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Technology as a Threat to Local Values and Culture Among Students: A Case Study in Sabah, Malaysia

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Abstract

The technological and cultural revolution, driven by media manipulation and intensified by social media's cross-border communication, threatens local values and culture (LVC) in any society. In Malaysia, emerging lifestyles significantly challenge LVC, especially among students. Limited research has examined how educators in Sabah perceive the impact of technology on student behaviours related to LVC, leaving a gap in understanding the region's cultural and educational challenges. This study explores educators' perspectives regarding technological influences in Sabah. Utilising a qualitative case study, nine educators from different educational levels were interviewed individually to explore students' behaviours in reflecting the LVC in Sabah, Malaysia, particularly in Kota Kinabalu and Tawau. The thematic analysis resulted in four themes, i.e., (a) personality development, (b) technological weakness, (c) emotional intelligence, and (d) suggestions to address student development and digital literacy. The study presented an argument with the previous findings concerning personality disorders in defending LVC due to technological influences. The study suggests the importance of defending LVC in shaping a civilised society. It also contributes new findings on the students' abilities to overcome the challenges of technological influences.

Keywords: technological influences, local values and culture (LVC), personality development, social media, Sabah

1. Introduction

Advances in science and technology have led to a modern and sophisticated way of life. In a string of advances led by developing countries, the discovery of the Internet, which was once challenging to own, is now spreading widely worldwide. The Internet has even cultivated the existence of local values and culture (LVC) via social media channels such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, YouTube, TikTok, Netflix, Pinterest and many more. The existence of social media allows for intensive cross-border and open communication networks. The dynamic landscape of 'Malaysian Culture' is transforming, leading to the emergence of new lifestyles that pose a significant threat to LVC among students. The use of the Internet without control creates a personality disorder that forms indifferent attitudes toward the environment. Early studies stated that relationship, academic, financial and career losses occurred as a result of Internet addiction (Young, 1998).

Apart from that, smartphones and the availability of the Internet on these devices play a significant role in increasing the impact of social media, both individually and in society as a whole. The emergence of technology is not only considered a technological revolution but also a cultural revolution. In the cultural revolution, information and media or information manipulation technology determine everything, including what is understood as 'truth', which threatens local values. Local value refers to the level, quality and nature of elevation; thought, society and many more. It closely relates to the existence of human values. Culture brings the meaning of civilisation, the progress of mind and common sense; the way of thinking, behaving and others. It is the method of thinking and behaving that forms the civilisation of a nation. The values and behaviours of other people who were from different cultures (Raja Zainal Hassan et al., 2020). In this study, threat refers to the influences of technology that affect LVC. The famous platform has also influenced the way people live, think and behave, especially those currently living in different cultural or ethnic groups (Raja Zainal Hassan et al., 2020).

From another dimension, culture is formed due to the processing of human values. Both mutually influence the development of the dynamics of civilisation of a strong nation, sustainable and able to determine the direction of development of a country. Therefore, there is no denying that the Internet plays a major role in upgrading the lives of people around the world. Annamalai et al. (2021) found that the use of smartphones in Lithuania had a positive impact on the education system. The teaching and learning methods are interactive and interesting, thus improving academic performance. It is not surprising that the Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia (SPM) keeps increasing yearly. The SPM results in 2023 recorded a good achievement at 4.6 of the National Average Grade (GPN) compared to 4.74 in 2022. The urban area obtained higher at 4.58 while the rural area obtained 5.01. The increase of 3.1% in 2023 compared to 2.7% in 2022 for candidates who received all A's indicates that technology is leading to a positive influence on education.

However, personality development is unbalanced (Al-Rahmi et al., 2021; Amani, 2020; Isnawati et al., 2021; Jackman et al., 2021; Kibirige, 2023; Samat et al., 2020). With the emergence of social networking sites such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and TikTok, stress,

loneliness, happiness, depression, and other feelings are expressed or shared more often in cyberspace than in the real world, such as family and friends. The 'cyber relationship' formed a new lifestyle that differed from the existing lifestyle. The research by Young (1998) was the most significant since the studies existed two decades ago.

