use to deepen the authentic appreciation of Christian values. Sitompul (2020) emphasized that Christian Religious Education learning that meaningfully integrates technology can increase students' affective engagement, which in turn strengthens internal commitment to the values learned.

Second, in the dimension of loyalty, the finding of "two versions of self" experienced by students is a phenomenon that requires serious theological and pedagogical attention. The fragmentation of identity between Christian identity in the classroom and different behaviors in the digital space reflects the lack of wholeness, which is the core of Christian integrity. Hutahaeen (2021) emphasizes that Christian integrity is holistic, encompassing all aspects of life, both public and private, including digital life, which is often considered beyond the scope of faith's accountability.

However, on the other hand, the finding that a number of students were able to transfer the values of loyalty from biblical narratives (such as the story of Daniel) to concrete situations involving gadget use demonstrates that contextual and relevant Christian Religious Education (PAK) learning has real transformative power. Effective Christian Religious Education (PAK) learning is a transformative process, not merely informative, that is, it is capable of producing changes in the way people think, feel, and act. The findings in students like PS-3 provide empirical evidence that such transformation is possible when Christian values are taught in depth, contextually, and accompanied by authentic role models.

Third, in the dimension of responsibility, findings on digital procrastination and the character-behavior gap phenomenon underscore the importance of a behavioral approach to character education in Christian Education (PAK), as outlined in the literature review. Cognitive knowledge of responsibility does not automatically translate into responsible behavior in gadget use. Character building in PAK learning must involve consistent practice and habituation, not just verbal teaching of values, but the creation of conditions in which students are repeatedly faced with choices that require responsibility and are given space to practice and reflect on these choices.

The discovery of the social dimension of responsibility, which irresponsibly uses gadgets, impacts the learning rights of fellow students, opens up a rich communal ethical perspective for Christian Religious Education (PCE) learning. In the Christian tradition, responsibility is not solely related to individual consequences, but to loyalty to the bonds of a faith community in which each member is responsible for the common good. This principle can serve as a strong foundation for a Catholic Religious Education (PCE) learning approach that builds a sense of collective responsibility in the use of gadgets in the classroom.

When these three dimensions of integrity are read together, a consistent thread emerges: the gaps in each dimension stem from the same pattern: gadgets enlarge students' autonomy at a time when their internal capacity to manage that autonomy has not yet fully developed. In the honesty dimension, this autonomy emerges in the form of easy access to answers without detection; in the loyalty dimension, in the freedom to behave in a digital space that is perceived as separate from the oversight of the faith community; and in the responsibility dimension, in the freedom to manage time and priorities without external reminders. The recurring pattern across these three dimensions reinforces the argument that the most strategic intervention is not to limit students' autonomy through stricter supervision alone, but rather to

accelerate the development of internal capacity, faith awareness, self-control, and valuable decision-making skills, so that the autonomy afforded by gadgets can be lived by students with integrity even when no one is watching.

Overall Findings and Research Implications

Based on the data presentation and discussion conducted in the previous sections, this study produces overall findings that can be formulated as follows. First, the dynamics of gadget usage behavior of grade XI students in PAK learning at SMA Isen Mulang Palangka Raya are complex, varied, and contextual, which can be grouped into three main patterns: adaptive, distractive, and ambivalent with the ambivalent pattern being the most dominant. These dynamics are influenced by the mutually influencing interaction between internal factors (learning motivation, self-control, personal values) and external factors (learning methods, peer influence, consistency of school policies).

Second, the dynamics of gadget use behavior contribute dialectically to the process of building student integrity. On the one hand, uncontrolled gadget use negatively impacts all three dimensions of integrity: encouraging academic dishonesty that erodes honesty, creating identity fragmentation that disrupts adherence to Christian values, and facilitating procrastination that weakens responsibility. On the other hand, directed and meaningful gadget use has the potential to be a catalyst that strengthens integrity, particularly when used for deepening the study of God's Word, exploring Christian values, and spiritual reflection that results in a deeper commitment to faith. Third, there is a significant gap between cognitive knowledge about integrity values gained from religious education (PAK) learning and their implementation in everyday digital behavior. This gap indicates that PAK learning needs to be strengthened in the affective and behavioral dimensions, not just cognitive ones, so that the values taught truly transform into character traits that are integrated into all aspects of life, including digital life.

