

CHARACTER EDUCATION MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES TO ADDRESS THE NEGATIVE IMPACTS OF SOCIAL MEDIA USE ON YOUTH

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Abstract

This study aims to explore effective character education management strategies to address the negative impacts of social media use on adolescents. This research employed a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) to analyze studies on character education, digital citizenship, and social media, focusing on their impact on adolescents. A qualitative approach was used, synthesizing peer-reviewed journal articles, books, and conference papers published in the last five years from academic databases like Google Scholar, PubMed, and Scopus. Data collection involved selecting relevant studies based on specific keywords and predetermined criteria. The collected data were then analyzed through several stages: first, screening and classifying the selected literature; second, extracting key variables such as research focus, methodology, and outcomes; and third, performing a narrative synthesis to identify recurring themes, patterns, and gaps in current research. The results showed that integrating character education with digital citizenship education is crucial in equipping adolescents with the skills to interact positively online. Furthermore, the role of educators trained in technology and digital ethics is essential to help adolescents manage the psychological impacts of social media. The biggest challenge faced is the lack of a curriculum that explicitly integrates digital citizenship with character education. A phenomenon-based approach has proven effective in addressing this challenge by providing students with real-life experiences. In conclusion, digital-based character education can improve adolescents' skills in managing social media use more responsibly. This research makes an important contribution to the development of a more relevant educational curriculum in the digital era.

Keywords

Character Education, Digital Citizenship, Social Media.



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INTRODUCTION

The development of digital technology has had a significant impact on various aspects of life, especially for the younger generation (Iivari et al., 2020). Social media, as one of the most influential forms of digital technology, influences the way teenagers interact, learn, and shape their identities. While social media offers various benefits, such as expanding social networks and access to information, its negative impacts, such as anxiety, depression, cyberbullying, and detrimental social comparison, are also increasingly apparent. Furthermore, exposure to risky digital content, such as pornography and online violence, further impairs the psychological well-being of adolescents, especially those who are not yet mature in critical thinking (Guamanga et al., 2024). Therefore, character education is a crucial aspect in building healthy digital awareness and skills among adolescents. Effective character education in the digital age must address these challenges by integrating ethical values, responsibility, and social awareness into the digital context. This study aims to explore character education management strategies that can address the negative impacts of social media use on adolescents. Thus, character education goes beyond simply teaching moral values to guide adolescents in using technology wisely and responsibly (Candiasa et al., 2021).

The main challenge facing the implementation of character education in the digital era is the rapid development of technology, which is often difficult for educators to keep up with. Teachers often struggle to align educational materials with the ever-changing digital reality, particularly with the emergence of online figures who can negatively influence adolescents' mindsets and behaviors. Furthermore, research conducted by Fenech and Zammit (2025) shows that even though a digital citizenship education curriculum has been introduced in schools, there is still a gap between the knowledge students acquire and its application in everyday life. Therefore, this research is important to find more effective character education management strategies to address this issue (Hidayat et al., 2024).

The development of digital technology, particularly social media, has had a significant impact on various aspects of adolescent life, both positive and negative. Excessive use of social media can affect adolescents' moral and social behavior, leading to issues such as anxiety, depression, cyberbullying, and harmful social comparisons. Therefore, it is crucial to design and implement character education management strategies that can address these negative impacts. Character education needs to be integrated with digital citizenship values to help adolescents understand ethical interactions in the digital world. However, the biggest challenge is the lack of a

curriculum that explicitly integrates character education with digital citizenship education, which is essential to developing digital awareness and resilience in adolescents (Budiyono et al., 2024).

Character education management strategies can be designed by incorporating a phenomenon-based approach that allows adolescents to learn from real-life experiences about the impact of social media usage. Additionally, the role of school principals, teachers, and the educational environment is vital for the success of this program. The school principal must ensure that character education policies and programs are effectively implemented, while teachers play the role of facilitators, guiding adolescents to apply moral values and digital ethics in their daily lives. The educational environment must also create a supportive atmosphere for the development of adolescent character by providing opportunities for students to engage in activities that promote positive values, both in the real world and online. With this support, adolescents will be better prepared to face the challenges of the digital world in a healthy and responsible way (Kim & Choi, 2018).