Therefore, Sabah, which is rich in customs, culture, and fresh nature, is affected by technological influences (Hu et al., 2020). This phenomenon is considered to be capable of bringing the rich customs and culture of the state of Sabah to the world stage or vice versa. These results motivated the researchers to explore student's behaviours reflecting the LVC from the educators' perspectives in Sabah, Malaysia, particularly Kota Kinabalu and Tawau. In pursuit of this proposal, one research question (RQ) was addressed in this study as follows:

RQ1: *What are the perceived student behaviours in reflecting local values and culture (LVC) against the influence of technology from educators' perspectives in Sabah, Malaysia?*

2. Literature Review

The balance between the advantages and disadvantages of technology has drawn the attention of many researchers. While they have highlighted the benefits of science and technology as catalysts for development, they have also studied the drawbacks, including personality disorders and mental health problems among users. A series of that, a different dimension suddenly discovers the LVC of society. The relationship between LVC influences each other in the formation of civilisation, which ultimately determines the formation of a country. In the landscape of Malaysian culture, several studies have delved into the intersection of culture among students. The growth of smartphones is the major influence in a shift that implements screen activities to serve entertainment and social media as an interactive communication medium. Such activities affect not only co-curricular performance but also students' physical and mental health (Michael & Ambotang, 2020).

Meanwhile, Samat et al. (2020) suggested that smartphones cause poor sleep quality that leads to depression such as loss of energy, concentration and personality disorders. As a result, the individual is driven to act compulsively and impulsively and have an unmanaged lifestyle. It was due to the 'lack of reading' culture. The phenomenon of many teachers not cultivating reading makes it more challenging to understand digital information materials (Ismawati et al., 2021). The culture of reading towards a valuable personality does not occur due to less reading practice among educators and students. Students are less mature when making decisions and are more aggressive towards society. Kopciewicz and Bougsiaa (2021) expressed disappointment in primary school teachers in Poland, who dismissed tablets as mere 'toys' incompatible with the school's objectives. The presence of tablets in the classroom poses a significant challenge for teachers and is a source of serious doubt. As a result, teachers often focus on their fears, concerns, and uncertainties regarding whether and how tablets can meet learning goals.

In Malaysia, technology triggers a rejection of spiritual understanding of the reality of life, the role of knowledge and truth, the dimensions of the mind and the relationship between metaphysics and physics (Hairudin, 2000).#Ethics and traditional values are no longer seen as

ideals that should be preserved. Some students are not shy about uploading material that reveals their personality or engaging in excessive self-promotion; even rude and obscene language is becoming normalised. Amani (2020) states that manners on social media have become sharp and critical due to the freedom to write, often lacking civility because of uncontrolled emotional impulses. Unrestricted interaction through smartphones can also lead to avoiding communication with parents and teachers (Rashid et al., 2020). Michael and Ambotang (2020) concluded that the low level of physical activity among students is due to excessive screen time activities. A student's inability to communicate, interpret or control the content of information transmitted through social media separates them from community groups that communicate healthily.

Not surprisingly, Jackman et al. (2021) claimed that 60% of 8 to 12-year-old children were exposed to cyber-risks such as cyberbullying, gaming disorder, sexual grooming and violence obtained among 145000 children and adolescents across 30 countries worldwide. They see themselves as superior icons, great, and to be praised. They are easily mad when criticised and are often jealous of other people's talents. Their desires and dreams should be achieved and fulfilled. This study highlights the decline of local values and culture (LVC) among students, a concern also noted by Ismawati et al. (2021) and Kibirige (2023), due to negative behaviours such as disrespect, social media misuse, viewing inappropriate content, and excessive pursuit of pleasure. These studies show findings that are not much different from Young's (1998) discussion on Internet addiction as a growing clinical disorder and highlight its implications for personality disorders and mental health that finally threaten the LVC.

