Journal of General Education and Humanities
Vol. 5, No. 6, December 2026, pp. 7387 – 7402, https://doi.org/10.58421/gehu.v5i6.2229
ISSN 2963-7147

Digital Literacy of Sunday School Teachers in Filtering Religious Information in the Social Media Era

L. Joseph[1], Febrilianti[2], Misye Waliana[3], Eurene Maurendini Lefta[4]
[1,2,3,4]Master's Program in Christian Religious Education, Postgraduate School, Institut Agama Kristen Negeri Ambon, Indonesia

Article Info

Article history:

Received 2026-10-06
Revised 2026-11-11
Accepted 2026-11-14

Keywords:

Christian Religious Education
Digital Literacy
Religious Information
Social Media
Sunday School Teachers

ABSTRACT

Social media provides Sunday School teachers with extensive religious learning resources, while simultaneously exposing them to anonymous sources, decontextualized biblical quotations, and materials unsuitable for children's developmental needs. This study aimed to describe Sunday School teachers' digital literacy, identify strengths and weaknesses, and formulate implications for professional and ecclesial development. The study was conducted at GKI Bethesda Sele Be Solu, Sorong City, from May to July 2026 using a descriptive quantitative approach supported by qualitative data. A 22-item, five-point Likert questionnaire covered seven indicators. Of the planned population of 51 teachers, nine complete questionnaires were analyzed; four informants representing coordination, institutional leadership, mentoring, and classroom practice provided supporting interview notes. Quantitative data were analyzed using scores, percentages, descriptive statistics, and Cronbach's alpha, while interview notes were thematically analyzed and integrated during interpretation. The participants obtained 824 of 990 points (83.23%), categorized as very high. Digital ethics scored highest (88.15%), followed by child-service suitability (87.41%) and theological content and contextual assessment (86.67%); source verification scored lowest (76.30%). Cronbach's alpha was .844, indicating good preliminary internal consistency for the available responses. Interviews showed that the Bible and official church materials functioned as primary references, but verification routines, coordination, and content adaptation were not yet standardized. The study concludes that training should translate strong ethical-theological orientations into shared procedures through lateral verification, biblical-context checking, child-suitability assessment, source documentation, and instructional material production. Because the valid response rate was 17.65%, the findings describe the analyzed group and should not be generalized to the whole population.

This is an open-access article under the CC BY-SA license.

Corresponding Author:

L. Joseph
Master's Program in Christian Religious Education, Postgraduate School, Institut Agama Kristen Negeri Ambon, Indonesia
Email: lourinejoseph919@gmail.com

1. INTRODUCTION

Social media has become part of the ecology of religious learning. Quotations of verses, devotionals, sermon videos, Bible stories, spiritual songs, images, and ideas for children's activities circulate through platforms that can be accessed within seconds. In digital religion studies, the boundary between online and offline religious practice is increasingly blurred; technology is not merely a neutral channel, but a space in which authority, identity, community, and faith practices are negotiated [1], [2]. For the church, this situation offers an opportunity to expand learning resources and an obligation to manage information risks.

Sunday School teachers occupy an important position in this flow because they are not merely media users, but directors of children's faith learning experiences. Content that looks attractive may contain unclear source identities, oversimplification, additional stories that are not distinguished from the biblical text, language that is not age-appropriate, frightening visuals, or invitations to share information without checking. Therefore, teachers' digital competence needs to go beyond the ability to operate devices. This competence must connect technological knowledge, pedagogy, learning content, ethics, and institutional responsibility [3], [4].

Social media literacy is multidimensional [5], mapping the competencies for accessing, understanding, analyzing, evaluating, communicating, and producing content. Caulfield and Wineburg [6] more specifically described social media information literacy as the capacity to assess, understand, and curate information amid information overload. Creswell and Creswell [7] also showed the relationship between digital skills and information management, communication, collaboration, critical thinking, and problem solving. Thus, access is only the entry point; the quality of decisions is determined by the ability to evaluate and use information.

Credibility is becoming increasingly important because users often rely on surface cues—professional design, number of followers, popularity, or agreement with their prior beliefs—to assess sources. Desimone [8] showed that online credibility evaluation takes place through both analytical and heuristic strategies. In a dense information environment, users even need to know when to ignore low-quality sources and shift their attention to more accountable sources [9]. Lateral reading, namely leaving the original page to check the reputation and claims through other sources, has been shown to distinguish expert evaluators from readers who only browse a single page vertically [10], [11].

Intervention studies show that media literacy can improve the ability to distinguish mainstream information from false information [11], while shifting attention to accuracy can reduce the tendency to share misinformation [12]. However, corrections do not always remove the influence of false information because beliefs, identity, and cognitive processes also shape how people receive messages [13]. For Christian Religious Education, this implies that training is insufficient if it only provides a list of trusted sites. Teachers need to practice checking claims, tracing the origin of quotations, considering theological frameworks, and explaining why they select materials.

In the context of children's education, media suitability must be linked to learning objectives, active engagement, meaningfulness, and social interaction. Heiss et al. [14]

emphasized that the label ‘educational’ does not automatically make media effective, while [15] showed the importance of adult guidance in young children’s use of digital media. Sunday School teachers need to assess whether materials facilitate conversation, reflection, movement, play, and inner experience, not merely capture children’s attention visually. This role aligns with Sunday School teachers' responsibility for children’s introduction to the faith and social-emotional development [16], [17].

