

## SPIRITUAL PEDAGOGY IN THE DIGITAL LEARNING ENVIRONMENT: Reconstructing Self-Esteem among Vulnerable Children

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**Abstract:** The transformation of the educational environment in the digital age requires a pedagogical approach that not only emphasizes cognitive aspects but also strengthens learners' emotional and spiritual dimensions, especially for children who grow up without direct parental care. This study aims to analyze the role of spiritual pedagogy in strengthening the self-esteem of foster children through learning practices developed in the digital learning ecosystem at Kampung Anak Negeri Unit Pelaksana Teknis Daerah (UPTD) Wonorejo Surabaya, East Java. This study uses a qualitative approach with a phenomenological design to understand participants' life experiences through in-depth interviews, participatory observation, and thematic analysis. The analytical framework is based on Carl Rogers' humanistic psychology perspective, which emphasizes learner-centered instruction, empathy, and unconditional acceptance in the educational process. The results show that integrating spiritual reflection practices, dialogical mentoring, and digital media into learning interactions can strengthen positive self-concept, increase self-confidence, and help children develop emotional resilience when facing social and psychological challenges. These findings confirm that spiritual pedagogy, integrated into the digital learning environment, can serve as a holistic pedagogical framework for strengthening children's character, psychological well-being, and identity development in contemporary education.

**Keywords:** Digital spiritual pedagogy; self-esteem development; digital learning ecosystem; humanistic psychology; emotional resilience.

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## Introduction

Social changes and digital technology transformations over the past two decades have had a significant impact on the dynamics of adolescent psychological and moral development. Various studies show that today's young generation faces increasingly complex social pressures, ranging from exposure to digital culture to disruption of family relationships and an increased risk of deviant behavior that affects their identity development and mental health. Global reports indicate that adolescents who experience family instability or limited emotional support are at higher risk of identity crises, low self-esteem, and difficulties in building healthy social relationships.<sup>1</sup> In the context of contemporary education, this issue increasingly demands a pedagogical approach that not only focuses on cognitive achievement but also on strengthening students' emotional, moral, and spiritual well-being.

One of the psychological problems that often arises in such situations is low self-esteem, which is an individual's assessment of their own value and abilities. Research shows that self-esteem plays an important role in determining adolescents' psychological well-being, social adaptation, and academic success.<sup>2</sup> Individuals with low self-esteem tend to experience social anxiety, withdraw from social environments, and have negative perceptions of themselves. This condition becomes more complex when experienced by children who do not receive direct care from their parents, such as children living in social care institutions or orphanages. The absence of a primary caregiver can hinder the formation of a secure attachment, which, according to attachment theory, greatly influences a child's social and emotional development.<sup>3</sup>

From a humanistic psychology perspective, the formation of a healthy self-concept is greatly influenced by an individual's experiences in a social environment that provides empathy, appreciation, and unconditional acceptance. The theory developed by Carl Rogers emphasizes that individuals

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<sup>1</sup> Ulrich Orth and Richard W. Robins, "The Development of Self-Esteem," *Current Directions in Psychological Science* 23, no. 5 (October 2014): 381–87, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0963721414547414>; Jean M. Twenge and W. Keith Campbell, "Associations between Screen Time and Lower Psychological Well-Being among Children and Adolescents: Evidence from a Population-Based Study," *Preventive Medicine Reports* 12 (December 2018): 271–83, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pmedr.2018.10.003>.

<sup>2</sup> Orth and Robins, "The Development of Self-Esteem."

<sup>3</sup> John Bowlby, *A Secure Base* (London: Routledge, 2012).

can develop a positive self-concept when they are in an environment that provides unconditional positive regard, which is unconditional acceptance and appreciation of their existence.<sup>4</sup> A supportive environment allows individuals to align their real experiences with their ideal self-concept, thereby forming greater self-confidence and psychological health. However, in the context of children experiencing family disruption, such environmental conditions are not always readily available.

