Developing Digital Technological Literacy in Pirivena Education Based on Discipline-Oriented Theoretical Principles

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Abstract

This article presents a theoretical literature review on the development of digital technological literacy in Pirivena education through discipline-oriented theoretical principles. The revised manuscript strengthens the original argument by explicitly positioning Pirivena digital literacy as a value-mediated educational construct rather than a purely technical skill set. The analysis integrates Thomas Lickona's Character Education Theory, Albert Bandura's Social Learning Theory, and Paul Gilster's Digital Literacy Theory to identify how moral formation, social modeling, and critical information competence can be combined within Buddhist monastic education. In response to the revision requirement, the paper now clarifies the problem statement, expands the methodological basis of the theoretical literature review, updates the literature with international digital competence frameworks such as DigComp 2.2, UNESCO's technology-in-education evidence base, and OECD digital education ecosystem analysis, and proposes an integrated conceptual model for disciplined digital conduct in Pirivena settings. The review concludes that digital technological literacy in Pirivena education should be developed through guided access, teacher and senior-monk modeling, critical source evaluation, protection of identity and monastic dignity, and institutional norms for safe, purposeful, and ethically restrained technology use. The contribution of the study is a context-sensitive framework that links digital competence development with the moral and disciplinary objectives of Pirivena education in Sri Lanka.

Key words - Digital Technological Literacy, Pirivena Education, Social Learning Theory, Character Education, Buddhist Monastic Education, Discipline-oriented Pedagogy.

Introduction

Digital technologies now mediate how learners search for information, communicate, read texts, participate in learning communities, and construct educational identities (Buckingham, 2007; Jenkins et al., 2009). For general education systems, this has generated a shift from viewing technology as an optional tool to treating digital competence as a foundational learning capacity (Ferrari, 2012; Fraillon et al., 2020). For Pirivena education, however, the issue is more complex. Pirivena institutions are not merely conventional schools; they are historically embedded

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centers of Buddhist monastic learning in which educational activity is closely tied to discipline, ethical conduct, religious identity, and cultural continuity (Ruwanpathirana, 2021; National Institute of Education, 2026).

The original manuscript correctly identified that digital tools have become indispensable in contemporary education while also creating tensions for the ethos of monastic learning. This revision deepens that claim by distinguishing three connected problems: the competence problem, the conduct problem, and the contextualization problem. The competence problem concerns students' ability to search, evaluate, organize, and responsibly use digital information (Gilster, 1997; Hague & Payton, 2010). The conduct problem concerns the possibility that online platforms may encourage distraction, identity exposure, misinformation, disrespectful communication, or practices inconsistent with monastic restraint (Livingstone, 2009; Ribble, 2011; UNESCO, 2023b). The contextualization problem concerns the absence of a framework that interprets digital literacy through the internal values of Pirivena education rather than importing a secular technology-skills model without adaptation.

Accordingly, the central purpose of this article is to identify theoretically grounded ways of developing digital technological literacy in Pirivena education while protecting discipline-oriented educational aims. The paper does not reject digital technology; rather, it argues that technology integration becomes educationally defensible only when it is governed by moral purpose, supervised modeling, critical information judgment, and institutional guidelines suited to the Pirivena environment (Dewey, 1916; Lickona, 1991; OECD, 2023).

The revised contribution is therefore threefold. First, it synthesizes character education, social learning, and digital literacy as complementary rather than separate theories (Lickona, 1991; Bandura, 1977; Gilster, 1997). Second, it translates these theories into a Pirivena-specific framework of disciplined digital literacy. Third, it converts the original descriptive literature review into a more coherent theoretical paper suitable for journal review by adding a clearer problem statement, methodological explanation, updated evidence, conceptual framework, and implementation implications.

Problem Statement

In the contemporary information and communication technology era, digital tools have become an indispensable component of the educational sphere. However, their incorporation into monastic education generates tensions for the quality, identity, and ethos of traditional Pirivena learning. Pirivena education is a structured educational process grounded in Buddhist monastic discipline, ethical conduct,

doctrinal learning, and socially respected religious formation (Ministry of Education, 2026; National Institute of Education, 2026). The use of smartphones, internet platforms, digital archives, social media, online video and generative information tools can support learning; yet the same tools may also weaken attention, expose students to unreliable content, and complicate the disciplined public identity expected from monastic learners (Livingstone, 2009; UNESCO, 2023b).

