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Ethnographic Insights of Educational Digital Life Behaviours: A Study of Affluent Schools

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Abstract

Recently, many affluent schools have spread, targeting specific classes of learners with the aim of preparing them in qualitative ways that rely primarily on digital educational technologies. The concentrated reliance of this type of schools on digital educational technologies has resulted in the emergence of behaviours prevalent in the educational life of students. Researching and identifying these behaviours in this context related to affluent schools is necessary for working on developing frameworks that enhance understanding of the nature of behaviours associated with digital educational life. Therefore, the current study aimed to conduct qualitative analyses of digital educational life behaviours in affluent schools. The current study is based on the ethnographic approach. Four analytical tools were relied upon, including: daily observations for two full months, analysis of some digital images and video clips that reflect students' use of digital technologies, semi-structured interviews with teachers, and focus groups with students. The number of teachers was (6) teachers, and the number of students was (6) students. The findings disclosed the presence of (4) behaviours that transform into actual practices through the digital educational life environment in affluent schools, which are: educational ambition, educational satisfaction, independent learning, and affluent learning. It may be important to plan to employ digital technologies to enhance the behaviours and practices of ambition, satisfaction, independent learning, and affluent learning in schools that have intensive technology experiences, whether in affluent schools or regular schools.

Keywords: *Ethnographic Analysis, Educational Behaviour, Digital Life, Affluent Schools.*

Introduction

The usage of digital technologies in the educational process is one of the trends that have spread recently as a result of their effectiveness in enhancing learners' performance (Bhatia et al., 2024), as these technologies contribute to creating more dynamic and interactive educational environments, and have transformed the role of teachers into facilitators who use digital tools (Jenita et al., 2023; Kamalov et al., 2023; Naeem et al., 2023), because of their provision of a set of tools and applications that help learners access various educational resources at any time and place (Apriadi & Sihotang, 2023), and many studies have confirmed that integrating content supported by digital technologies such as interactive simulations, educational games, gamification and other tools, works to stimulate and enhance learners' participation and engagement in the learning process (Al-Hafdi & Alhalafawy, 2024; Al-Hafdi & AlNajdi, 2024; Deni, 2023; Maulana et al., 2021). And so, providing and using them in classrooms has become an innovative educational strategy that provides effective and attractive learning experiences for learners (Purba & Saragih, 2023; Rožman et al., 2023). Affluent schools have several capabilities that enable them to develop a digital life based on advanced technologies that improve the learning climate and transform from regular life to digital life (Williamson et al., 2020). Among these technologies are digital platforms that are easy to use and very useful as they help learners to be more productive and give them access to different materials and submit assignments with ease, which increased their interaction and motivation in the educational process (Al-Azmi & Al-Shboul, 2024; Alanzi & Alhalafawy, 2022a, 2022b; Alnimran & alhalafawy, 2024; Alshammary & Alhalafawy, 2022, 2023; Kassim, 2024; Zohdi et al., 2024), in addition to social media that are used to exchange e-learning resources, collaborate between colleagues, and provide feedback and peer evaluation by forming small or large social circles (Bettahar & Zourgui, 2024; Graefen & Fazal, 2023), as well as many other technologies such as mobile applications (Alhalafawy & Zaki, 2019), smart applications

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(Alsayed et al., 2024), adaptive applications (Alhalafawy et al., 2021), motivational digital technologies (Alhalafawy & Zaki, 2022; Alzahrani & Alhalafawy, 2023; Alzahrani & Alhalafawy, 2022; Alzahrani et al., 2022), augmented reality technologies (Alhalafawy, 2018; Alhalafawy & Tawfiq Zaki, 2024; Najmi et al., 2023), micro-learning applications (Al-Nasheri & Alhalafawy, 2023), and graphic information image applications (Saleem et al., 2024, and flipped classrooms (Zaki et al., 2024), and now reaching the Internet of Things (Najmi et al., 2024) and many other technologies that have contributed to developing new features of what is called digital life.