The theological dimension distinguishes the filtering of religious information from general information literacy. Teachers need to distinguish biblical text, interpretation, tradition, illustration, and the content creator’s opinion; examine the literary and historical context of verses; and consider their consistency with church teaching. Mariangga [18] reminds us that responsible Bible reading requires attention to context and literary genre. At the same time, religious authority on the internet derives not only from formal office but is also shaped by networks, visibility, and user acceptance [19]. This situation demands a clear map of authority in children’s ministry practice.

In Indonesia, digital literacy is linked to social media ethics and preventing the acceptance and spread of false information [20], [21], [22]. In the church context, the research of [23] affirms the church’s role in improving social media literacy, while [24] shows the need for the development of Sunday School teachers to face the challenges of the digital era. Although these studies provide an important foundation, there is still limited research that simultaneously measures access, verification, theological assessment, curation, child suitability, ethics, and use of information among Sunday School teachers and links it to the experiences of local ministry leaders and practitioners.

GKI Bethesda Sele Be Solu in Sorong City has a Sunday School ministry spread across several rayons. Official synod and church materials are used as references, while social media is used to find songs, stories, images, games, and additional explanations. Differences in connection quality, device skills, teaching experience, and coordination habits have the potential to produce inconsistent filtering practices. Therefore, local data are needed so development is not based solely on general assumptions about the digital generation.

The novelty of this study lies in the integration of three layers of decision-making by Sunday School teachers. The first layer is digital information competence: access, verification, comparison, and curation. The second layer is the responsibility specific to faith educators: assessment of content and theological context, suitability for child development, and ethics. The third layer is the transformation of content into ministry materials. The seven indicators are read together with interview notes from different ministry functions so that the scores are not treated as a single picture detached from context.

Based on this gap, the study aims to: (1) describe the level of Sunday School teachers’ digital literacy in filtering religious information; (2) identify the strongest indicators and those most in need of strengthening; (3) explain practices, obstacles, and needs through interview data; and (4) formulate a development model that can be applied to local ministry. The focus of the study is not to test causal relationships, but to produce a descriptive mapping and evidence-based recommendations.

2. METHOD

2.1. Research Design

The study used a descriptive quantitative approach supported by qualitative data from interviews. The questionnaire data serve to describe the tendency of digital literacy levels, while the interviews explain the reasons, practices, obstacles, and development needs behind the score patterns. Integration was carried out at the interpretation stage through comparison of findings across sources, not through equal weighting as in a full mixed-methods design. This choice is consistent with the descriptive aim and the availability of research data [25].

The study was conducted at GKI Bethesda Sele Be Solu, Sorong City, from May to July 2026. The planned population was 51 Sunday School teachers. From the documents received, nine questionnaires met the completeness requirements and could be reliably matched for processing. Thus, the valid response rate was 17.65%. Three other photos of manual questionnaires were not included because the page pairing and legibility could not be ensured. This decision protects data integrity, although it reduces the representativeness of the results.

2.2. Instruments and Indicators

The quantitative instrument consisted of 22 positive statements with five options: Strongly Agree, Agree, Uncertain, Disagree, and Strongly Disagree. Scores ranged from 5 to 1. Seven indicators were designed to capture the whole process of using digital spiritual content, from searching to adaptation for ministry. The indicator framework combines social media literacy [17], [18], source evaluation [26], [27], teachers' digital competence [28], [29], and the suitability of children's media [18].

Table 1. Digital literacy indicators of Sunday School teachers

No.	Indicator	Operational Definition	Items
1	Digital Information Access	Finding relevant spiritual platforms and materials	3
2	Source Verification	Checking identity, credibility, references, and consistency	3
3	Theological Content and Contextual Assessment	Assessing consistency with the Bible, verse context, and official materials	4
4	Information Comparison and Curation	Comparing references and selecting usable parts	3
5	Child-Service Suitability	Assessing language, visuals, emotion, age, and learning objectives	3
6	Digital Ethics	Weighing truth, impact, privacy, and responsibility	3
7	Use of Information in Ministry	Adapting content into teaching materials and activities	3
Total			**22**

2.3. Informants and Qualitative Data Collection

Supporting data came from four informants selected based on ministry function: I1, PAR Coordinator of Rayon 3; I2, PAR Chair; I3, PAR Supervising Council Member; and I4, Sunday School Supervisor of Rayon 8. The interview guide contained questions about

the sources used, ways of checking truth, consistency with the Bible and official materials, technological obstacles, age-based adaptation, coordination, and training needs. The available material took the form of thematic notes, not word-for-word audio transcripts. Therefore, the quotations in the article are presented as excerpts of notes that have been normalized in spelling and punctuation without changing the meaning.

2.4. Data Analysis and Trustworthiness of Interpretation

Quantitative analysis was carried out by checking completeness, scoring, summing scores per respondent and per indicator, calculating percentages against the maximum score, and presenting the mean, median, range, and sample standard deviation. The overall percentage was calculated using the formula of score obtained divided by maximum score multiplied by 100. The internal consistency of the 22 items was reported using Cronbach's alpha. Rusdy [30] defines alpha as a characteristic of the data and the use of the instrument in a particular sample; this value was not used as the sole evidence of construct validity or unidimensionality.