The research gap is not simply that Pirivena students require more access to technology. A narrow access-based interpretation would treat digital literacy as device availability or basic operational skill. The more important gap is theoretical and pedagogical: existing digital literacy frameworks explain critical use of information, but they rarely address the disciplinary and moral environment of Buddhist monastic education (Buckingham, 2007; Hague & Payton, 2010); conversely, traditional character and social learning theories explain ethical formation and modeling, but they must be explicitly connected to contemporary digital practices (Kohlberg, 1984; Ryan & Bohlin, 1999). Therefore, literature requires an integrated framework explaining how digital competence can be cultivated without detaching learners from discipline, restraint, and ethical responsibility.

This gap is significant in Sri Lanka because national education reforms and official digitalization initiatives increasingly emphasize technology-supported learning, while Pirivena education must also preserve historical continuity and religious legitimacy (National Education Commission, 2022; Cabinet Office of Sri Lanka, 2024). The challenge is therefore to develop a disciplined digital literacy model that helps monastic learners use technology for study, research, cultural preservation, doctrinal learning, language development, and social contribution without normalizing unregulated or ethically careless digital behavior.

Aim and Objectives

Aim

The aim of this study is to construct a theoretical basis for developing discipline-oriented digital technological literacy in Pirivena education.

Objectives

Four specific objectives structure the review

(1) to examine the relevance of Character Education Theory to digital conduct

(2) to analyse the relevance of Social Learning Theory to digital modelling and imitation

(3) to examine Digital Literacy Theory and contemporary competence frameworks in relation to critical information practice

(4) to propose a context-sensitive framework for Pirivena institutions

Methodology

The study adopts a theoretical literature review design. Unlike a statistical review or meta-analysis, a theoretical review aims to clarify concepts, compare explanatory frameworks, and construct an integrated model that can guide future empirical research and educational practice. This design is suitable because the central issue is not the measurement of an already established intervention but the conceptual formation of discipline-oriented digital technological literacy within a specific educational and cultural setting (Schunk, 2012; Ormrod, 2014).

The review followed four analytic stages. First, core theories were selected according to their explanatory relevance to moral discipline, social modeling, and digital competence. Second, each theory was examined for its major constructs and educational implications. Third, contemporary digital education literature was added to update the manuscript and connect the original theoretical analysis with current international frameworks. Fourth, the constructs were synthesized into a proposed Pirivena digital literacy framework (Table 1). The main inclusion criteria were conceptual relevance to digital literacy, moral education, technology-supported learning, educational modelling, Buddhist or value-based education, and applicability to teacher-guided learning environments (Vygotsky, 1978; Koehler & Mishra, 2009; Tondeur et al., 2017).

Table 1

Theoretical Framework of the Study

Theory	Key Constructs	Application
Character Education (Lickona, 1991)	Moral knowing, feeling, action	Ethical digital conduct
Social Learning (Bandura, 1977)	Observation, modeling, motivation	Teacher modeled behavior
Digital Literacy (Gilster, 1997)	Search, evaluate, use	Critical information use
DigComp (Vuorikari et al., 2022)	Safety, communication, problem-solving	Digital competence

Theoretical Foundation

Character Education and Digital Conduct

Character Education Theory views education as a deliberate effort to cultivate ethical values, responsibility, and good conduct. Lickona's triadic model of moral knowing, moral feeling, and moral action is particularly relevant to the digital environment because responsible technology use requires more than skill (Lickona, 1991). A learner may know how to search, download, post, copy, or share information, but such technical ability becomes educationally valuable only when governed by honesty, respect, restraint, accountability, and concern for others. This also aligns with broader moral-development and character-formation literature, which treats ethical judgment and habitual conduct as central educational outcomes (Kohlberg, 1984; Ryan & Bohlin, 1999).