Evaluation of character education management is crucial for measuring the success of the program in reducing the negative impacts of social media on adolescents' moral development and behavior. An effective evaluation model should include measurements of changes in adolescents' attitudes and behaviors related to social media usage, as well as improvements in managing stress and psychological impacts from social media (Khairunisa & Sundawa, 2023). This evaluation can be conducted using instruments that assess digital citizenship skills, critical thinking abilities, and adolescents' capacity to manage the psychological effects of social media. With appropriate evaluation, the effectiveness of character education programs in fostering digital resilience and minimizing the negative influence of social media on adolescents' personality development can be clearly understood.

Recent studies have explored the integration of character education and social media, revealing various approaches to mitigating the negative impacts of social media on adolescent behavior. (Alrahman et al., 2024) found that character education programs focusing on empathy, responsibility, and honesty can help reduce harmful behaviors such as cyberbullying and social comparison. However, they did not delve into the specific strategies or curricular designs required for effective integration of character education with digital ethics. (Najafov, 2025) emphasized the critical role of educators in teaching digital ethics alongside character education to help adolescents engage responsibly with social media. Yet, their study lacks a clear evaluation model to assess the

effectiveness of these educational interventions. (Sharma et al., 2022) demonstrated that social media platforms can be used as tools for reinforcing positive behaviors like kindness and respect, but they did not address the risks posed by excessive social media use or the importance of community involvement in character development. (Sanusi et al., 2025) examined how character education could address mental health issues related to social media, such as anxiety and depression, but failed to offer specific curricular interventions to help students manage their mental health in a digital context. Lastly, (Polizzi & Harrison, 2022) identified barriers in implementing character education curricula in the digital age but did not provide a framework for overcoming these challenges with practical strategies. The novelty of this research lies in its phenomenon-based approach that focuses on real-world social media experiences, offering practical, actionable strategies for educators to foster digital resilience and moral development in adolescents. Additionally, this study introduces a comprehensive evaluation model to assess the impact of character education programs on students' digital citizenship and resilience, addressing the gaps in existing research.

Character education policies must evolve in the face of rapid technological advances and the increasing influence of social media on adolescents. This has led to the integration of digital citizenship education within character education, which emphasizes the ethical use of technology. As (Palmquist et al., 2025) explain, a responsible digital citizen curriculum is critical, teaching students to navigate digital spaces while fostering well-being and ethical online behavior. Their research highlights that digital citizenship is a key component of character education, urging that students not only be taught moral values but also be equipped with the skills to manage online behaviors responsibly. However, (Palmquist et al., 2025) note a persistent gap in adapting this curriculum to the rapidly evolving nature of digital platforms, which often outpace the current educational frameworks.

Furthermore, (Caena & Punie, 2019) illustrate that social media can be utilized as an educational tool for character building, reinforcing values such as respect and responsibility. They argue that through deliberate integration into educational settings, social media can foster positive character traits. However, they emphasize the lack of a comprehensive policy framework that ensures this integration happens across diverse school systems, leaving gaps in consistent implementation. This gap creates a challenge in standardizing how character education should be taught in relation to social media usage.

Meanwhile, (Beilmann et al., 2022) and (Vhalery, 2024) focus on how social media's psychological impact on adolescents can be mitigated through well-structured character education programs. The research suggests that digital resilience—an essential component of digital citizenship education—must be explicitly addressed within the curriculum. Despite this, there remains a lack of consistent policy integration that supports educators in managing social media-related challenges in the classroom, such as cyberbullying or social comparison. This research underscores the need for policies that not only address online behavior but also focus on enhancing mental health and resilience.

To overcome these challenges, policymakers must design curricular reforms that integrate digital citizenship with character education. The research clearly illustrates the necessity of developing training programs for educators that equip them with the tools to manage social media-related impacts on adolescents, as shown in the work of (Mahbubi, 2024), who outlines the importance of educator readiness in the digital era. This highlights the need for stronger alignment between character education theory and practical, real-world digital challenges. The primary objective of this research is to develop a character education management strategy to mitigate the negative psychological effects of social media on adolescents, while integrating digital citizenship values into the curriculum. This study aims to enhance educators' roles in guiding responsible digital engagement among adolescents (Pamuji et al., 2024).