Many public schools available in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia can be classified as rich schools or affluent schools attended by students from wealthy classes, as these schools require high fees to enrol in them, and only the wealthy classes of students can afford such fees. Among these schools are international schools that offer international curricula, and Saudi students from wealthy families as well as students from the children of high-income residents attend this type of school. The context of many international schools was studied, especially since one of the members of the research team works in one of the international schools, and some of the children of the research team are enrolled in this type of international school, which is characterized by high costs. The fees of this type of school reach about (80) thousand Saudi riyals, which is equivalent to (22) thousand US dollars per academic year. In return for these high fees, schools provide great educational services that are mostly based on digital services, starting from student registration and passing through teaching using multiple digital technologies, which makes the lives of students in this type of school a digital life that is largely based on digital technologies, especially those used in teaching and learning processes. Hence, the research team moved towards conducting an ethnographic analysis of one of the affluent schools to recognise the reality of the behaviours generated because of the emerging digital educational life considering the intensive use of digital technologies in the educational environment. The importance of this study is based on the obvious lack of ethnographic studies that have been implemented to analyse this type of schools that depend on the use of digital technologies in a huge manner, which makes this analysis vital to come up with reflections that can bear fruit on the educational reality that is gradually shifting towards fully digital environments. This ethnographic analysis relied on the coexistence processes that take place periodically and daily through a member of the research team who works in one of the affluent schools and recorded daily observations related to the use of digital technologies. Besides, members of the research team analysed some documents and photographs related to the use of digital technologies. Multiple interviews were also conducted with teachers and students to determine the behaviours and practices resulting from the nature of digital educational life in this type of schools.

Therefore, this study aims to identify the emerging behaviours in the context of digital educational life provided by affluent schools based on the intensive use of digital educational technologies. Thus, the research problem is based on answering the following question: "How can digital educational life behaviours be described in affluent schools?"

Literature Review

Digital technologies are tools that can help to improve the educational process in various ways, as they facilitate teachers' creation of educational materials and provide collaborative and participatory methods for learners. These technologies include: smartphones, mobile devices, computers, social media, interactive smart boards, cloud computing, Microsoft software packages, learning management platforms, electronic tests, and other various technologies. What has increased their effectiveness and efficiency is the spread of the Internet around the world and the connection of these technologies to it (Carvalho et al., 2022; Lockyer & Patterson, 2008; Varea et al., 2022), all of which enhances and gives learners a sense of success and encourages them to learn further by improving the presentation of information and providing flexible access to it and ease of retention, which has made education more interactive and knowledge-sharing and increased learners' enthusiasm for learning (Grainger et al., 2021; Hsu, 2007; Lacka & Wong, 2021). Among the digital technologies used in affluent schools is the collaborative Miro platform, which allows users to create interactive whiteboards online flawlessly, and provides countless tools such as freehand drawing, linking documents and videos, instant messaging, tagging people and ideas, and taking notes (Xu et al., 2024). Its importance is highlighted in providing an environment for generating fruitful dialogues and

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discussions among learners by sharing their different ideas, opinions, and knowledge, which has enhanced conversations between learners who have not spoken to each other before (Thomas et al., 2021). The Pear deck platform is also used, which allows teachers to create interactive presentations and share them with learners online, as it includes various activities such as open questions, multiple choice, true or false, pairing, matching, collaborative live board, and fill in the blanks. It can also be compatible with other platforms such as Google Meet and ZOOM (Roqobih & Astriani, 2024; Ruado & Cortez, 2024).

Moreover, electronic assessments are an important part of digital educational life, since the learner responds to them using digital technology and leads to improving the assessment processes and the accuracy of the results. The response is usually easy to access and click, which increases the learner's level of self-confidence because it makes it less necessary for him/her to exert a lot of effort in conducting the assessment (Asad et al., 2021; Maison et al., 2020; Trimawati et al., 2020).