In recent years, educational studies have begun to develop pedagogical approaches that integrate spiritual dimensions to strengthen students' character and psychological well-being. The concept of spiritual resilience is understood as an individual's ability to make sense of life experiences, build hope, and maintain psychological resilience through spiritual beliefs and practices.<sup>5</sup> In the context of modern learning, this spiritual dimension is no longer practiced only in traditional religious spaces but has also taken various forms of pedagogical interaction mediated by digital technology. This approach gave rise to the concept of digital spiritual pedagogy, a pedagogical model that integrates spiritual reflection practices, empathetic relationships between educators and students, and digital learning environments to support students' emotional development and self-identity.<sup>6</sup>

Although a number of studies have shown that psychospiritual and humanistic approaches play an important role in building psychological resilience in adolescents, most still treat spirituality and self-concept as separate domains of study. Research on spiritual resilience generally focuses on an individual's ability to cope with life pressures. At the same time, studies on self-esteem are mostly analyzed from the perspectives of developmental psychology or humanistic counseling. To date, there has been limited research that specifically integrates the concept of spiritual resilience with self-esteem

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<sup>4</sup> Carl Rogers, "On Becoming a Person: A Therapist's View of Psychotherapy," Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1961, <https://www.scirp.org/reference/ReferencesPapers?ReferenceID=2038491>.

<sup>5</sup> Kenneth I. Pargament, *Spiritually Integrated Psychotherapy: Understanding and Addressing the Sacred* (New York: Guilford Press, 2011); Michael Ungar, "Systemic Resilience: Principles and Processes for a Science of Change in Contexts of Adversity," *Ecology and Society* 23, no. 4 (2018), <https://www.jstor.org/stable/26796886>.

<sup>6</sup> European Commission. Joint Research Centre., *European Framework for the Digital Competence of Educators: DigCompEdu* (LU: Publications Office, 2017), <https://doi.org/10.2760/159770>; Neil Selwyn, *Education and Technology: Key Issues and Debates* (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2021).

theory from a humanistic perspective, particularly within the developing framework of pedagogy in digital learning environments.

Based on this gap, this study offers a conceptual contribution by developing a digital spiritual pedagogy framework as a pedagogical approach that integrates Carl Rogers' humanistic theory with the concept of spiritual resilience in the context of alternative education for vulnerable children. This study aims to analyze how spiritual pedagogy practices mediated in a digital learning environment can help reconstruct the self-esteem of children who do not receive direct care from their parents. By taking the case of foster children in Kampung Anak Negeri Wonorejo Surabaya, this study is expected to provide theoretical contributions to the development of a more holistic digital pedagogy study, while offering practical implications for the development of an educational model that supports the psychological well-being and identity formation of students in the context of a digital society.

## Methods

This study uses a qualitative approach with a phenomenological approach to understand children's subjective experiences of low self-esteem and the development of spiritual resilience in a social care environment. Epistemologically, the phenomenological approach allows researchers to explore the meaning of participants' life experiences reflectively based on their own perspectives. The research analysis draws on the phenomenological tradition developed by Edmund Husserl, specifically the principle of *epoché* (bracketing), which involves suspending the researcher's initial assumptions to understand participants' experiences better, authentically, and in context.<sup>7</sup> This research was conducted at the Unit Pelaksana Teknis Daerah (UPTD) Kampung Anak Negeri Wonorejo Surabaya, with participants aged 12–18 years who were in the institution's care. Informants were selected using purposive sampling based on the relevance of their experiences to the research focus, supplemented by supporting informants, such as the institution's social workers.<sup>8</sup>

Data collection was conducted through semi-structured in-depth interviews, participatory observation, and documentation. Interviews were used to explore participants' subjective experiences of self-concept dynamics,

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<sup>7</sup> John W. Creswell, *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing Among Five Approaches* (United States: SAGE, 2013).