Interview notes were analyzed thematically through repeated reading, initial coding, code grouping, theme review, and integration with the quantitative indicators. The procedure followed the principles of systematic and reflexive thematic analysis [31] as well as traceable reduction, display, and conclusion drawing [32]. The trustworthiness of interpretation was strengthened by comparing indicator scores, problematic items, and informants' statements from different roles. Inconsistencies were retained as analytical information, not removed for the sake of uniformity.

2.5. Ethics and Data Limitations

Respondents' personal identities are not displayed, and informants were coded I1–I4. Questionnaire photos showing names were not included in the article. Written consent documents and an ethical approval number were not available in the research files; this information needs to be supplied if the target journal requires it. The article also does not specify the number of mini workshop participants because the available attendance list was not filled in, and it does not make claims of effectiveness because pre–post measurements were not available.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Data Profile and Instrument Consistency

The nine valid questionnaires produced individual scores of 81–109 out of a maximum score of 110. The total score was 824 out of a maximum of 990. The mean respondent score was 91.56, the median was 88, and the sample standard deviation was 8.99. The mean per response occasion was 4.16 on a five-point scale. These statistics show a tendency toward positive answers among the respondents analyzed, but variation in scores remains visible, and not all teachers have the same level of competence.

Table 2. Summary of quantitative and qualitative data

Component	Result
Planned population	51 Sunday School teachers
Complete and valid questionnaires	9 (17.65%)
Number of items	22 positive statements
Total score	824 out of 990
Mean; median; standard deviation	91.56; 88; 8.99
Respondent score range	81–109
Overall percentage	83.23% (Very High)
Cronbach's alpha	0.844
Supporting informants	4 (I1–I4)

The Cronbach's alpha value of 0.844 indicates good internal consistency for the nine available responses. However, the small number of responses makes this estimate not yet stable enough to describe the population. Alpha also does not prove that the seven indicators form a single dimension. Therefore, this result is reported as preliminary reliability, while subsequent testing still requires a larger sample, item-total analysis, examination of alpha if an item is deleted, and validation of the construct structure (Taber, 2018).

3.2. Level of Digital Literacy and Gaps between Indicators

The overall percentage of 83.23% falls in the very high category according to the intervals used in the study. In general, respondents rated themselves as able to find, assess, and use digital spiritual content responsibly. However, digital literacy is a layered construct. A high aggregate score must not conceal the 11.85 percentage-point gap between the highest and lowest indicators. The indicator breakdown shows that ethical orientation, attention to children, and theological assessment are stronger than source-verification routines.

Table 3. Digital literacy achievement by indicator

No.	Indicator	Score	Percentage	Category
1	Digital information access	109/135	80.74%	High
2	Source verification	103/135	76.30%	High
3	Theological content and contextual assessment	156/180	86.67%	Very High
4	Information comparison and curation	109/135	80.74%	High
5	Child-service suitability	118/135	87.41%	Very High
6	Digital ethics	119/135	88.15%	Very High
7	Use of information in ministry	110/135	81.48%	Very High

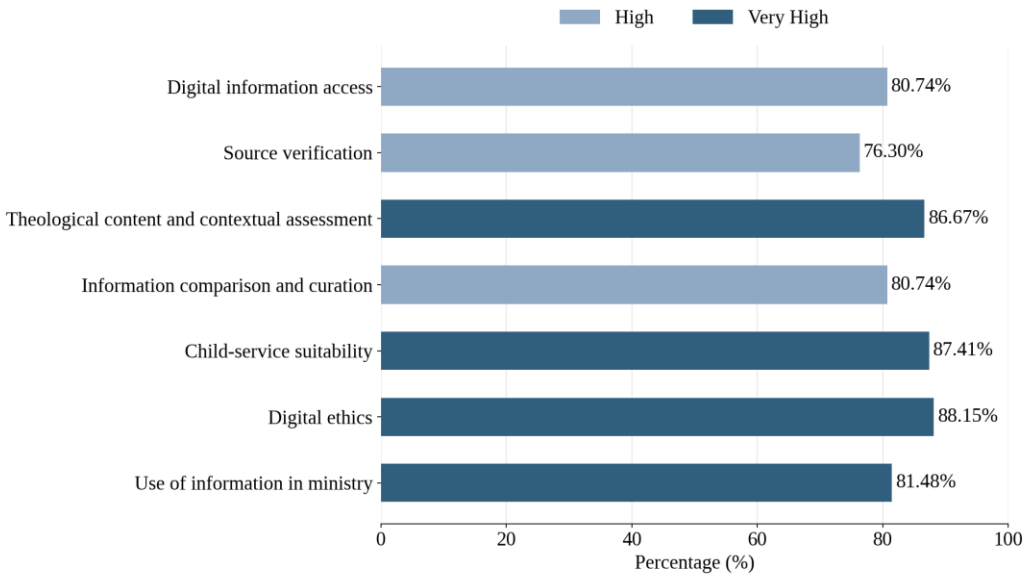


Figure 1. Percentage of digital literacy per indicator

3.3. Digital Information Access: A Basic Competence That Needs Guidance

The digital information access indicator reached 80.74%. This result shows that social media has been accepted as a supporting source for finding songs, images, games, videos, stories, and explanatory materials. High access is an important asset, but it is not identical to evaluation competence. Ng (2012) distinguished technical, cognitive, and socio-emotional dimensions in digital literacy, while [33] emphasized that teachers' digital competence becomes meaningful only when technology is connected to pedagogical purposes and professional decision-making.