It can be said that schools that use these types of digital technologies have witnessed a tremendous growth in the number of affluent international schools licensed by the government in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Such schools have expanded as they apply the curricula of their national systems and serve a more diverse student body (Al-Ereify, 2011). Most of the groups that attend these schools are from high-income families for several reasons, including high tuition fees and the large numbers of professionals from different ethnic, linguistic and cultural backgrounds who flock to the country with their families. Saudi Arabia is also witnessing an economic prosperity linked to Vision 2030, which has increased the number of foreign professionals (Vision2030, 2023). Expatriates also tend to send their children in these schools, as they meet their children's educational needs and provide them with international programs such as IGCSE or the International Baccalaureate, which is considered a ticket to international higher education, allowing them to complete their studies abroad (MacKenzie et al., 2003). The growing need for these schools by Saudi families returning from abroad (Hammad & Shah, 2018), and the interest in high-quality English language education are also contributing factors (Hallinger et al., 2011; Walker & Cheong, 2009). These schools contain a nursery and 13 educational levels, unlike government and private schools, which are distributed as follows: Nursery – one-year, Prep School – 6 educational levels, Grammar School – 7 educational levels.

Methodology

Approach

The current study aims to investigate the behaviours caused by digital educational life in affluent schools, which arose because of the heavy use of digital technologies. The qualitative approach with the ethnographic method was chosen to collect deep and detailed data on the current study problem (Tomaszewski et al., 2020), as this type of methodologies is suitable for studies that aim to collect deep data from participants in the study problem, and then analyse and organize this data through interpretive methods based on their statements, and link it to appropriate educational theories and related previous studies, all in order to provide a better understanding of the study problem (Smith & Nizza, 2022). This methodology also concentrates significantly on analysing observations and conducting experiences with the community and answering questions that provide a comprehensive view with depth and a better detailed understanding of how things happen, supported by interpretive visions of the reasons for their occurrence (Creswell & Poth, 2016). The ethnographic analysis in this study is based on continuous experience of the luxury schools through the work of one of the researchers in one of these schools, where the nature of digital life was analysed. Several documents and photographs related to the use of digital technologies by male and female students were also analysed. Continuous and diverse visits were conducted by the research team to reach observations that can be induced to determine the behaviours associated with the reality of digital life in this type of luxury schools. Many interviews were also piloted with teachers using semi-structured interviews, and with students using focus groups to determine the behaviours and practices resulting from the nature of digital educational life in this type of schools.

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Participants

The participants in this study were selected using the intentional sampling method from teachers working at the British Dutch International School in Jeddah (Jeddah Prep and Grammar School). They were selected according to a set of criteria that must be met by them, as follows: 1- The participant must use at least three different digital tools for educational purposes. 2- He/She must have the appropriate qualifications to teach in British international schools, such as the Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) and the Qualified Teacher Status (QTS). The reason for setting these criteria is to ensure the provision of in-depth data that contributes to reaching a better and more detailed understanding, which leads to addressing the study questions. This method of selecting participants based on strict conditions and criteria helps the researcher obtain comprehensive and diverse data for the current study problem. The sample size was (6) teachers from the British Dutch International School in Jeddah (Jeddah Prep and Grammar School) at various levels and subjects. This number is appropriate for the context and dimensions of the study and the desired goal and is appropriate for reaching the data saturation stage (Tomaszewski et al., 2020). The number of individual interviews was 6 interviews for (6) participants. Table 1 shows the characteristics of the participants.