<sup>8</sup> Michael Quinn Patton, *Qualitative Research & Evaluation Methods: Integrating Theory and Practice* (London: SAGE Publications, 2014).

spiritual experiences, and the social support they received within the care environment. Participatory observation was conducted to understand the patterns of social interaction and coaching practices that occurred in the daily lives of children at the institution. Meanwhile, documentation was used to supplement the data, including records of guidance activities, character education program notes, and institutional documents relevant to shaping children's values and self-identity.<sup>9</sup>

Data analysis was conducted using an interactive analysis model that included data reduction, data presentation, and iterative conclusion drawing.<sup>10</sup> Data obtained from interviews and observations were transcribed, then analyzed through a thematic coding process to identify patterns of experiences related to spiritual resilience, environmental support, and the formation of self-esteem. Data validity was maintained through triangulation of sources and methods, as well as member checking with participants to ensure that the research interpretation accurately represented their experiences. With these procedures, this study aims to explain how the practice of spiritual resilience in a caregiving environment can contribute to the reconstruction of children's self-concept from a humanistic psychology perspective.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Social Ecosystem and Education of Vulnerable Children in Kampung Anak Negeri

The presence of social rehabilitation institutions for vulnerable children in urban areas is an important part of the social protection system in modern society. In Indonesia, rapid urbanization often results in groups of children who find themselves in unstable social situations, such as street children, abandoned children, and children experiencing family dysfunction. This condition is also evident in Surabaya, a metropolitan city with high social mobility and significant economic inequality. In this context, UPTD Kampung Anak Negeri functions as a social rehabilitation institution that not only provides basic protection but also develops educational programs,

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<sup>9</sup> Robert K. Yin, *Case Study Research and Applications: Design and Methods* (Los Angeles: SAGE Publications, Inc, 2018).

<sup>10</sup> Matthew B. Miles, A. Michael Huberman, and Johnny Saldana, *Qualitative Data Analysis: A Methods Sourcebook* (United States: SAGE Publications, 2018).

character building, and psychological strengthening for children under the care of the institution.<sup>11</sup>

Institutionally, Kampung Anak Negeri is under the coordination of the Surabaya City Social Service and is mandated to restore the social functioning of children who have experienced family breakdown. The programs developed include formal education, skills training, and mental and spiritual guidance. Field observations show that this institution also develops a structured, daily discipline-based coaching system, ranging from worship activities and formal education to skills training and activities to develop children's interests.<sup>12</sup> This organized activity structure shows that the institution not only performs a social rehabilitation function but also acts as an alternative pedagogical space that integrates character learning, spiritual coaching, and social capacity building for children.

From a contemporary pedagogical perspective, this type of coaching model can be understood as a form of humanistic education oriented towards holistic personality development. This approach places children as subjects of learning who have life experiences, emotional needs, and the potential for authentic development. This perspective aligns with the humanistic education theory developed by Carl Rogers, which emphasizes that an effective educational process must foster a learning environment characterized by empathy, unconditional positive regard, and dialogue that enables students to build self-understanding through reflection.<sup>13</sup>

In recent developments, learning practices in these institutions have also begun to interact with the digital learning ecosystem. Children have access to digital devices, social media, and various online learning resources that broaden their learning experiences. This digital transformation presents new opportunities and challenges because technology not only serves as a means of learning but also as a space for children to form their identities and social relationships. Therefore, the integration of spiritual learning and the digital environment is important so that technological developments not only strengthen cognitive aspects but also support the psychological well-being and moral development of students.

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<sup>11</sup> Observation at the Wonorejo Surabaya Children's Village Technical Implementation Unit (UPTD) regarding institutional functions and social rehabilitation programs, August 21, 2025.

<sup>12</sup> Field observation notes on the daily activities of the children under supervision and the institution's activity schedule on August 22, 2025.

<sup>13</sup> Carl R. Rogers, *Freedom to Learn* (Columbus: Merrill, 1969).

### **The Dynamics of Low Self-Esteem in Children without Parental Care**

The findings show that most children in the care of Kampung Anak Negeri experience low self-esteem, which is closely related to traumatic experiences in childhood. These experiences include parental divorce, domestic violence, child exploitation, and prolonged poverty. This situation shapes a negative perception of oneself, which then affects the child's ability to build social relationships and self-confidence.