The interviews showed that official materials remain the reference, while social media is used as a supplement. This pattern is constructive because digital sources are not immediately placed as the highest authority. However, wide access also increases the burden of selection. I1 highlighted that popularity indicators often replace quality assessment.

> *"Much content is made merely for the sake of audiences or popularity, is exaggerated, and its source is unclear; it is hard to sort out which is suitable."*
>
> *(I1, interview notes, 2026)*

This statement aligns with the heuristic model of credibility: users are easily influenced by appearance, social recognition, or a message's similarity to their prior beliefs [34]. Therefore, access training needs to cover keyword formulation, mapping source types, and recognizing authority traces. Teachers need to know not only where to search, but also why a source deserves attention.

3.4. Source Verification: A Procedural Weak Point

Source verification obtained the lowest achievement, namely 76.30%. This value still falls in the high category, but it aligns with interview notes about anonymous sources, the absence of standard steps, the use of personal judgment, and limited internet access for

cross-checking. This finding shows that the problem is not a lack of concern, but that concern has not yet been turned into a consistent procedure.

> *"We rely on personal judgment because the media is so vast. There is no standard guideline yet, but we try to be selective."*
> *(I2, interview notes, 2026)*
> *"Internet or Wi-Fi access is uneven and often disconnected when we want to cross-check."*
> *(I2, interview notes, 2026)*

Vertical checking on a single page is inadequate when the content creator's identity, the institution's reputation, or the claim's origin is unclear. Lateral reading requires users to open other sources, check who the content creator is, trace quotations back to their original context, and seek independent confirmation [35], [36], [37], which showed that this skill can be trained through case-based interventions. Under limited connectivity, teachers can prepare a list of official sources that can be accessed offline, store materials that have been reviewed, and postpone the use of content that cannot be verified.

The concept of critical ignoring is also relevant. Novella-García and Cloquell-Lozano [25] affirmed that digital competence is not only the ability to read more, but the ability to allocate attention appropriately. When an account does not display basic identity, claims cannot be traced, and content demands rapid dissemination, a responsible professional decision may be not to use the content. This strategy reduces the checking burden without lowering standards.

3.5. Theological Assessment: Strong in Orientation, Needs to Be Clarified in Method

The assessment of theological content and context reached 86.67%, one of the highest achievements. Informants consistently named the Bible and official church materials as the primary references. This strength is important because digital media creates new forms of authority: popularity, visibility, and networks can cause content creators to be treated as if they have theological legitimacy [16], [18]. Establishing the Bible and church guidelines as references sets a boundary against that shift in authority.

> *"The main principle is first to match it with the Bible; if confused, we return to the official guidelines."*
> *(I4, interview notes, 2026)*
> *"When we find a different version, we explain the difference between the Word and additional stories, then guide the children to hold fast to the Bible."*
> *(I3, interview notes, 2026)*

Both excerpts show the right orientation, but also reveal a categorization problem. Bible stories on social media often mix text, interpretation, imagination, and illustration without markers. Heiss et al. [14] emphasized the importance of literary and historical context and the author's purpose. Therefore, teachers need training to state explicitly which part is biblical text, which part is a summary, and which part is a pedagogical illustration. This practice prevents children from accepting additional story elements as the Word.

Theological assessment must also not stop at matching words or verses. Content can use a correct verse but apply it out of context, frighten children, or oversimplify matters of faith. A stronger process requires questions about the verse's context, main message, relationship to the whole biblical witness, consistency with official materials, and pedagogical consequences. Thus, hermeneutics functions as a tool of digital literacy, not a field separate from technology.

3.6. Information Curation: From Comparing to Recording Decisions

Information comparison and curation reached 80.74%. Interviews showed that teachers discussed content, extracted its essence, and compared it with official materials. However, this process has not been carried out in a uniform format. When decisions are stored only in personal memory, it is difficult to pass on the reasons for choosing or rejecting materials to other teachers. Campbell and Tsuria [5] place curation as a core part of social media information literacy because users must control the flow of information, not merely receive everything available.

Accountable curation requires minimum metadata: material title, creator, link or file origin, access date, theme, age group, key verse, reason for selection, parts modified, and reviewer's name. Desimone [8] emphasized the importance of tracing the origin of claims and evaluating sources with outside evidence. In ministry, such recording can form a material bank that stores not only files, but also traces of theological and pedagogical decisions.

This finding explains why a high general score does not automatically mean that the organization already has a curation system. The self-assessment questionnaire captures respondents' belief that they compare information, while the interviews show variation in how and how intensely they implement it. This difference is not a contradiction; both describe the gap between individual orientation and institutional routine.

3.7. Child Suitability and Digital Ethics as the Main Strengths

Child-service suitability reached 87.41%, while digital ethics was the highest indicator at 88.15%. Respondents showed attention to language, images or videos, age-group division, emotional impact, and responsibility before sharing information. This strength aligns with the nature of children's ministry: teachers are responsible for forming faith and shaping social-emotional experience, not only delivering content [8], [10].