Table 1. Characteristics of the Study Participants

Participant	Qualification	Age	Nationality	Stage	Experience	Used technologies
(T1)	B.A. in Science (with Honors) M.A.in Computer Science PGCE, QTS, NQT and NPQH	42 yrs	British	Intermediate & secondary stage	16 years (13 years in international schools, 3 yrs in UK)	Microsoft teams, Google Classroom, Scratch, Python IDLE and Blender
(T2)	B.A. in Science (with Honors) M.A. in History	32 yrs	British	Intermediate & secondary	7 years	Microsoft teams, Google Classroom and ChatGPT
(T3)	B.A. in Education Arts: Arabic Language Department	45 yrs	Egyptian	Intermediate & secondary	24 years in teaching (13 yrs in British schools in Egypt, 11 yrs at the British-Dutch International school in Jeddah)	Microsoft teams, Google Classroom, ChatGPT
(T4)	B.A. in Political Science PGCE and QTS	38 yrs	British	Secondary	12 years	Microsoft teams, Google Classroom, ChatGPT, Peardeck and Miro
(T5)	B.A. in Arts (Department of Music) PGCE and QTS	56 yrs	British	Intermediate & secondary	23 years	Microsoft Teams, Google Classroom and YouTube

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(T6)	B.A. in Science (with Honors)	36 yrs	British	Intermediate & secondary	13 years	Microsoft teams, Google Classroom, ChatGPT, ClassroomScreen and Miro

In order to get more in-depth data, a group of male and female students was then selected using the intentional sample method, with the necessity of meeting a set of criteria as follows: 1- The participant must use at least three different digital tools for educational purposes. 2- They must be from high-income families. This data helps the researcher obtain comprehensive and diverse data. The sample number was (6) learners from the British Dutch International School in Jeddah (Jeddah Prep and Grammar School) at various educational levels. This number is appropriate to help the research team identify learners' uses of digital technologies, whether in schools or especially in their homes. This was done through a focus group, which numbered (1) interview. Table No. 2 shows the characteristics of the participants.

Table 2. Characteristics of the Participants in the Study.

Participant	Grade	Age	Nationality	Digital technologies used in the educational process
(T1)	11th	42 years	Saudi	Ipad, Miro and ChatGPT
(T2)	12th	32 years	Egyptian	Laptop, Google Classroom and ChatGPT
(T3)	12th	45 years	Pakistani	Ipad, Miro and Google Classroom
(T4)	13th	38 years	Syrian	Ipad, Miro and Peardeck
(T5)	10th	56 years	Indian	Laptop, Google Classroom and Miro
(T6)	11th	36 years	Saudi	iPad, Google Classroom, E-book and ChatGPT

Data Collection Tool

Different tools were used, including an observation diary that was used over two successive months to analyse behaviours related to digital life within the school. A diary of analysis of still and moving images was also used to analyse behaviours related to the use of digital technologies. Besides, a structured interview tool was used to collect data from teacher participants, while a focus group tool was used to collect data from learner participants. The structured interview and focus group tools are qualitative research tools used to collect data related to attitudes and experiences on specific issues and aim to answer questions related to qualitative methodology and fundamental methods, as well as allowing the research team to engage themselves in the culture by obtaining diverse responses and different points of view from participants. The structured interview and focus group tools consisted of a set of axes related to digital technologies and exploring educational practices and behaviours among the affluent groups, for example, learners' experiences and their use of these digital technologies, whether in schools or homes, why do they use them? How do they use them? The extent to which they contribute to developing the learning environment in which they study. How do learners interact with each other?

Reliability

It is one of the methods and techniques that aim to make the results of the study, that will be reached, of high quality, accuracy and trustworthy (Creswell & Poth, 2016). It is one of the terms used in qualitative

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research and corresponds to the terms of validity and reliability in quantitative research (Smith & Nizza, 2022). It includes a set of criteria, namely the credibility criterion, the reliability criterion, and the confirmatory criterion (Williams, 2021). Due to the importance of these criteria and the necessity of achieving them in the current study, the pluralistic (triangulation) method was used for the credibility criterion, and this method, of course, depends on applying more than one source in studying the data (Smith & Fieldsend, 2021). Numerous tools were applied in this study, as the observation memo, the tool for analysing still and moving images, standardized interviews, and focus groups were used. So as to ensure the reliability standard, the research team analysed all the data and then presented it to an expert specialized in qualitative research. After taking his comments, they agreed with him on the first stage, which is coding (codes), then the second stage, converting similar codes into categories, then the third stage, coming up with sub-topics, and finally identifying the main topics, which are extracted from the participants (Sholokhova et al., 2022). Finally, in order to achieve the confirmatory standard, the elements of the analysis cards and the motivational questions related to the study tools were presented to two experts in this field, to obtain their opinion and suggestions on the appropriateness of the formulation of the questions, their clarity, and their ability to achieve the study objectives. Accordingly, the questions were modified based on the suggestions they received.