METHOD

The research method used in this study is a systematic literature review (SLR), which aims to analyze and identify effective character education management strategies in addressing the negative impacts of social media use on adolescents. This research design involved selecting, evaluating, and synthesizing relevant articles published in various journals and academic sources that could provide insight into this topic (Hauliza & Satria, 2025). The process began with a systematic literature search, using trusted academic databases, such as JSTOR, Scopus, and Google Scholar, with relevant keywords related to character education, the impact of social media, and digital citizenship.

The research method used in this study is a Systematic Literature Review (SLR), following the PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) guidelines. The main objective of this method is to analyze and identify effective character education management

strategies to mitigate the negative impacts of social media use among adolescents. The review process involved four systematic stages: identification, screening, eligibility, and inclusion. A comprehensive search was conducted in reputable academic databases such as Scopus, JSTOR, and Google Scholar, using keywords including “character education,” “digital citizenship,” “social media,” and “adolescent behavior.”

In the identification phase, 25 relevant articles were initially retrieved from the databases. During the screening phase, duplicate and irrelevant studies were removed, resulting in 13 articles that met the initial inclusion criteria based on topic relevance, research quality, and methodological clarity. In the eligibility phase, a more detailed assessment was conducted, which narrowed the selection to 4 articles that fully met all criteria, focusing on character education management strategies integrated with digital citizenship education. Data extraction was then performed on these final articles using a structured extraction table. Each article was analyzed for:

1. Author and publication details,
2. Research objectives and design,
3. Key findings and educational implications, and
4. Identified challenges or limitations.

The extracted data were further synthesized using a narrative synthesis approach to identify recurring themes, patterns, and research gaps related to character education and digital citizenship. The analysis was conducted qualitatively to produce an in-depth understanding of how character education can be managed effectively in the digital era. This PRISMA-based process ensures transparency, replicability, and rigor in analyzing how previous studies contribute to the development of character education strategies in managing the negative effects of social media use among adolescents (Herak, 2025). The research instruments in this SLR were a checklist to assess the methodological quality and research findings of the selected articles, as well as an evaluation tool to identify key themes related to character education strategies. The data collection procedure involved a structured and organized literature search, followed by the selection of articles based on specific criteria. The collected data were then analyzed using narrative synthesis to identify common patterns and findings related to character education management strategies implemented across various contexts (Rahayu, 2023). The analysis was conducted qualitatively to generate a deeper understanding of the relationship between character education and social media use among

adolescents. This process ensured that only relevant studies that met the eligibility criteria were included in this systematic review.

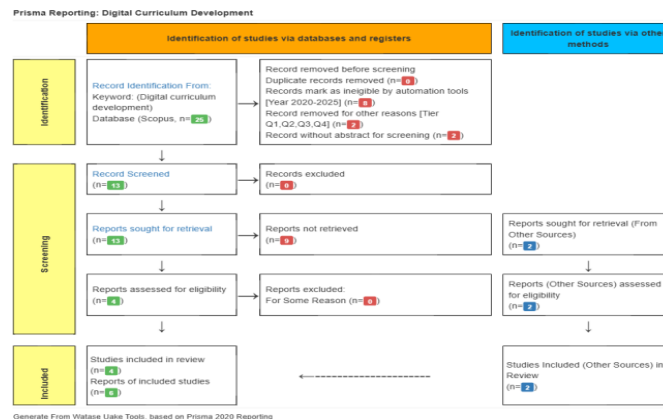


Figure 1. The PRISMA of Digital Curriculum Development

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Findings

The results of this study explore various key findings related to effective character education management strategies in addressing the negative impacts of social media use on adolescents (Veerasamy et al., 2025). The PRISMA guide, used to identify and evaluate relevant literature in this study, played a crucial role in ensuring the quality and transparency of the analysis process. In the Identification stage, PRISMA enabled the selection of appropriate literature from various databases, such as Scopus, which identified 25 records related to "digital curriculum development." These records were then further processed to ensure their relevance to the topic of character education in the digital world.