Interview data show that several informants admitted to feeling that they had no value or potential that could be appreciated by their social environment. One informant, for example, stated that he preferred not to speak in class because he felt that his presence was meaningless to others.<sup>14</sup> This statement illustrates the psychological condition often found in individuals with low self-esteem, namely feelings of worthlessness, a tendency to withdraw from social interaction, and a fear of failure.

From a humanistic psychology perspective, this condition can be explained through the concept of the inconsistency between the self-concept and the ideal self, proposed by Carl Rogers. Individuals develop their self-concept based on the social interactions they experience in their environment. When these experiences are dominated by rejection, criticism, or emotional abuse, individuals tend to develop a negative self-concept characterized by feelings of worthlessness and low self-esteem.<sup>15</sup> In such conditions, individuals experience *incongruence*, which is the gap between how they view themselves and how they want to be as an ideal person.

This psychological vulnerability can also become more complex in the digital environment. Digital media often present idealized and competitive representations of life, which can reinforce the process of social comparison. Children with low self-esteem tend to feel inferior more easily when comparing themselves to representations of success or happiness that appear on social media. Therefore, pedagogical approaches that emphasize self-acceptance, spiritual reflection, and the reinforcement of personal identity are very important in the context of contemporary digital education.

### **Spiritual Pedagogy as a Mechanism for Self-Esteem Reconstruction**

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<sup>14</sup> Interview with informant T, a child under the care of Kampung Anak Negeri (researcher's interview notes) on August 23, 2025.

<sup>15</sup> Carl R. Rogers, *A Way of Being* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1980).

One of the important findings of this study is that the practice of spiritual pedagogy in Kampung Anak Negeri plays a significant role in reconstructing the self-esteem of the children in its care. Spiritual pedagogy in this context is understood not only as religious rituals but also as an educational process that integrates existential reflection, moral dialogue, and the formation of meaning in life through spiritual experiences.

Spiritual activities such as congregational prayers, recitation of the Qur'an, reflective prayers, and group guidance become a medium for children to reorganize their life experiences. Based on field observations, these activities not only increase religious discipline but also create a space for emotional dialogue between children and social workers.<sup>16</sup> Through this process, children gain experiences of social acceptance and emotional support that they previously did not receive in their family environment.

This change is evident in the children's increased courage to participate in group activities, such as leading prayers, calling the adhan, or expressing their opinions in group discussions. One informant stated that he had previously been afraid to lead worship activities, but after becoming accustomed to spiritual guidance, he began to feel more confident doing so.<sup>17</sup> These findings show that spiritual experiences can serve as a mechanism of spiritual resilience, the ability of individuals to constructively interpret traumatic experiences and build hope for the future.

Theoretically, this process reflects a shift from a state of *incongruence* to *congruence* within the framework of humanistic psychology. When individuals begin to accept themselves more positively and gain social support from their educational environment, they can align their life experiences with the self-concept they have built. In this context, spiritual pedagogy not only functions as religious guidance but also as a pedagogical strategy that strengthens children's psychological well-being and self-identity.

### **Spiritual Pedagogy in the Digital Learning Ecosystem**

In the context of contemporary education, the spiritual pedagogy practices applied at Kampung Anak Negeri also interact with developments in digital technology. Children in this institution have access to various digital media used for learning, entertainment, and social communication. This

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<sup>16</sup> Interview with informant T, a child under the care of Kampung Anak Negeri (researcher's interview notes) on August 23, 2025.

<sup>17</sup> Interview with informant N regarding their experience participating in spiritual activities (researcher's interview notes) on August 24, 2025.

transformation shows that the educational space is no longer limited to the physical environment but extends into a more complex network of digital interactions.

The integration of spiritual learning and digital technology creates opportunities to develop a more holistic educational model. Digital media can be used as a means of reflection, dissemination of educational content, and reinforcement of moral and spiritual values.

In this context, technology serves not only as a learning tool but also as a space for shaping students' digital identity and ethics. This approach aligns with the connectivism framework developed by George Siemens, which emphasizes that learning in the digital age occurs through a network of interactions among individuals, technology, and distributed knowledge sources.<sup>18</sup> By integrating spiritual values into the digital learning ecosystem, education can help children develop reflective skills in facing increasingly complex information flows.