Procedures

Ethical Procedures

The researcher gave the participants all the information about the nature of the research, its objectives, and its importance. He obtained their consent to participate in the study. He also explained to them all their rights to freedom of participation - prior consent - and withdrawal from the study at any stage and at any time. He also chose the appropriate time to conduct the interviews and focus group according to their circumstances. The privacy element was also explained to the participants; after indicating their names and it is sufficient to refer to them using symbols to preserve their privacy. The participants were informed of the confidentiality of the information they disclosed. The duration of the regular interview does not exceed 15 minutes, and the duration of the focus group interview does not exceed 30 minutes.

Implementation Procedures

Every-day recordings of observations of the nature of digital life within the school were conducted, and a variety of images were extracted using digital technologies, whether from the school's website or through the school's digital database, and periodic analysis was led to determine the most prominent characteristics and behaviours generated and compare them to what will be reached through interviews and focus groups that will be implemented with both teachers and students.

Besides, a verbal agreement was reached with the participating teachers, and they requested to review the questions before conducting the interview with them. Then, an electronic mail was sent to each participant separately containing a set of questions and the appropriate time and place to conduct the face-to-face interview, some of which were inside the classrooms and others were in his private office, and they were notified that the interviews would be audio-recorded via the researcher's phone. The interviews were conducted for each participant separately, since these interviews lasted for about two weeks, and the audio recording was then tabulated into a txt file using the Transcribe feature supported by artificial intelligence in Samsung phones, and then the txt file was converted to a Word file for easy editing, correcting and reviewing it more than once to ensure that it was free of any mistakes.

After that, the principal of the intermediate and secondary school was contacted and (5) students were selected to conduct a focus group interview – of course, after obtaining the necessary approvals - and it lasted for about a week. At the end of these procedures, the study participants were thanked for their efforts and time. Following the completion of all the interviews and focus group, the recorded and written version was reviewed by the research team, and it was confirmed that the data collected was consistent with the study objectives and contributed to answering its questions.

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Data Analysis

Upon the completion of the study application, comes the step of analysing the qualitative data obtained from the participants, where thematic analysis was used. This type of analysis helps organize the data, divide it into categories, and classify these categories into subtopics, and then main topics, which contribute to understanding it in a better way, and giving it the appropriate meanings and interpretations according to its contexts (Creswell & Poth, 2016). Data analysis using this method includes six stages, the first stage: the stage of immersion in the data; where the research team conducted interviews with the participants face to face and used his own phone to record the audio and listen to it several times, to achieve immersion and familiarity with the qualitative data, and thus understand it in a better and deeper way. In the second stage, the process of identifying codes included the researcher himself, who helps in coding the words and phrases of the participants. Each interview was coded separately, and the number of codes reached (110) codes. As for the third stage, categories were found in the data, where it was confirmed that the codes were consistent with the participants' statements, and the different paragraphs and dimensions in the interviews, by re-listening to the interviews, and matching them with the whitened and written version. While the fourth stage focused on putting the final touches on the categories, by discovering the relationships between the codes and categories, merging similarities between them, and deleting duplicates. The fifth stage included reviewing each category and distributing the codes into interconnected categories, then forming subtopics as well as main topics related to answering the study questions. The sixth stage came, which is the analysis and final review of the main topics that were reached as shown in Figure No., and ensuring that they include the study topic, and producing the final report that appears in the study results and discussing them. Finally, approaches were made between the objective analysis and the analytical elements that were recorded in the daily observations and the data obtained through the analysis of the still and moving digital images.