Table 1. PRISMA Data Screening and Selection Process

Stage	Description	Number of Articles (n)	Remarks
Identification	Records identified through database searching using keywords "digital curriculum development," "character education," "social media," and "digital citizenship."	25	Retrieved from Scopus, Google Scholar, and JSTOR.
Screening	Duplicate and irrelevant articles were removed based on title and abstract review.	18	7 records excluded due to duplication and lack of relevance.
Eligibility	Full-text assessment for inclusion based on criteria: relevance to digital character education, research quality, and educational context.	13	5 records were excluded because they did not address digital character formation.

Inclusion	Final studies included in qualitative synthesis (data extraction and analysis).	4	Selected for thematic synthesis in the <i>Findings</i> section.
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In the screening phase, 13 recordings were successfully screened and further evaluated. This phase describes the selection of literature relevant to the main theme of this research, namely, the integration of character education with digital citizenship. Digital literacy and ethical social media use were central topics in the analyzed studies (Fenech & Zammit, 2025). Several selected studies demonstrate the importance of digital-based character education that teaches responsibility, empathy, and honesty to adolescents in the context of social media. For example, teaching ethical social media use can reduce the risk of negative behaviors such as cyberbullying and the spread of misinformation, which is one of the main findings of this study.

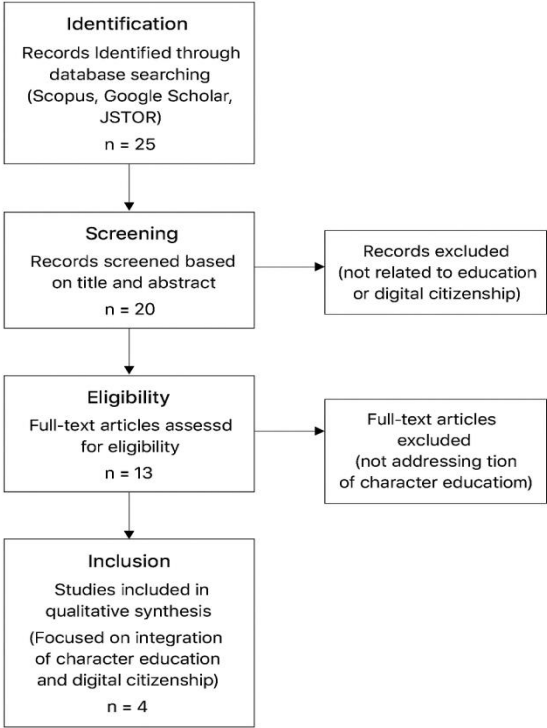


Figure 2. PRISMA Flow Diagram of Literature Selection Process

In the Eligibility phase, a further assessment was conducted on four reports that met the inclusion criteria for inclusion in this review. Findings from the selected literature emphasize the crucial role of educators in managing social media use among adolescents. Educators are not only expected to teach moral values but also to guide students in the wise use of technology. Several reports indicate that educators trained in technology and digital ethics play a more effective role in guiding students regarding healthy and responsible social media use (Carl & Worsfold, 2021).

This study also identified challenges in implementing a social media-based character education curriculum. One key challenge is the lack of a curriculum that explicitly integrates digital citizenship education into character education. Although many schools have begun integrating digital values into their curricula, the gap between theory and practical application remains a significant issue (Erstad et al., 2021). Factors such as a lack of resources, inadequate training for educators, and the difficulty of keeping up with rapid technological developments exacerbate this problem. Another challenge is how to address the negative influence of social media, which is more powerful than the messages conveyed in traditional character education. This phenomenon suggests that current character education is insufficient to comprehensively address the negative impact of social media on adolescents.

Furthermore, this research also found that several strategies successfully implemented in several studies involved a phenomenon-based learning (PhBL) approach (Jurado et al., 2021). This approach allows students to learn from real-life experiences and reflect on issues they face, such as the impact of social media on their psychological well-being. This approach provides students with the opportunity to understand the impact of their digital behaviors more deeply and helps them develop critical and reflective thinking skills, which are essential in facing today's digital challenges.