Suitability cannot be determined merely from the label 'children's' or 'Christian'. Creswell and Creswell [7] proposed that educational media be assessed through active engagement, focus on learning goals, meaningfulness, and social interaction. Mariangga [18] added that adult guidance can affect the learning benefits of digital media for children. For Sunday School, these criteria can be translated into questions: does the material invite children to think and speak, are the visuals safe, is the language understandable, are the activities appropriate to attention span, and is the teacher present as an active companion.

Teachers' digital ethics encompass more than communication politeness. This dimension includes information accuracy, source citation, respect for copyright, protection of children's photos and identities, caution in forwarding messages, and willingness to

correct mistakes. Kozyreva et al. [17] place ethics as a core dimension of teachers' digital competence, while [19] links it to responsibility in the post-truth space. Therefore, high ethical achievement needs to be institutionalized in shared rules so that it does not depend on personal character.

3.8. Use in Ministry: The Gap between Consumption and Production

The indicator of use of information in ministry obtained 81.48%. Although this category is very high according to the study's intervals, the item on the ability to process digital information into teaching materials reached only 75.56%. This finding shows that using content is easier at the level of consumption and selection than at the level of pedagogical production. Teachers can find images or videos, but are not necessarily able to design objectives, questions, teaching aids, activity sequences, and learning evaluations from those materials.

> *"Technical skills in using devices and applications are still limited. Creativity exists, but has not been maximally developed; communication among teachers is also not yet intense."*
> *(I4, interview notes, 2026)*

I4's statement shows the relationship between technical competence, pedagogical creativity, and social support. The TPACK framework affirms that technology integration requires the meeting of technological, pedagogical, and content knowledge [7]. Ecker et al. [10] extended it with personal-ethical and professional competencies. In religious education, technology should be guided by pedagogical and theological purposes, not used because it is available or popular [11].

Therefore, training needs to use authentic tasks. Participants choose one piece of content, check the source, determine the biblical message, assess age suitability, simplify the language, create an activity, cite the sources, and then present the product for joint review. This kind of cycle turns digital literacy from declarative knowledge into ministry practice. Reviewed products can enter the church's material bank with adaptation notes.

3.9. Coordination and Development as Institutional Factors

The interviews showed variation in coordination experiences. Some informants noted references and discussion, while others felt preparation remained largely independent and communication was not yet strong. This difference shows that mechanisms may already exist, but their reach and consistency differ across rayons. Digital competence cannot be placed on teachers alone because decisions about sources, theology, and child safety have institutional consequences.

> *"There is no regular development or socialization before worship day; coordination is limited so preparation is often done independently."*
> *(I1, interview notes, 2026)*
> *"Training is hoped to be ongoing, not just a single meeting. Teachers need ready-to-use learning examples and practice in using devices for teaching aids."*
> *(I4, interview notes, 2026)*

Kozyreva et al. [17] identify the church as an important actor in faith-based media literacy, while [8] emphasizes developing Sunday School teachers to face the internal and external challenges of the digital era. The church can carry out this function through a shared checklist, a list of trusted sources, theological consultation space, review of materials before worship, and inter-rayon practice-sharing meetings.

A one-time development session is generally not enough to change routines. Mariangga [18] emphasized content focus, active learning, coherence, duration, and collective participation as elements of professional development. Martha et al. [19] showed that the impact of training is influenced by mechanisms that help teachers deal with real problems in practice. Therefore, training needs to be followed by application tasks, feedback on products, reflection after two to four weeks, and collective development of the material bank.

3.10. Integration of Quantitative and Qualitative Findings

Table 4. Integration of questionnaire and interview results

Questionnaire finding	Interview evidence	Meaning of integration
Digital ethics—88.15%	Teachers are careful and do not immediately use doubtful content	Strong in attitude; needs to be made a shared standard
Child suitability—87.41%	Age, language, visuals, and group division are considered	Strong pedagogical orientation; a formal rubric is still needed
Theological assessment—86.67%	The Bible and official materials serve as the main references	Data reinforce each other; the distinction between text and illustration needs to be clarified
Use—81.48%	Device skills and processing of teaching aids are not yet evenly distributed.	Material production practice is needed.
Curation—80.74%	Content is compared and its essence extracted	The practice exists, but documentation of decisions is not yet uniform
Access—80.74%	Social media is used for additional sources	Access needs to be directed by purpose and a source map
Verification—76.30%	Anonymous sources, no standard guidelines, limited internet	The main gap is procedural, and the infrastructure constraint is real

The integration shows a consistent pattern: the highest scores relate to deeply rooted values—caution, orientation to the Bible, and attention to children—while the lower scores relate to technical procedures and governance—identity checking, cross-checking, source recording, material production, and coordination. In other words, the main need is not to build concern from scratch, but to turn concern into professional routines that can be taught, observed, and evaluated.

3.11. A Model for Filtering Digital Spiritual Content

Based on the integration of data and theory, this article proposes a six-step model, ‘Filter before Sharing’. The model is not a new validation instrument, but a practical procedure derived from the study’s indicators and field problems. Each step produces a decision or note that can be checked by other teachers.