In the Pirivena context, moral knowing can be translated into awareness of proper and improper digital behavior: recognizing misinformation, avoiding harmful content, respecting intellectual property, and protecting personal and institutional dignity. Moral feeling can be translated into conscience, empathy, and an internalized sense of responsibility when communicating or consuming information online. Moral action can be translated into observable digital habits such as citing sources, limiting distracting use, avoiding offensive communication, and using technology for learning, service, and cultural preservation (Ribble, 2011; Livingstone, 2009).

This theoretical lens prevents digital literacy from being reduced to mechanical computer training. It supports a value-based literacy approach in which students learn not only what digital tools can do but also what they ought to do with those tools (Dewey, 1916; Ryan & Bohlin, 1999). For monastic learners, this distinction is crucial because digital behavior is part of broader character formation.

Social Learning and Modelled Digital Behavior

Bandura's Social Learning Theory explains that learning occurs through observation, modelling, imitation, and reinforcement (Bandura, 1977). In Pirivena institutions, students do not learn discipline only through formal rules; they observe teachers, senior monks, peers, and respected institutional figures. Digital conduct is likely to develop in the same manner. If role models use devices with restraint, verify sources, avoid unproductive browsing, and communicate respectfully, learners receive a concrete behavioral script for disciplined technology use. Educational psychology literature similarly emphasizes modelling, feedback, and guided practice shape learner behavior (Ormrod, 2014; Schunk, 2012).

The four processes of observational learning - attention, retention, reproduction, and motivation - can be applied directly to digital literacy training. Attention occurs when learners observe responsible use of digital resources during lessons or research activities. Retention occurs when rules, demonstrations, and repeated routines help learners remember proper digital procedures. Reproduction occurs when students practice conducting themselves, for example by evaluating sources or preparing digital learning materials. Motivation occurs when teachers and the institutional culture reward carefully, ethical, and academically useful technology use. This process can also be understood as a form of scaffolded learning within a social environment (Vygotsky, 1978).

Therefore, the development of digital literacy in Pirivena education should not rely only on printed rules or one-time workshops. It should be embedded in the everyday modelling practices of teachers and senior learners. Such modeling is especially important in settings where students may be negotiating the boundary between religious disciplines and technologically mediated social life (Bandura, 1977; Ruwanpathirana, 2021).

Digital Literacy, Critical Evaluation and Safe Practice

Gilster's Digital Literacy Theory argues that digital literacy is the ability to understand and use information from multiple digital sources (Gilster, 1997). The theory emphasizes searching, evaluating, integrating, and using information responsibly. In the original manuscript, these ideas were correctly identified as central to Pirivena digital development. The revision expands this section by linking Gilster's framework with later digital competence frameworks, especially DigComp 2.2, which organizes competence around information and data literacy, communication and collaboration, digital content creation, safety, and problem solving (Ferrari, 2012; Hague & Payton, 2010; Vuorikari et al., 2022).

For Pirivena learners, information searching is important for locating canonical texts, commentaries, language resources, historical documents, and academic materials. Critical evaluation is necessary because digital religious, cultural, and educational materials vary widely in accuracy and ideological quality. Information integration is important because students must connect doctrinal, linguistic, historical, and contemporary knowledge. Responsible use is essential because inappropriate content, careless sharing, plagiarism, and identity exposure can conflict with monastic values (Buckingham, 2007; Jenkins et al., 2009; Ribble, 2011).

Updated international evidence further supports a cautious and purposeful approach. According to UNESCO (2023a), educational technology should be adopted

on educational terms rather than because of technological novelty. OECD's digital education ecosystem approach similarly stresses that technology use should be shaped by governance, teacher capacity, and responsible implementation (OECD, 2023). These insights align strongly with Pirivena education, where technology should serve disciplined learning rather than replace teacher guidance or institutional values. Teacher capacity is especially important because knowledge, confidence, beliefs, and institutional culture influence how technology is used in classrooms (Ertmer & Ottenbreit-Leftwich, 2010).