From these findings, it can be concluded that the success of character education management strategies in addressing the negative impacts of social media depends on several key factors. These factors include better curriculum integration, adequate educator training, and the use of real-world, experience-based approaches relevant to the challenges of the digital world. However, the challenges faced in implementing these strategies remain significant, particularly related to the gap between character education theory and its application in everyday practice. Therefore, further efforts from educators, the government, and the community are urgently needed to address this issue and create a more effective learning environment to guide adolescents in using social media wisely and responsibly.

Table 2. Summary of Journal Articles on Digital Curriculum Development and Educational Strategies

Research Title	Research Location	Author Name	Publication Year	Insight	Theories Used	Research methods	Research result	Research Limitations
Prácticas de Innovación Universitaria sobre las Ventajas y	Universidad de La Guajira, Colombia	Alba Ruth Pinto-Santos, Adolfin	2022	Analysis of curriculum management	Digital Competence in Teaching (CDD),	Evaluative research approach with	The findings show that the current	Limitations in curriculum implementation that do

Debilidades Educativas de los Entornos MOOC		a Pérez Garcías		ent in digital education for the development of digital teaching competencies in students.	Distance Learning, and Curriculum Management	curriculum management indicator inventory instruments and digital teaching competency assessment rubrics	curriculum is not effective enough in developing digital competencies in student teachers.	not fully encompass technological innovation in teacher education.
The Development of a Curriculum to Enhance Learning Management Competency in the Digital Transformation Age for Pre-service Teachers	Srinakharnwirot University, Thailand	Suppawan Satjapiboon	2025	Curriculum development to improve learning management competencies in the era of digital transformation for prospective teachers.	Learning Management Competencies, Digital Transformation, and Phenomenon-Based Education	Curriculum development based on needs analysis and effectiveness testing with qualitative and quantitative data	The developed curriculum has been proven to improve the learning management competencies of prospective teachers with a focus on digital transformation.	Time constraints and variations in teachers' experiences in adopting new technologies in education.
Digital Removable Denture Workflows in Dental Education: A Systematic Review and Curriculum Development Exploration	Dental Institutions Globally	Arthi Veerasamy, Fatimah Ghuloum, Yunam Lo, Wendy Jansen van Vuuren	2025	The use of digital workflows in denture manufacturing in dental education and the challenges of its	CAD/CAM Workflows, Digital Education, and Technology Integration in the Curriculum	A systematic review with evaluation of digital denture curricula in dental educational	Digitalization in denture manufacturing improves efficiency and quality, but there are challenges in	Limitations in technology adoption across dental institutions and a lack of standards in digital teaching.

Empowering Responsible Digital Citizens: Insights from Maltese Secondary Schools	Rebecca Marie Fenech, Luciann e Zammit	2025	implementation. PSCD teachers' views in Malta on the influence of technology on students' well-being and the relevance of the curriculum on Digital Citizenship and Education .	Digital Citizenship Education , Student Well-Being Theory, and Social Technology	institutions provide qualitative approach with semi-structured interviews with PSCD teachers in Malta	global adoption. Technology provides social benefits but also risks to student well-being, and the PSCD curriculum still needs to be adapted to technological developments.	Limitations in integrating the latest, rapidly developing technologies into the PSCD curriculum.
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Discussion

The results of this study provide a clear picture of effective character education management strategies to address the negative impacts of social media use on adolescents(Herak, 2025). Based on an analysis of the selected literature, several key themes were identified, include the importance of integrating character education with digital citizenship education, the role of educators in social media management, and the challenges faced in implementing a digital-based character education curriculum (Kulsum et al., 2024).

First, the research findings indicate that integrating character education with digital citizenship is crucial for addressing the negative impacts of social media on adolescents (Rusydiyah et al., 2021). As discussed in research, character education grounded in an understanding of digital ethics and responsible online interactions can equip adolescents with the skills necessary to face various challenges in the digital world. Several analyzed studies also show that character education focused on values such as empathy, honesty, and responsibility can prevent negative online behaviors, such as cyberbullying and the spread of misinformation (Rina et al., 2020). This aligns with the findings, which also demonstrated that digital-based learning management competencies are crucial for developing strong character in prospective teachers in the era of digital

transformation. In this context, digital citizenship education becomes an integral part of character development, as it helps students understand their ethics and responsibilities online (Attruk et al., 2024).