3. Theoretical Framework

The Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), Connectivism Learning Theory (CLT) and Social Learning Theory (SLT) are three influential theories that provide insight into how students interact with technology and socialise in digital environments. These theories provide a comprehensive understanding of the complex nature of life that influences an individual’s attitudes in the context of LVC.

The TAM, proposed by Davis (1989), is a theoretical model that explains how users accept and use technology. It suggests that user acceptance of technology is determined by two factors: *Perceived Usefulness* (PU) and *Perceived Ease of Use* (PEOU) (Park & Park, 2020). In the context of digital literacy education in Sabah, TAM helps stakeholders understand how students accept and adopt digital technology in life (Hu & AlSaqqaf, 2021). The usability and ease of use of digital tools and platforms influence the attitudes and intentions of students to incorporate these technologies into their lives.

Moreover, CLT is a learning theory proposed by Siemens (2005) that emphasises the importance of connections and networks in learning. According to connectivism, learning occurs through the creation and traversal of networks of connections among people, information, and technology. In the realm of LVC in Sabah, connectivism implies that students learn and adapt values and culture from digital networks. By fostering connections and networks, educators can create rich learning experiences that promote personal development (Felten & Lambert, 2020).

Additionally, SLT is proposed by Bandura (1977), highlights the role of social interactions and observational learning in shaping behaviour. According to this theory, individuals learn through observing others' behaviours, attitudes and outcomes of those behaviours, which then influence their own behaviour. According to Bandura (1977), parents, siblings and close friends are models that influence individual learning. If the model has a superior personality, positive learning will be formed. However, the opposite is formed if the model pattern behaves aggressively.

Bringing together TAM, CLT, and SLT offers a multifaceted understanding of how students interact with technology and socialise in digital environments. TAM provides a foundation for understanding the acceptance and adoption of digital technologies, emphasising the importance of usability and ease of use. CLT enriches this understanding by highlighting the role of digital networks and connections in learning, suggesting that technology facilitates not just individual use but also collective learning experiences. SLT complements these perspectives by focusing on the social aspects of learning, demonstrating how observational learning and social interactions influence behaviour and attitudes. By integrating these three frameworks, this study intends to provide a comprehensive outlook that addresses both the technological and social dimensions of digital literacy and value cultivation. This holistic approach ensures that educational interventions are not only technologically sound but also socially relevant, fostering a supportive learning environment that leverages the strengths of each theoretical perspective.

4. Method

A qualitative research approach was employed in this study, utilising a case study design with semi-structured interviews. Additionally, observations were conducted to complement the semi-structured interviews and enhance understanding. This method was chosen to explore the subjective perspectives of participants with relevant experience and expertise. The sampling technique involved selecting educators from various educational levels and institutions through purposive sampling. As a result, nine participants were recruited from different educational institutions in Kota Kinabalu (two high schools and two universities) and Tawau (two primary schools and three vocational colleges) to gather diverse viewpoints. Initially developed by Young (1998), the interview questions were modified for the current study to cover a range of topics, including threats faced in LVC, perspectives on students' behaviours, and suggestions for improvement. These interview questions were validated by experts working in the relevant fields, who then provided positive feedback with minor amendments before data collection.

The thematic analysis was then used to analyse the qualitative data collected (Nowell et al., 2017). Interview sessions were transcribed and coded by themes following Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-step approach: (a) familiarising with the data, (b) generating initial codes, (c) searching for themes, (d) reviewing themes, (e) defining and naming themes, and (f) producing the final report. Both Bahasa Malaysia and English were available for the semi-structured interviews to address potential language barriers and enhance comprehensibility. Ensuring the trustworthiness and reliability of qualitative data is crucial.