Aiming to ensure the quality of the analysis of the data that was reached, the research team presented it to the study participants to verify its validity and that it covered what they wanted to talk about, and it was also presented to experts specialized in the field to examine the data and provide comments.

Results and Discussion

The data analysis process resulted in (28) codings (codes), and four main topics were reached about the behavioural practices associated with the use of digital technologies for the affluent groups, in four basic areas, which are: educational satisfaction, educational reassurance, independent learning, and affluent learning. These can be summarized as in Figure (1):

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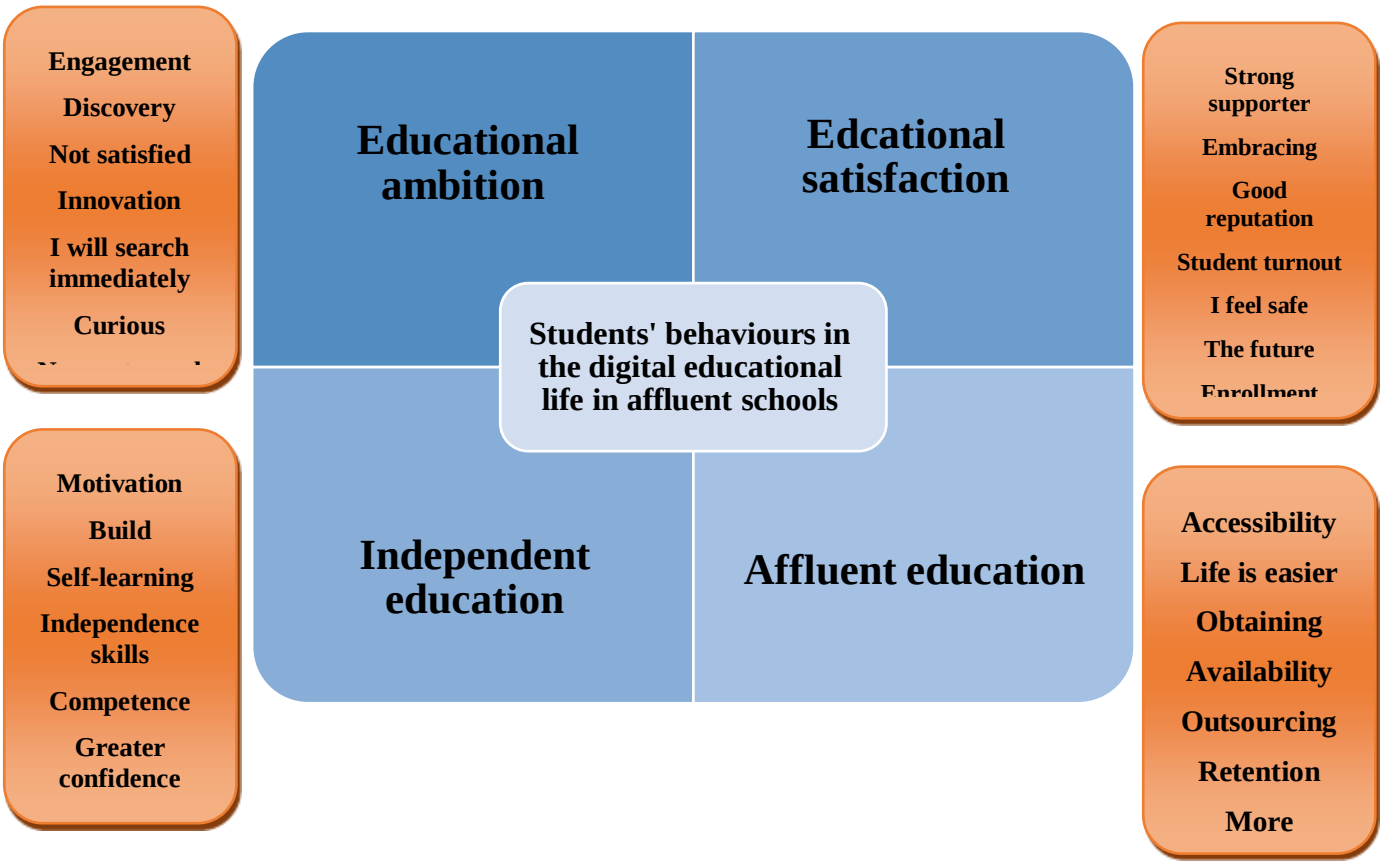