Second, the role of educators in managing character education in the digital world is also crucial. Educators act as mentors who not only teach moral values but also help adolescents manage their use of social media wisely and responsibly. This is evident in research findings (Hidayati & Nihayah, 2025), which shows that character education conducted by educators trained in technology and digital ethics can guide students in using social media in a healthy manner. Educators play a crucial role in supporting students in dealing with the psychological impacts of social media, such as anxiety and social comparison. Adequate educator training in technology and digital ethics is also crucial for creating a safe learning environment and supporting positive character development in adolescents. As found in research (Khairunisa & Sundawa, 2023), technology-based learning management competencies have also been shown to improve teachers' skills in effectively managing social media in the classroom.

Third, the challenges in implementing a digital-based character education curriculum are a significant finding in this study. Although many schools have begun introducing digital values into their learning, there is a gap between the theory taught and its application in the field. Several studies have found that many curricula have not fully integrated digital citizenship education into character education. This creates difficulties in addressing the increasingly powerful negative influence of social media, which is often more profound than the moral messages taught in schools. This finding is similar to the research of (Taufik & Nurhayati, 2023), which showed that although digital education has a clear goal of developing digital competencies in student teachers, its implementation remains limited. One major challenge is the lack of adequate resources and training for educators, which hinders their ability to effectively integrate digital education into character education teaching (Shobirin & Efendi, 2025).

The findings of this study have significant implications, both theoretically and practically. Theoretically, this study fills a gap in the literature linking character education to social media management among adolescents (Mahbubi, 2024). By integrating the concepts of character education and digital citizenship, this study makes an important contribution to the development of educational curricula relevant to rapid technological developments (Maritim & Buchori, 2025). Furthermore, this study enriches the understanding of the role of educators in managing the

negative impacts of social media, as well as the importance of educator training in technology and digital ethics (Kundaria, 2025).

Practically, this research provides useful insights for policymakers and educators in designing curricula that not only focus on teaching moral values but also equip students with skills to manage their online behavior (Kwartawaty et al., 2025). With the increasing use of social media among adolescents, the results of this study demonstrate the importance of character education that is more integrated with digital aspects, which can help adolescents interact in more responsible and positive ways. Therefore, this research provides a strong foundation for the development of educator training programs based on an understanding of digital ethics and social media management (Novella-García & Cloquell-Lozano, 2021).

The implications of this research are far-reaching, particularly in developing a character education curriculum that is more adaptive to technological developments. This research demonstrates that digital-based character education can be an effective tool in equipping adolescents with the skills to face the challenges posed by social media use. Therefore, developing a curriculum that integrates digital citizenship education and ethical social media use is crucial for creating a young generation that is not only digitally skilled but also possesses strong character (Falloon, 2020).

However, this study also has several limitations. First, while the results provide valuable insights, limitations in collecting data from different countries or cultural contexts may limit the generalizability of these findings (Nurhayati et al., 2024). Second, while a phenomenon-based approach has been shown to be effective in some studies, its success is highly dependent on contextual factors, such as educator preparedness and existing school infrastructure. Third, this study is limited to existing literature from a specific period and does not consider more recent changes in digital technology and social media use by adolescents (Lestari, 2022). Therefore, further research is needed to explore more deeply how character education strategies can be effectively implemented across different educational contexts and countries.

CONCLUSION

The results of this study provide an important contribution to understanding how character education can be integrated with digital citizenship education to address the negative impacts of social media use on adolescents. This study also emphasizes the importance of educators and adequate training in managing technology in the classroom. While there are challenges in

implementing this strategy, these findings suggest that education based on real-life experiences and reflection, such as a phenomenon-based approach, can help students better understand the impact of their digital behavior and develop critical thinking skills. Moving forward, this research opens up opportunities for developing more effective curricula to shape adolescent character in the digital age.

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