To enhance credibility and ethical consideration, interview transcripts were submitted to participants involved in semi-structured interviews for verification (Creswell, 2008). This allowed participants to confirm the accuracy of the transcripts, ensuring alignment with their conveyed messages. Moreover, consistency, a critical factor in credibility, was maintained by having all research members cross-check the coded data. Additionally, an external coder, familiar with e-learning in language teaching and experienced in qualitative research, was recruited to independently code a sample of the data, confirming agreement on the coded transcripts. Their consistent interpretation and coding of data further strengthened the study's credibility (Johnson et al., 2020).

5. Results

This study provides educators with a point of view (POV) on how they reflect the students' behaviours. Findings were obtained from primary and secondary schools, vocational colleges and universities, exploring their understanding of LVC, its challenges and the strategies applied to overcome them.

5.1 Descriptive Results of Demographics

As shown in Table 1, nine participants were involved in this study: five males (four with IT backgrounds and one without) and four females (one with an IT background and three without). Notably, the age breakdown suggests that younger educators tend to have more knowledge and technological skills compared to older ones. Table 1 presents the age breakdown of technology-based educators. Among the participants, there was one educator aged 21–30, one aged 31–40, and two aged 41–50. However, three educators aged 41–50 were not tech-savvy and were female. Educators aged 51 and above did not have a technological background.

Table 1. Descriptive results of participants

Participant (Level of Teachings)	Gender	Age Range	Course Taught	Working Experience (Years >)	Technological Background
PP1 Primary school	Female	41–50	Malay Language	19	Non-IT
PP2 Primary school	Male	31–40	Science	15	IT
SP3 Secondary school	Female	41–50	Science Stream	17	Non-IT
SP4 Secondary school	Male	21–30	Science and RBT	3	IT
VP5 Vocational College	Female	41–50	History	10	Non-IT
VP6 Vocational College	Male	41–50	Media and Library	22	IT
VP7 Vocational College	Male	51–60	Mathematics	25	Non-IT
UP8 University	Male	51–60	Contemporary Political Thought	27	Non-IT
UP9 University	Female	41–50	Fundamentals of Entrepreneurial Acculturation	16	IT

Furthermore, specialisation and working experience (with a mean score of 17) also

influenced educators' knowledge and technological skills. Those in science and technology fields benefit from their exposure to technology, while those in social sciences face hurdles due to limited technological exposure, despite having more than ten to twenty years of experience. Educators with shorter working experience tend to be more skilled. Despite this, both address similar POVs that connect to students' behaviour, which does not reflect the LVC. It relates the personality development, technological weaknesses, emotional intelligence and suggestions for defending the LVC among the students. In addition to these, to present the findings, each interviewed participant is identified by a number. Those from primary schools, secondary schools, vocational colleges, and universities are labelled as 'PP', 'SP', 'VP', and 'UP', respectively.

5.2 Results of Thematic Analysis

Given the use of thematic analysis to identify the main themes from the semi-structured interview questions, four key themes emerged from the qualitative analysis: (a) personality development, (b) technological weakness, (c) emotional intelligence, and (d) suggestions to address student development and digital literacy.

5.2.1 Personality Development

The development of students' personalities is frequently voiced by the participants. Accordingly, there is a significant difference in personality development; before and after two decades of technological influences. These developments threaten the LVC among the students; thereafter suggested a solution to strengthen the personality development.