Figure 1. Digital Learning Behaviours in Affluent Schools

The Main Areas Reached Are Presented as Follows:

Educational Ambition

Ambition is a relatively stable personal character that attempts continuously and comprehensively to attain success and achievement (Judge & Kammeyer-Mueller, 2012) and is often assumed to be a personality trait that is highly relevant in many social contexts (Judge & Kammeyer-Mueller, 2012; Pettigrove, 2007). In the educational context, ambition is one of the factors that clearly influences learners' motivation and academic performance (Dweck, 2002; Helwig, 2001) and is of great importance in adolescence where it plays a major role in determining effort, diligence, and academic performance (Chowdry et al., 2011; Gutman & Akerman, 2008; Haller, 1968). The results of the structured interviews and focus group showed that digital technologies played an important role in exploring the lifestyle of learners from high-income families who study in international schools, as it was found that they have very high ambitions in their studies and learning and in developing themselves, whether in school or at home, as it pushed them to go out into a wider world and engage in different sources and search in them and discover more information, as well as giving them the opportunity to implement real experiments and projects, as one of the participants stated: ***"As for digital technologies, they gave learners the opportunity to implement real experiments and projects, yes, they gave them a great opportunity, to benefit from different ideas from different***

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regions, as they are not satisfied with the region in which they study, to search in previous projects, to take ideas from upcoming projects" (T3).

Educational ambition can also affect learners' academic performance by enhancing their motivation (Abu-Hilal, 2000; Trebbels & Trebbels, 2015). Thus, digital technologies have played an important role in giving learners the opportunity to implement their innovative ways of learning, which confirms that their academic performance has reached advanced stages of achievement that individuals consider satisfactory, as one participant expressed: ***"Yes, I think that digital technology has allowed both pupils and students to implement innovative ways of learning. For example, if you introduce the use of Miro, it is a good example, all you must do is give them a whiteboard and they can do whatever they want. They can paste information on it. They can create tables, they can include websites, they can include videos, and they want you to give them the opportunity to do whatever they want. They will invent their own innovative ways... And you will find that some of them use chatGPT, some of them use Google, some of them use encyclopedias. Some of them ask Google, some of them will go to websites. Some of them use the right sources, some of them use academic sources, so if you give them the opportunity to show what they can do using "Technology, you would be very surprised at what they can do" (T4).*** Another participant confirmed: ***"I also think it's more interactive, for example, our teacher uses Miro, he's online, we're all online at the same time, so we can see what we're doing while we're working on it. Instead of him/her taking my book and stopping, let's talk and stop working, and we can keep working, and he/she sees us, and he/she can also look at other students at the same time, so that helps in class and outside" (P5).***

The socio-economic status of parents, such as their educational level and income, is another significant factor that can influence learners' academic performance (de Montgomery & Sievertsen, 2019; Giota & Bergh, 2021). In a British study by Sabates et al. (2011), learners' ambitions (educational and career expectations and educational and career attainment as adults) were shaped by socio-economic factors in childhood. As such, many learners with high ambitions belong to high-income and upper-class families. This was demonstrated by one participant: ***"If you come from a high-income family, you will have an iPad, a tablet, a laptop, a smartphone and unlimited internet access" (T4).*** Another participant confirmed this: ***"Because students are from high-income families, it means they already have digital technologies. A lot of technology is in the home, so there are computers, tablets, mobile phones, and they are very familiar with them and they are allowed to see how the devices are or something that we as a school can take advantage of considering factors including behaviour, sensitivity, etc., but there is a way to do it, we just need to be able to take advantage of it" (T1).***