Table 5. Six-step model for filtering digital spiritual content

Step	Action	Key question	Minimum evidence
1	Set the purpose and age	What is the faith objective and the target age group?	Objective, age, and children's needs
2	Identify the source	Who is the creator, and what is their competence?	Account/institution identity and reputation traces
3	Trace the origin	Where do the claims, images, quotations, or verses come from?	Link or primary source
4	Compare	Is it consistent with the Bible, context, official materials, and other sources?	Notes of similarities/differences
5	Assess safety and ethics	Is it safe, accurate, legal, and not harmful to children?	Decision to use, modify, postpone, or reject
6	Adapt and document	How is the content turned into active learning?	Teaching material design along with sources

Steps two to four adopt the principles of lateral reading and tracing origins [8], [11]. Steps one, five, and six connect verification with ministry goals, child development, ethics, and learning design [13], [18], [19]. If content fails on source identity or cannot be traced, teachers can apply critical ignoring and move to a more accountable source [20].

3.12. Initial Realization of Development and Limits of Claims

As an initial follow-up, the research documents record a Sunday School teachers' mini workshop held on Sunday, June 28, 2026, starting at 11:30 WIT in the Intermediary Room/Sunday School Room of GKI Bethesda Sele Be Solu. The written evaluation described the activity as a ministry need, a space for reflection, and a program that needs to be carried out continuously. One excerpt states that 'this is exactly the kind of activity that Sunday School teachers at GKI Bethesda Sele Be Solu truly need' [17]. Another excerpt emphasizes that the challenges of the times require teachers to keep learning and that practical training needs to be held regularly.

This evidence shows the start of a process, not the training's effectiveness. The available attendance list was not filled in, so the number of participants is unknown. A pre-test, post-test, product rubric, or measurable follow-up is also not available. Therefore, the article does not conclude that the workshop improved competence. Subsequent research needs to measure changes in understanding, the quality of teaching-material products, and application in the rayons after two to four weeks.

4. IMPLICATION

Theoretically, the results show that digital literacy in Christian Religious Education is inadequate if treated as a technical skill. The construct needs to connect information evaluation, theological authority, child development, ethics, and pedagogical production. This integration extends the social media literacy framework with the responsibility specific to faith educators: every decision to use content is at once an epistemic, theological, pedagogical, and moral decision.

Practically, the church can turn the six-step model into a one-page checklist. Each rayon can appoint a material reviewer, provide a list of official channels, and store content that has been reviewed together with minimum metadata. This approach is more realistic than requiring every teacher to check the entire internet independently. For teachers with limited connectivity, an offline material bank and a review schedule before worship day can reduce dependence on last-minute searching.

Pedagogically, development needs to be product-oriented. Success is measured not only through satisfaction or attendance, but through participants' ability to produce materials that cite sources, distinguish text from illustration, are age-appropriate, safe, and activate children. Professional development should follow a cycle of case–practice–feedback–application–reflection so knowledge becomes ministry routine [17], [37].

5. RESEARCH LIMITATIONS

a. Only nine of the 51 questionnaires were complete and could be processed. The valid response rate of 17.65% limits representativeness and does not allow statistical generalization to all Sunday School teachers at the research site.
b. The instrument used self-assessment. Scores may be influenced by perceptions of which answers are considered good and have not been systematically compared with observation of practice or analysis of teaching materials actually used.
c. Cronbach's alpha of 0.844 was calculated on a very small sample. This value is preliminary and does not yet replace tests of content validity, construct validity, item-total relationships, and examination of the structure of the seven indicators.
d. The interview data took the form of thematic notes, not verbatim transcripts. The article does not analyze intonation, conversation order, or interaction context in detail; the specific date of each interview and member checking are also not available.
e. The mini workshop only has evidence of implementation and a written evaluation. Because a completed attendance list, pre–post data, and product assessment are not available, the number of participants and the workshop's effectiveness cannot be determined.

These limitations do not erase the value of the study as a local mapping. The consistency among the lowest indicator, the problematic item, and the four informants' experiences provides a reasonable basis for designing development programs. The study's contribution lies in the transparency of data limits, the integration of findings, and the connection of recommendations to real problems, not in the breadth of generalization.

6. CONCLUSION

The digital literacy of the nine Sunday School teachers analyzed reached 83.23% and is in the very high category according to the study's intervals. The main strengths lie in digital ethics (88.15%), child-service suitability (87.41%), and assessment of theological content and context (86.67%). The Bible and official church materials served as the

primary references, and teachers expressed concern about the impact of content on children.

At the same time, source verification was the lowest indicator (76.30%). The interviews explained that anonymous sources, content popularity, the absence of standard guidelines, reliance on personal judgment, uneven internet access, device skills, and limited coordination hinder consistent filtering. This finding shows a gap between a strong ethical-theological orientation and operational procedures that are not yet uniform.

The recommended development uses six steps: setting purpose and age, identifying sources, tracing origins, comparing with the Bible and official sources, assessing safety and ethics, then adapting and documenting materials. The church needs to turn these steps into a checklist, a material bank, a review forum, and ongoing product-based training. Further research should increase the response rate, store item-level data and verbatim transcripts, conduct practice observations, and evaluate training impact through pre-tests, post-tests, product quality, and application in the rayons.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The authors thank Institut Agama Kristen Negeri Ambon for the 2026 Faculty and Student Group Research Grant scheme, the leaders and ministers of GKI Bethesda Sele Be Solu, and all Sunday School teachers and informants who supported the research.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

Conceptualization, data collection, analysis, drafting, review, and approval of the manuscript: Febrilianti, Misye Waliana, Eurene Maurendini Lefta, and L. Joseph. The details of the CRediT roles need to be confirmed by all authors before submission to the journal.