This cognitive-behavioral gap needs further explanation because it is the core problem underlying this research since the researcher's initial findings during the internship period. Research data shows that almost all students, including those in the distractive pattern, are actually able to correctly state what honesty, loyalty, and responsibility are from a Christian perspective when asked directly. This means that the gap that occurs is not caused by a lack of knowledge (knowledge deficit), but rather by a failure of the internalization process that transforms this knowledge into personally held beliefs (personal conviction) and automatically carried out habits

(habituated practice). The phenomenon of "two versions of the self" found in the loyalty dimension is the most obvious manifestation of this gap, because it shows that the same values can be verbally acknowledged in the classroom but not consistently applied when students are in a digital space that is considered outside the supervision of the faith community.

This gap occurs because observed PAK learning still tends to stop at the level of conceptual understanding (knowing what is right) without providing enough space for students to practice making valuable decisions in real situations that present temptations, such as those that occur when they handle gadgets unsupervised. Thus, this cognitive-behavioral gap confirms that building integrity requires a complete cycle of learning, understanding, appreciation, and habituation, not just a one-way transfer of knowledge from teacher to student.

Table 1 Summary of Findings: Dynamics of Gadget Behavior towards Dimension of Integrity

Dimension of Integrity	Negative Contribution of Gadgets	Positive Contribution of Gadgets
Honesty	Facilitates academic cheating (cheating via Google, plagiarism)	Access to spiritual resources deepens the commitment to honesty before God
Faithfulness	Creating fragmentation of Christian identity between the classroom and digital spaces	Transfer biblical values to concrete decisions (example: the story of Daniel)
Responsibility	Facilitates procrastination and sloppy work completion	Training self-discipline through self-regulation of planned gadget use

The implications of this research's findings span several aspects. From a pedagogical perspective, these findings imply the need for a more integrative reorientation of the Christian Religious Education (PCE) learning approach, where gadget management is not treated as a separate technical issue, but rather as part of a holistic process of character-building integrity. Catholic Religious Education (PCE) teachers need to design learning experiences that consciously place students in situations where they must make choices regarding gadget use and reflect on these choices based on Christian values.

From a school policy perspective, this research implies the need for more concrete, consistent, and values-based gadget use policies, rather than simply general prohibitions or permits. These policies should be developed in a participatory manner, involving students themselves, so they have a sense of ownership of the rules and are more motivated to comply, not out of compulsion, but because they understand and agree with the values behind them. In terms of Christian character development, these findings underscore the profound relevance of Christian Religious Education's teachings on integrity in the context of the digital age. The concept of Christian integrity, which transcends human moral standards and is rooted in God's holy and righteous character, provides a solid foundation for students to use gadgets responsibly, honestly, and faithfully to the values of their faith, even when no one is watching. This is the essence of true Christian integrity: living righteously not out of fear of being seen, but because of living before God who sees all things.

CONCLUSION

This study explored the dynamics of gadget use in Christian Religious Education (CRE) learning and its contribution to the development of student integrity among Grade XI students at SMA Isen Mulang Palangka Raya. The findings demonstrate that students' gadget-use behavior is dynamic and can be categorized into three major patterns: adaptive, distractive, and ambivalent. The adaptive pattern reflects productive use of gadgets for educational and spiritual purposes, including reading digital Bibles, participating in Quizizz activities, and accessing biblical resources. In contrast, the distractive pattern is characterized by the use of gadgets for social media, gaming, and entertainment during learning activities. The ambivalent pattern, identified as the most dominant, shows that students frequently alternate between productive and distractive behavior depending on classroom conditions, teacher supervision, and instructional strategies.

The study further reveals that these behavioral patterns are influenced by both internal factors, such as learning motivation, self-control, and personal integrity, and external factors, including teaching methods, peer influence, and the consistency of school policies. Moreover, the findings indicate that gadgets have a dual impact on integrity. While they provide opportunities for academic dishonesty, digital distraction, and procrastination, they also support spiritual growth, biblical learning, and self-regulation when used responsibly. A significant gap was identified between students' understanding of Christian values and their actual digital behavior, as well as between school policies and their implementation. Overall, the study concludes that gadgets are value-neutral technologies whose influence depends largely on students' intentions, self-control, and the educational environment. Therefore, strengthening student integrity requires a holistic approach integrating Christian digital literacy, consistent character education, effective classroom management, and faith-based learning practices that encourage responsible and ethical digital behavior.

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