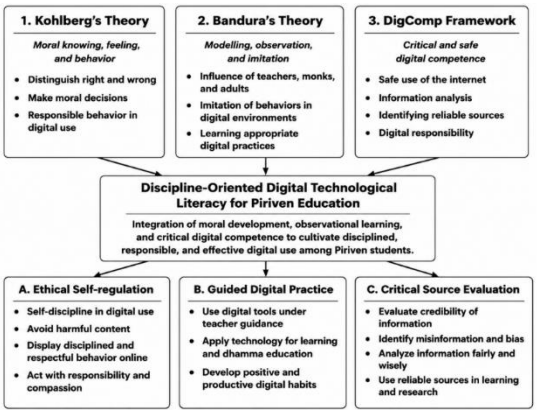
Integrated Conceptual Framework

The revised framework positions discipline-oriented digital technological literacy as the intersection of three dimensions: ethical self-regulation, socially modeled digital behavior, and critical digital competence. Ethical self-regulation is derived from character education. Socially modeled digital behavior is derived from social learning. Critical digital competence is derived from digital literacy theory and contemporary competence frameworks. The integration of these dimensions produces a form of digital literacy that is both technically useful and morally governed (Lickona, 1991; Bandura, 1977; Gilster, 1997; Ferrari, 2012; Vuorikari et al., 2022).

The framework (Figure 1) proposes that Pirivena institutions should begin with value clarification, proceed through guided modeling, and then develop critical digital competencies through supervised practice. In this model, devices and platforms are not the starting point; educational purpose is. Digital activity is justified when it supports learning, research, language development, social service, cultural preservation, or institutional communication while remaining consistent with discipline and responsibility (Dewey, 1916; Hattie, 2009; OECD, 2023).

Figure 1

Integrated Theoretical Framework for Discipline-oriented Digital Technological Literacy in Pirivena Education.



Note. Author's own construct based on Kohlberg's moral development theory (Kohlberg, 1984), Bandura's social learning theory (Bandura, 1977), and the digital competence framework tradition represented by Ferrari (2012) and DigComp 2.2 (Vuorikari et al., 2022).

Proposed Strategies for Privena Education

Based on the theoretical synthesis, the study proposes six strategies for developing digital technological literacy in Pirivena education. First, institutions should introduce a discipline-based digital orientation before learners are given independent access to digital tools. This orientation should explain digital identity, privacy, truthful communication, source reliability, copyright, plagiarism, and respectful online behavior (Ribble, 2011; UNESCO, 2023b). Second, Pirivena teachers and senior monks should receive professional development on guided technology use. Their role is not only to teach tools but also to model proper digital habits. Teacher preparation should therefore combine technological, pedagogical, and content knowledge while also addressing teachers' beliefs about technology (Koehler & Mishra, 2009; Ertmer & Ottenbreit-Leftwich, 2010; Tondeur et al., 2017). Third, lessons should include structured source-evaluation exercises in which learners compare reliable and unreliable digital materials, because clear feedback and visible learning intentions improve educational practice (Hattie, 2009). Fourth, institutions should establish a written code of digital conduct aligned with monastic discipline. Fifth, learning tasks should direct technology use toward academically and socially constructive purposes, such as digital archives, Buddhist heritage documentation, language learning, and research-based assignments, especially in the context of

national initiatives to introduce digital technology into Pirivena education (Cabinet Office of Sri Lanka, 2024; Ministry of Education, 2026). Sixth, assessment should include both technical competence and ethical conduct so that students learn that digital literacy is inseparable from responsibility (Table 2).

Table 2

Proposed strategies

Area	Strategy	Outcome
Orientation	Digital ethics training	Reduced misuse
Teacher Role	Model behavior	Improved discipline
Curriculum	Source evaluation tasks	Critical thinking
Governance	Digital conduct code	Consistency
Assessment	Ethics + skills	Responsible use

Discussion

The main argument emerging from the revised literature review is that Pirivena digital literacy should be understood as a disciplined educational formation process. Technical training alone is insufficient because it does not address the ethical and behavioral risks of digital environments (Livingstone, 2009; UNESCO, 2023a). At the same time, moral instruction alone is insufficient because learners also need practical digital capabilities for searching, analyzing, producing, and communicating knowledge (Gilster, 1997; Fraillon et al., 2020). Theoretical integration is therefore necessary.