FUNDING AND CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The research is part of the 2026 IAKN Ambon Faculty and Student Group Research Grant. The authors need to confirm the conflict-of-interest statement in accordance with the policy of the target journal; no conflict of interest is stated in the source documents.

DATA AVAILABILITY

The data underlying the article consist of a recap of the nine valid questionnaires and thematic notes from the four informants. Access may be considered by the authors with attention to consent, identity confidentiality, and institutional policy. Questionnaire photos containing respondents' names are not included.

REFERENCES

[1] V. Braun and V. Clarke, Thematic Analysis: A Practical Guide. London, U.K.: SAGE Publications, 2021.

[2] J. Breakstone, M. Smith, S. Wineburg, A. Rapaport, J. Carle, M. Garland, and A. Saavedra, "Students' civic online reasoning: A national portrait," Educational Researcher, vol. 50, no. 8, pp. 505–515, 2021,

doi: 10.3102/0013189X211017495.
[3] H. A. Campbell, “Who’s got the power? Religious authority and the Internet,” Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication, vol. 12, no. 3, pp. 1043–1062, 2007, doi: 10.1111/j.1083-6101.2007.00362.x.
[4] H. A. Campbell and G. Evolvi, “Contextualizing current digital religion research on emerging technologies,” Human Behavior and Emerging Technologies, vol. 2, no. 1, pp. 5–17, 2020, doi: 10.1002/hbe2.149.
[5] H. A. Campbell and R. Tsuria, Eds., Digital Religion: Understanding Religious Practice in Digital Media, 2nd ed. London, U.K.: Routledge, 2022.
[6] M. Caulfield and S. Wineburg, Verified: How to Think Straight, Get Duped Less, and Make Better Decisions About What to Believe Online. Chicago, IL, USA: University of Chicago Press, 2023.
[7] J. W. Creswell and J. D. Creswell, Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches, 6th ed. Thousand Oaks, CA, USA: SAGE Publications, 2023.
[8] L. M. Desimone, “Improving impact studies of teachers’ professional development: Toward better conceptualizations and measures,” Educational Researcher, vol. 38, no. 3, pp. 181–199, 2009, doi: 10.3102/0013189X08331140.
[9] I. Díaz, “Considering the efficacy of digital technology as a means of evangelization in Christian religious education,” Religious Education, vol. 116, no. 1, pp. 3–15, 2021, doi: 10.1080/00344087.2021.1872001.
[10] U. K. H. Ecker, S. Lewandowsky, J. Cook, P. Schmid, L. K. Fazio, N. M. Brashier, P. Kendeou, E. K. Vraga, and M. A. Amazeen, “The psychological drivers of misinformation belief and its resistance to correction,” Nature Reviews Psychology, vol. 1, pp. 13–29, 2022, doi: 10.1038/s44159-021-00006-y.
[11] G. Falloon, “From digital literacy to digital competence: The teacher digital competency (TDC) framework,” Educational Technology Research and Development, vol. 68, pp. 2449–2472, 2020, doi: 10.1007/s11423-020-09767-4.
[12] G. D. Fee and D. Stuart, How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth, 4th ed. Grand Rapids, MI, USA: Zondervan Academic, 2014.
[13] A. M. Guess, M. Lerner, B. Lyons, J. M. Montgomery, B. Nyhan, J. Reifler, and N. Sircar, “A digital media literacy intervention increases discernment between mainstream and false news in the United States and India,” Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, vol. 117, no. 27, pp. 15536–15545, 2020, doi: 10.1073/pnas.1920498117.
[14] R. Heiss, A. Nanz, and J. Matthes, “Social media information literacy: Conceptualization and associations with information overload, news avoidance and conspiracy mentality,” Computers in Human Behavior, vol. 148, Art. no. 107908, 2023, doi: 10.1016/j.chb.2023.107908.
[15] K. Hirsh-Pasek, J. M. Zosh, R. M. Golinkoff, J. H. Gray, M. B. Robb, and J. Kaufman, “Putting education in ‘educational’ apps: Lessons from the science of learning,” Psychological Science in the Public Interest, vol. 16, no. 1, pp. 3–34, 2015, doi: 10.1177/1529100615569721.
[16] M. M. Kennedy, “How does professional development improve teaching?” Review of Educational Research, vol. 86, no. 4, pp. 945–980, 2016, doi: 10.3102/0034654315626800.
[17] A. Kozyreva, S. Wineburg, S. Lewandowsky, and R. Hertwig, “Critical ignoring as a core competence for digital citizens,” Current Directions in Psychological Science, vol. 32, no. 1, pp. 81–88, 2023, doi: 10.1177/09637214221121570.
[18] O. Mariangga, “Peran guru Sekolah Minggu untuk pengenalan dan pertumbuhan iman anak Sekolah Minggu,” REI MAI: Jurnal Ilmu Teologi dan Pendidikan Kristen, vol. 3, no. 1, pp. 72–81, 2025, doi: 10.69748/jrm.v3i1.220.
[19] J. Martha, E. W. Wihardja, and P. A. Ardianto, “Peran gereja dalam meningkatkan literasi media sosial pada Generasi Z di Indonesia,” Kharisma: Jurnal Ilmiah Teologi, vol. 5, no. 1, pp. 70–84, 2024, doi: 10.54553/kharisma.v5i1.233.
[20] S. McGrew, “Learning to evaluate: An intervention in civic online reasoning,” Computers & Education, vol. 145, Art. no. 103711, 2020, doi: 10.1016/j.compedu.2019.103711.
[21] M. J. Metzger, A. J. Flanagin, and R. B. Medders, “Social and heuristic approaches to credibility evaluation online,” Journal of Communication, vol. 60, no. 3, pp. 413–439, 2010, doi: 10.1111/j.1460-