> *PP1: The personality of students before the 21st century was very polite and socialised with other people.*
>
> *PP1: …the students are not forgotten such as respecting teachers, asking for permission...*
>
> *SP4: In my opinion, the personalities of students before the year 2000 are different from the students of the year after 2000.*
>
> *VP5: More aggressive.*
>
> *VP7: …developed within a good knowledge and faith about Islamic teachings. Educators must instil it throughout the education session.*
>
> *UP8: The same question I asked 20 years ago was well-answered by the previous students.*
>
> *UP8: Compared to the previous, they are all mature, knowledgeable and sensitive to nature.*
>
> *UP8: If nobody guides them, our generation will be missing in action.*
>
> *UP9: Before the 21st century, they were more respectful to human beings because they had more interaction among their friends and surroundings.*

Meanwhile, PP2 pointed out different thoughts. *In my opinion, the personality of students nowadays depends on the use of technology. They often use technology mediums to search for information, communicate, learn or entertain* (PP2). It indirectly urged that the influence of technology on LVC depends on the student's acceptance, thus proving the existence of the theories; TAM, CLT and SLT.

5.2.2 Technological Weaknesses

Technological weaknesses are also highlighted. Participants did not deny the advantages of technology, which increases academic achievement as claimed by PP1, PP2, SP4, VP6, V7 and UP9. *Knowledge and skills gained* (PP1, SP3). *Students can independently learn by accessing information outside the classroom* (PP2, SP4, VP7). *Most likely because digital technology helps in making the learning process more interesting and interactive. A meaningful learning experience for teachers and students is created. As a result, academic achievement is better than before* (VP6). However, all of them, except VP6 and UP9, rather expressed their concern about the weaknesses. Everyone agrees that technology has a bad impact on LVC. Students perceive unbalanced emotional intelligence and take the technology for granted.

> *PP1: They do not have awareness of other people's emotions; anger, sadness, sullenness, or discouragement. It happens because they are only faced screen that has no feelings.*
>
> *PP2: Students were found to be less interested in physical activities compared to virtual activities involving the use of gadgets.*
>
> *SP3: I found that when students are learning... focus.... The focus time is shorter, or it is difficult for students to concentrate on learning.*
>
> *SP4: …more aggressive in their response…*
>
> *VP5: Not really good. Spending much time on the Internet.*
>
> *VP7: …create Inhumane personalities.*
>
> *VP8: Because all the information is at their fingertips, they pick it up without struggling. The touchscreen easily disappeared. We call it half-knowledgeable. They only know a partial and temporary existence. Compared to previous students, they had struggled for knowledge thus making it eternally exist. The only place to hunt for knowledge is a library. If they can't find it internally, they continue searching from other places, crossing the borders.*

5.2.3 Emotional Intelligence (EQ)

Emotional intelligence (EQ) is the ability to perceive, express, evaluate and manage emotions to adapt to an unexpected situation or others' emotions. To identify the threats of LVC, this research seeks educators' POVs pertaining to the accuracy of the evaluation of their students' behavioural. Overall, most of the participants mentioned unbalanced EQ due to a lack of

interaction. Before the 21st century, students interacted physically frequently. However, the existence of technology influences the way students interact as claimed by the participants.

> *PP1: … they do not have awareness of other people's emotions; anger, sadness, sullenness, or discouragement.*
>
> *SP3: I believe that today's students are more self-centred.*
>
> *SP4: … self-important and think they are right. They are also seen to be more aggressive in their response rather than in self-reflection...*
>
> *VP5: Poor emotional management.*
>
> *VP6: Unfortunately, technology sometimes limits this social relationship and leads to passive behaviour to socialise, and this causes unbalanced EQ. Students to become isolated, grumpy and lack empathy.*
>
> *VP7: … they also have more grey areas.*
>
> *UP8: … but most of them were worse. They just simply said what they wanted to say without further thinking. The worst part is when they think that they are right and believe in it; half-knowledgeable. They don't even bother with their surroundings.*
>
> *UP9: Whatever they watch on YouTube or any kind of news from social media, they easily write bad comments without knowing other feelings. It can be rude.*

The researchers found that personality disorders due to the less interaction between students and the community, thus leading to a lack of manners and ethics; rude (SP4, VP5, and UP9), disrespect (PP1 and UP9), isolation (PP1 and VP6) and cheating (SP3). Not surprisingly, it was due to the students' trends.