Thus, the findings of this study indicate that spiritual pedagogy integrated with the digital learning environment can be a holistic educational framework that strengthens self-esteem, psychological well-being, and identity formation in children who are in vulnerable social situations.

### **Thematic Analysis and Conceptual Model of Digital Spiritual Pedagogy**

Thematic analysis of interview, observation, and documentation data shows that the process of strengthening the self-esteem of children under the guidance of Kampung Anak Negeri does not take place linearly, but rather through complex pedagogical dynamics involving spiritual, emotional, social, and digital dimensions. Based on the thematic coding process of the field data, this study identified four main themes that explain how spiritual pedagogy works in a digital learning ecosystem.

The first theme that emerged from the data analysis was the process of reconstructing self-meaning through spiritual reflection. Children who have previously experienced traumatic experiences such as domestic violence, parental divorce, or social exploitation tend to have a negative self-perception and feel worthless in their social environment. Through spiritual practices

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<sup>18</sup> George Siemens, "Connectivism: A Learning Theory for the Digital Age," *International Journal of Instructional Technology and Distance Learning*, 2004, <https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/Connectivism%3A-A-Learning-Theory-for-the-Digital-Age-Siemens/7c7dd6c900c031b3685c761c72ebafdf3004caed>.

such as prayer, reading the Qur'an, and religious reflection, children begin to reinterpret their life experiences in a more positive framework.

Field observations show that spiritual activities function not only as religious practices but also as spaces for emotional reflection that allow children to express their personal experiences more openly.<sup>19</sup> This process helps them develop an understanding that their past traumatic experiences do not entirely determine their future identities. From a humanistic psychology perspective, this process can be understood as an effort to build harmony between life experiences and a more positive self-concept, as described by Carl Rogers.<sup>20</sup> Furthermore, spiritual reflection functions as a mechanism of meaning-making, enabling individuals to interpret life experiences within a spiritual framework that provides hope and optimism. In many cases, children who previously felt worthless began to develop the view that their lives had a purpose and potential to be developed.

The second theme is the importance of empathetic pedagogical relationships between the children and their social workers. In the Kampung Anak Negeri environment, the learning process takes place not only through the transfer of knowledge but also through empathetic interpersonal interactions between mentors and children. Observations show that social mentors often serve as surrogate family members, providing emotional support and moral guidance to children.<sup>21</sup> These interpersonal relationships are an important factor in building a sense of psychological security that allows children to develop self-confidence. From a humanistic pedagogical perspective, empathetic pedagogical relationships are among the main elements of a learner-centered learning process. Carl Rogers emphasizes that a learning environment rich in empathy and unconditional positive regard enables individuals to develop their potential more fully.<sup>22</sup> The findings of this study show that emotional support from social workers plays a significant role in helping children overcome low self-esteem and build a more positive self-concept.

The third theme that emerged from the data analysis was the function of collective spiritual practices as a mechanism for emotion regulation.

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<sup>19</sup> Observation of spiritual activities and social interactions among children at Kampung Anak Negeri (researcher's field observation notes) on August 25, 2025.

<sup>20</sup> Rogers, *A Way of Being*.

<sup>21</sup> Field observation notes on the interaction between social workers and children under their care on August 25, 2025.

<sup>22</sup> Rogers, *Freedom to Learn*.

Activities such as congregational and group prayers, as well as spiritual group discussions, created a social space where children could express their emotions and build social solidarity. Based on the interview results, several informants stated that they felt calmer and able to control their emotions after participating in spiritual activities regularly.<sup>23</sup> These spiritual practices helped them manage anxiety, reduce psychological pressure, and increase self-awareness in facing various life challenges. In contemporary spiritual psychology studies, collective spiritual practices are often understood as a form of spiritual resilience, which is the ability of individuals to overcome life's difficulties through spiritual resources. This concept has been widely developed in modern research on religious psychology, which emphasizes the role of spirituality in improving individual psychological well-being.<sup>24</sup>