2466.2010.01488.x.
[22] M. B. Miles, A. M. Huberman, and J. Saldaña, Qualitative Data Analysis: A Methods Sourcebook, 4th ed. Thousand Oaks, CA, USA: SAGE Publications, 2020.
[23] P. Mishra and M. J. Koehler, "Technological pedagogical content knowledge: A framework for teacher knowledge," Teachers College Record, vol. 108, no. 6, pp. 1017–1054, 2006, doi: 10.1111/j.1467-9620.2006.00684.x.
[24] W. Ng, "Can we teach digital natives digital literacy?" Computers & education, vol. 59, no. 3, pp. 1065–1078, 2012, doi: 10.1016/j.compedu.2012.04.016.
[25] C. Novella-García and A. Cloquell-Lozano, "The ethical dimension of digital competence in teacher training," Education and Information Technologies, vol. 26, pp. 3529–3541, 2021, doi: 10.1007/s10639-021-10436-z.
[26] G. Pennycook, Z. Epstein, M. Mosleh, A. A. Arechar, D. Eckles, and D. G. Rand, "Shifting attention to accuracy can reduce misinformation online," nature, vol. 592, pp. 590–595, 2021, doi: 10.1038/s41586-021-03344-2.
[27] K. Polanco-Levicán and S. Salvo-Garrido, "Understanding social media literacy: A systematic review of the concept and its competences," International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health, vol. 19, no. 14, Art. no. 8807, 2022, doi: 10.3390/ijerph19148807.
[28] N. O. Purmanasari and Y. Pandiangan, "Peran guru Sekolah Minggu dalam mendukung perkembangan sosial-emosional anak usia dini," Kharisma: Jurnal Ilmiah Teologi, vol. 4, no. 2, pp. 41–51, 2023, doi: 10.54553/kharisma.v4i2.137.
[29] P. Rianto, "Literasi digital dan etika media sosial di era post-truth," Interaksi: Jurnal Ilmu Komunikasi, vol. 8, no. 2, pp. 24–35, 2019, doi: 10.14710/interaksi.8.2.24-35.
[30] M. Rusdy, "Pengaruh literasi digital terhadap pencegahan informasi hoaks pada remaja di SMA Negeri 7 Kota Lhokseumawe," Jurnal Pekommas, vol. 6, no. 2, pp. 77–84, 2021, doi: 10.56873/jpkm.v6i2.4271.
[31] M. M. Solihin, "Hubungan literasi digital dengan perilaku penyebaran hoaks pada kalangan dosen di masa pandemi COVID-19," Jurnal Pekommas, vol. 6, Special Issue, pp. 91–103, 2021, doi: 10.56873/jpkm.v6i3.4316.
[32] K. S. Taber, "The use of Cronbach's alpha when developing and reporting research instruments in science education," Research in Science Education, vol. 48, pp. 1273–1296, 2018, doi: 10.1007/s11165-016-9602-2.
[33] G. Taylor, G. Sala, J. Kolak, P. Gerhardstein, and J. Lingwood, "Does adult-child co-use during digital media use improve children's learning aged 0–6 years? A systematic review with meta-analysis," Educational Research Review, vol. 44, Art. no. 100614, 2024, doi: 10.1016/j.edurev.2024.100614.
[34] M. M. Tobing, "Pembinaan guru Sekolah Minggu dalam menghadapi tantangan internal dan eksternal di era digital," Jurnal Christian Humaniora, vol. 8, no. 2, pp. 208–224, 2024, doi: 10.46965/jch.v8i2.2547.
[35] E. van Laar, A. J. A. M. van Deursen, J. A. G. M. van Dijk, and J. de Haan, "The relation between 21st-century skills and digital skills: A systematic literature review," Computers in Human Behavior, vol. 72, pp. 577–588, 2017, doi: 10.1016/j.chb.2017.03.010.
[36] S. Wineburg, J. Breakstone, S. McGrew, M. D. Smith, and T. Ortega, "Lateral reading on the open Internet: A district-wide field study in high school government classes," Journal of Educational Psychology, vol. 114, no. 5, pp. 893–909, 2022, doi: 10.1037/edu0000740.
[37] S. Wineburg and S. McGrew, "Lateral reading and the nature of expertise: Reading less and learning more when evaluating digital information," Teachers College Record, vol. 121, no. 11, pp. 1–40, 2019, doi: 10.1177/016146811912101102.