> *SP3: … the way students communicate has changed slightly, for example, the way they speak to older people.*
>
> *VP6: … greatly influenced by what they watch and learn from gadgets and social media. Fashion, catwalk style, hairstyle, way of speaking, food and hobbies are imitated from their gadgets.*

Furthermore, observations at the university level follow a similar pattern. According to one informant, some students' manner of speaking is quite annoying and impolite, to the point where he felt like knocking on their heads. However, this applies to only a small group of students; most students are respectful and polite overall. The findings of this study strongly proved that personality disorders are the threats in LVC, as influenced by SLT. It represents that most students mentally suffered. *They don't interact with humans; they create inhumane personalities* (VP7). Sadly, a minority group unbalanced the findings.

> *PP2: … students in the age of technology still have a good balance of emotional*

intelligence (EQ) if they do not overuse technology in their daily lives. Students should be encouraged to access relevant information that can help develop their emotional intelligence.

VP7: They have it balance.

UP8: … it was undeniable there was a group good at both IQ and EQ ….

This minority group has a balanced IQ and EQ. Based on the researchers' observations, they are polite and know how to greet and appreciate other parties. They apologise if they intently disturb or make mistakes. Supported by the informant, they are amazing students who can survive in the technology era with numerous challenges. These groups really exist.

5.2.4 Suggestions to Address Student Development and Digital Literacy

Given the potential escalation of LVC threats in the future, most participants expressed concerns and offered suggestions not only to top management and parents but also to students. They observed that there are more knowledgeable and skilled students compared to the educators.

PP1: I hope that the personality development among the students is not forgotten such as respecting teachers, asking for permission to use the ICT facilities and helping their friends who are slow in learning ICT by explaining how to use them.

PP2: All teachers should often apply elements that relate to the student's personality development during school. In addition, teachers can plan for specific programs that aim to develop students' personalities.

SP3: As a school educator, the use of the latest ICT needs to be in collaboration with the parents, especially the use of mobile phones. Parents always need to monitor their children's activities. At the school level, teachers need to ensure that no students take the opportunity to use mobile phones, this is because there are cases of misuse of mobile phones in schools. For example, the case of cheating during exams using a handphone or a smartwatch.

SP4: Encourage disciplined compliance and always be aware of the environment and respond positively to stimuli. Also, applying positive values during teaching and learning.

VP5: Always giving advise.

VP6: Educate the students with religious knowledge as well as moral values.

VP7: …developed within a good knowledge and faith about Islamic teachings. Educators must instill it throughout the education session.

UP8: …don't jump to conclusions by enforcing the policy without enlightenment because every student has different capabilities and abilities.

UP8: Sustain religious knowledge to balance life's needs. Each religion teaches good things, a human values.

6. Discussion

This study suggests the capability of digital literacy education to reshape civilised society. It also contributes new findings on the student's abilities in overcoming the challenges of technological influences in sustaining LVC. It has been more than two decades, and Young's research concern that technology affects students' academic performance can be further argued, togetherness with the previous researchers (Kibirige, 2023; Kopciewicz & Bougsiaa, 2021; Michael & Ambotang, 2020; Rashid et al., 2020). The improvement in academic achievement is comprehensively proved as recorded in SPM 2023's result. PP2, VP7 and UP8 agreed with the existence of amazing students in the digital age. They are well-rounded in technology and independent in learning. This group enables CLT and has the advantage; for some reason, their knowledge and skills are much better than the educators. This group knows valuable websites and is well-utilised for learning purposes (Al-Hamad et al., 2020; Lei et al, 2021; Isnawati et al., 2021; Jackman et al., 2021; Kibirige, 2023).