The final theme that emerged from the thematic analysis was the interaction between spirituality and the digital learning environment. The children at Kampung Anak Negeri live in a social context that is inseparable from the development of digital technology. They use digital devices to learn, communicate, and access various forms of information and entertainment. This digital transformation has created new dynamics in shaping children's identities. Digital media often becomes a space where individuals construct representations of themselves and compare themselves with others. In the context of low self-esteem, this process of social comparison can reinforce feelings of inferiority. However, this study found that when digital technology is integrated with spiritual pedagogical practices, digital media can serve as a means of constructive reflection and learning. Children not only use technology as a means of entertainment, but also as a source of knowledge and inspiration that strengthens their motivation to learn.<sup>25</sup>

### **Digital Spiritual Pedagogy Model and Dialogue with Contemporary Global Research**

Based on the thematic analysis above, this study proposes a conceptual model called the Digital Spiritual Pedagogy Model. This model explains how integrating spiritual pedagogy, humanistic pedagogical relationships, and digital learning environments can strengthen the self-esteem of children in

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<sup>23</sup> Interview with research informants about their experiences participating in spiritual activities (researcher's interview notes) on August 26, 2025.

<sup>24</sup> Pargament, *Spiritually Integrated Psychotherapy*.

<sup>25</sup> Observation of the use of digital media by foster children in learning activities on August 26, 2025.

socially vulnerable situations. This model consists of three main components. First, spiritual reflection is a process that allows children to reinterpret their life experiences within a spiritual framework that provides hope and optimism. Second, an empathetic pedagogical relationship between social workers and children creates a psychologically safe learning environment. Third, a digital learning ecosystem, which is a digital learning environment that provides access to knowledge resources, social interaction, and self-development opportunities for children.

The interaction between these three components results in a holistic pedagogical process that can strengthen self-esteem, increase emotional resilience, and help children build a more positive self-identity. This model shows that education in the digital age requires not only technological innovation but also a pedagogical framework that integrates spiritual and emotional dimensions into the learning process.

The findings of this study are also relevant to developments in global education studies that highlight the importance of integrating psychological well-being, spirituality, and technology in the learning process. In recent years, various international studies have shown that digital transformation in education must be balanced by a pedagogical approach that attends to students' emotional well-being.

Research conducted by Neil Selwyn shows that the digitization of education not only changes the way of learning but also shapes new dynamics in learners' social and psychological identities.<sup>26</sup> In this context, pedagogical approaches that focus on psychological well-being and moral values are becoming increasingly important to ensure that digital technology does not reinforce social inequality or psychological pressure in the educational environment.

In addition, recent research in the field of digital well-being also shows that the integration of self-reflection practices, emotional awareness, and ethical use of technology can improve the psychological well-being of students in a digital learning environment.<sup>27</sup> These findings are in line with research from Kampung Anak Negeri, which shows that spiritual practices can serve as a reflective framework to help children navigate the digital environment in a more critical and meaningful way.

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<sup>26</sup> Selwyn, *Education and Technology*.

<sup>27</sup> Wilhelmine Berger et al., "Students' Well-Being in Digital Learning Environments: A Multilevel Analysis of Sixth-Graders in Comprehensive Schools," *Education Sciences* 15, no. 8 (August 2025): 1034, <https://doi.org/10.3390/educsci15081034>.

Thus, this study contributes to the development of digital education literature by showing that integrating spiritual pedagogy and digital technology can be an effective pedagogical approach for improving the self-esteem and psychological well-being of children in socially vulnerable conditions.

### **Theoretical Contributions and Implications for Digital Pedagogy**

This study provides theoretical contributions to the development of digital pedagogy studies by showing that the learning process in a digital ecosystem cannot be understood solely as a transformation of educational technology, but rather as a pedagogical process that simultaneously involves psychological, social, and spiritual dimensions. The findings of this study expand the humanistic pedagogy framework developed by Carl Rogers by placing spiritual resilience as a pedagogical mechanism that plays a role in reconstructing self-esteem in groups of children who are in socially vulnerable conditions. In this context, the practice of spiritual reflection, empathetic pedagogical relationships, and institutional social support form a learning space that enables students to develop a more positive self-concept.<sup>28</sup> Thus, this study confirms that a pedagogical approach centered on the subjective experiences of students remains relevant in explaining the dynamics of identity formation amid social changes triggered by the development of digital technology.