The proposed framework also avoids two extremes. The first extreme is technological rejection, in which digital tools are viewed as inherently incompatible with monastic education. This position underestimates the educational value of digital archives, online libraries, language tools, and educational platforms. The second extreme is technological adoption without ethical adaptation. This position underestimates the specific disciplinary obligations of Pirivena learning. A balanced approach accepts technology, but only under pedagogical and moral governance (National Education Commission, 2022; OECD, 2023).

The review further suggests that teacher capacity is the mediating condition between policy and practice. Digital infrastructure may expand, but without trained and value-conscious teachers, students may receive access without guidance. Similarly, rules may exist, but without modeling and supervised practice, students

may not internalize disciplined digital behavior. This reinforces the combined relevance of Lickona (1991), Bandura (1977), and Gilster (1997): values define the purpose, models demonstrate the behavior, and digital literacy skills enable competent practice. It also supports research showing that teachers' knowledge, beliefs, and pedagogical orientation influence meaningful technology integration (Ertmer & Ottenbreit-Leftwich, 2010; Tondeur et al., 2017).

Implication

For policy makers, the study implies that Pirivena digitalization should be accompanied by context-specific guidelines rather than generic technology distribution (National Education Commission, 2022; Cabinet Office of Sri Lanka, 2024). For curriculum planners, it implies that digital literacy outcomes should include ethical self-regulation, critical evaluation, safety, and source-based academic practice (Vuorikari et al., 2022; UNESCO, 2024). For teacher educators, it implies that professional development should cover both technical skills and value-based digital pedagogy (Koehler & Mishra, 2009). For researchers, it offers a conceptual model that can be empirically tested through surveys, interviews, classroom observations, or design-based educational interventions.

The framework may also support the development of future Pirivena digital citizenship modules. Such modules should include Buddhist ethical communication, mindful technology use, protection from misinformation, academic integrity, online safety, cultural heritage research, and disciplined collaboration (Ribble, 2011; UNESCO, 2023b; UNESCO, 2024). In this way, digital technological literacy can become a means of strengthening, rather than weakening, the educational identity of Pirivena institutions.

Limitation and Future Research

As a theoretical literature review, this paper does not present primary empirical data from Pirivena teachers, students, administrators, or policy makers. Its contribution is conceptual and framework oriented. Future research should therefore test the proposed framework using qualitative case studies, teacher interviews, student surveys, classroom observations, and intervention-based evaluations. Comparative research may also examine differences between basic Pirivena, Maha Pirivena, and Vidyayathana settings, as well as differences between monastic and lay students (Ruwanpathirana, 2021; National Institute of Education, 2026).

Future empirical studies should also measure digital literacy outcomes before and after discipline-oriented training programmes. Possible indicators include critical source evaluation, academic use of digital resources, safe communication practices,

self-regulation of screen time, avoidance of inappropriate content, and adherence to institutional digital conduct guidelines. Such evidence would strengthen the practical value of the theoretical model proposed here and connect Pirivena-focused research with wider digital competence assessment approaches (Fraillon et al., 2020; Vuorikari et al., 2022).

Conclusion

This revised theoretical literature review concludes that the development of digital technological literacy in Pirivena education must be grounded in discipline, responsibility, and moral formation. Lickona's Character Education Theory explains the ethical basis of digital conduct (Lickona, 1991); Bandura's Social Learning Theory explains the role of exemplary modelling and social reinforcement (Bandura, 1977); and Gilster's Digital Literacy Theory explains the critical information competencies required for digital learning (Gilster, 1997). When combined with contemporary digital competence frameworks, these theories offer a coherent basis for Pirivena digital literacy reform (Ferrari, 2012; Vuorikari et al., 2022).

The central conclusion is that Pirivena education should not treat digital literacy as a neutral technical skill. It should be treated as a disciplined, ethically guided, socially modelled, and critically practiced form of educational competence. If implemented through teacher training, institutional guidelines, supervised practice, source-evaluation tasks, and value-based assessment, digital technology can support Pirivena learning while preserving the moral and disciplinary foundations of Buddhist monastic education (Lickona, 1991; Ribble, 2011; OECD, 2023).

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