Ironically, LVC was the most threatening in this era. Morals and ethics were concerned due to the lack of interaction with the environment. Most of the participants agreed that students act aggressively, impolite, speak harshly and write without ethics. The previous students preserved LVC by interacting and communicating politely with the older (PP1, UP8, UP9). It confirms the existence of SLT, as well as Young's findings concerning personality disorders among students, thus confirming the findings thereafter. Students are narcissistic, hedonistic, and unbalanced in emotional intelligence. They tend to have an unreasonably high sense of importance, to be admired, self-indulgent, pleasure-loving and socialist. This group of students spent more time on social media than surfing for learning materials; surfed irrelevant websites, engaged in chatroom gossip, and conversed with Internet pen pals (Young, 1998), which brought them to cyberbullying, gaming disorder, sexual grooming, and violence (Jackman et al., 2021). After two decades of the technology age, the habits of social media form a culture called students' trends. Their lifestyle is greatly influenced by what they watch and learn from gadgets and social media, as stated by SP3, VP6 and informant, which leads them to write unethically (Amani, 2020).

This study identifies a new cultural phenomenon: 'screen culture,' which leads to partially knowledgeable and inhuman personalities. 'Screen' refers to any device with a display, such as smartphones, tablets, laptops, desktops, and televisions. These devices significantly influence the digital world and threaten LVC. As noted by participants, the frequent use of screens fosters behaviours that impact the LVC of society. Temporary knowledge often results from the habit of gathering information without fully understanding underlying concepts or principles, leading to students with only partial knowledge. The 'inhuman' personalities are more concerning, where students exhibit indifference to their surroundings. This study demonstrates that Western culture, as propagated through social media, contradicts the LVC.

Along these lines, emotional intelligence should also be considered. Although there is a

minority group of students who exhibit good manners and ethics, are self-disciplined, highly motivated, and successful with less reliance on educators, supported by Jackman et al. (2021), it was found that only 45% of children online were affected by cyberbullying, 39% experienced reputational risks, 29% were exposed to violent and sexual content, 28% encountered cyber threats, 17% had risky contacts such as offline meetings with strangers or sexual contact, 13% were at risk of a gaming disorder, and 7% were at risk of a social media disorder. Nonetheless, inhuman personalities should be addressed to foster more positive human traits, as suggested by the participants. On the other hand, parents play a crucial role in children's socialisation. They are responsible for fostering effective communication and creating a supportive environment. Children who grow up with healthy norms are more likely to exhibit positive behaviour.

Overall, this study explored new perspectives not addressed in previous research. It found that screen activity fosters addictive behaviour, leading to the formation of 'screen culture' and creating two distinct groups of students: i) well-rounded students who survive ethically and defend LVC, and ii) knowledge-bypass students who threaten LVC. Along with this, the ‘student trend’ formed when the student’s lifestyle slightly changed. This trend seemingly reforms a rare culture in the future undertaking. Therefore, few participants urged the policymakers to balance human values and strengthen religion in shaping students' personalities.

7. Conclusion

As further discussed, this study brought significant implications for educators and government as policymakers. Educators' roles are not limited to teaching for academic achievement but also to drive students in both professional and personal realms by cultivating the values of humanity. The government was the most pointed. As the main policymakers in the field of national education, the Malaysian Ministry of Education should refer to national education philosophy when implementing relevant digital literacy programmes to ensure the curriculum contents are reframed holistically by considering the balance both intellectually and spiritually. Meanwhile, Kota Kinabalu and Tawau were the only focus of this study. The data collection may be considered inadequate due to the exclusion of other districts. These limitations are unavoidable due to constraints such as financial support, limited time for administering the study, and access to study locations. Additionally, the data was solely collected from educators' perceptions, omitting students' perspectives, which could have provided a different view of the findings. Due to these matters, the researchers highly recommended broader populations, involving students and focusing on one particular topic only for further research. It helps the researchers to conduct the study more organised with limited resources. Future educational institutes frame the power of connection. To summarise, by adopting a holistic approach that focuses on personality development, educational institutions can effectively address the threat of LVC and promote better human values holistically among students.

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