In addition, this study contributes to the digital pedagogy literature by proposing a conceptual model of Digital Spiritual Pedagogy. This pedagogical framework integrates three main dimensions: spiritual reflection, humanistic pedagogical relationships, and digital learning ecosystems. This model shows that digital technology functions not only as a learning medium but also as a social space that shapes learners' identities, emotions, and interpersonal relationships. This perspective enriches the discourse on digital education, which has tended to focus on technological innovation and digital literacy, by emphasizing the importance of psychological and spiritual well-being in the learning experience. In line with Neil Selwyn's argument, digital transformation in education cannot be separated from the social and psychological dynamics that influence how individuals understand themselves

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<sup>28</sup> Rogers, *A Way of Being*; Arthur W. Chickering, *Education and Identity* (San Francisco, California: Jossey-Bass, 1969); Pargament, *Spiritually Integrated Psychotherapy*.

in technology-mediated learning environments.<sup>29</sup> Therefore, the Digital Spiritual Pedagogy model proposed in this study provides an alternative perspective that places the human dimension at the center of digital education innovation.

The practical implications of this study indicate that educational and social care institutions need to develop a more holistic pedagogical approach to address the challenges of the digital age. The integration of spiritual reflection practices, emotional support from educators or social workers, and the reflective use of digital technology can help students develop psychological resilience and a more stable sense of identity.<sup>30</sup> In the context of educating children in vulnerable social situations, this approach is particularly important because digital technology often presents new social pressures through mechanisms of social comparison and identity representation in digital spaces. Therefore, this study emphasizes that digital education innovation requires not only the development of technological infrastructure, but also a pedagogical framework capable of integrating spiritual, emotional, and social dimensions into the learning process.

## Conclusion

This study shows that strengthening children's self-esteem in social care settings is influenced not only by individual psychological factors but also by complex interactions among spiritual experiences, pedagogical relationships, and the learning environments they encounter. Through a phenomenological approach, this study found that spiritual reflection practices, emotional support from social workers, and participation in religious communities play an important role in helping children reconstruct a more positive self-concept. From the humanistic psychology perspective developed by Carl Rogers, an empathetic pedagogical environment that unconditionally accepts individuals enables students to develop their potential and build self-confidence more sustainably.

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<sup>29</sup> Neil Selwyn, *Education and Technology: Key Issues and Debates* (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2021); Ben Williamson, Rebecca Eynon, and John Potter, "Pandemic Politics, Pedagogies and Practices: Digital Technologies and Distance Education during the Coronavirus Emergency," *Learning, Media and Technology* 45, no. 2 (April 2020): 107–14, <https://doi.org/10.1080/17439884.2020.1761641>.

<sup>30</sup> Rogers, *A Way of Being*; Chickering, *Education and Identity*; Pargament, *Spiritually Integrated Psychotherapy*.

The findings of this study also show that, in an increasingly digitized society, the processes of identity formation and children's psychological well-being cannot be separated from the dynamics of the digital ecosystem they navigate. The integration of spiritual practices into the digital learning environment creates space for a more reflective and holistic pedagogical approach. Based on a thematic analysis of the field findings, this study proposes a conceptual model of Digital Spiritual Pedagogy, which is a pedagogical framework that connects spiritual reflection, humanistic pedagogical relationships, and the digital learning ecosystem as mechanisms to strengthen psychological resilience and increase children's self-esteem in vulnerable social situations.

Theoretically, this study contributes to the development of digital pedagogy research by emphasizing that educational innovation in the technological era should not focus solely on digital literacy or the use of learning technology. Instead, a pedagogical approach that integrates spiritual, emotional, and social dimensions is increasingly important to ensure that digital transformation in education remains oriented towards the holistic development of students' humanity. Thus, the digital spiritual pedagogy model proposed in this study can serve as an alternative conceptual framework for developing more inclusive, humanistic, and sustainable educational practices to address the challenges of education in the digital era.

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