Thus, it is possible to say that all the previous factors represented in the provision of various digital technologies, innovative ways of learning by the learners themselves, and the socio-economic status of the parents contributed to making the learners very ambitious and encouraging them to achieve their future goals. Also, it can be said that this could be approached through analysing the daily observations recorded by the research team, which highlighted the ambitions of male and female students in expressing their desire for scientific progress and continuous learning through digital technologies. The observations and analyses that were carried out over two months showed that students expressed in various situations that the limits of learning related to the curricula are no longer the goal, but rather that many male and female students used digital technologies to build educational knowledge that goes beyond the limits of the curriculum they are studying.

Educational Satisfaction

The word "satisfaction" refers to individuals' positive emotional responses including their self-evaluations of their quality of life (Diener et al., 1985). These self-evaluations of different life domains and roles including family, work, school, and community may be an important indicator of their overall life satisfaction (Franzen et al., 2021). Therefore, there is a positive relationship between learners' satisfaction with academic life and their psychological well-being (Lodi et al., 2019). The results of structured interviews and focus groups indicated that digital technologies played an important role in the lives of learners from high-income families, as it was shown that they feel psychologically comfortable and reassured about their

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educational future, through the availability of these technologies and the ease of access to their resources and programs and their use in their studies, as one participant expressed: ***"Everything related to digital technologies is available to them even for the future" (T3).*** This was confirmed by another participant: ***"I think that learners' interaction and engagement with digital technology is evidence that they embrace it, this adoption comes from them" (T4).*** One participant went on to say: ***"I think AI and ChatGPT are very helpful for visual learning because a lot of people don't like to sit and read for a very long time, they can't just sit and listen. So, the technology itself, as we all learn from videos in different ways, helps us expand ourselves in different ways and even in the classroom, we can all learn the same thing, but in different formats" (P4).***

The educational environment also contributes to learners' sense of educational security and academic satisfaction, as previous studies have shown that satisfaction with the learning environment plays a crucial role in forming and maintaining academic commitment among learners, and is one of the important factors that work to adapt to school and continuous attendance (Rabe-Hemp et al., 2009), as proven by one of the participants: ***"We are here in this school, we have a good reputation among prestigious foreign universities, and this is what makes us stand out from other schools, and this is what makes students' demand for us very high" (T4).*** This confirms that parents provide the appropriate environment for their children, such as international schools that follow the British curriculum, as these schools have a high rating among other schools, and also have a good reputation for foreign universities due to the cadres who work in them and the different teaching methods, which makes learners have high chances of acceptance into prestigious universities, so it can be said that all of the previous factors (academic satisfaction, parents' social and economic status, and the educational environment) give a sense of security for their future.

In a related context, the analysis of the images extracted from the school website, in addition to the analysis of daily observations carried out by the research team over two months, showed that there is a state of satisfaction and happiness on the faces of the students during learning, especially when the educational situation is linked to digital technologies, which reflects the great satisfaction that the research team witnessed in the experience of digital educational life in affluent schools.

Independent Learning

It is a form of learning activity that focuses largely on learners' awareness of learning, and can be interpreted as increasing knowledge, skills, achievements, and individual self-development that begins with the individual's own initiative. Based on the results of various research conducted, independent learning can improve self-efficacy, learning motivation, and learning outcomes, which enhances building self-confidence (Kamriana & Salim, 2024). The results of structured interviews and focus groups revealed that digital technologies played an important role in promoting independent learning among learners from high-income families. One participant stated: ***"If I had the opportunity to dispense with school and the teacher, and just learn independently at home, I would do it immediately, because I feel that I can get everything I want from Google" (P1).*** Another participant continued: ***"If I wanted to do more, I might decide to learn at home by myself. I can sit privately until I reach a high level of learning, and study at home by myself where I can use YouTube" (P5).***

This finding is consistent with the study of (Lee & Hannafin, 2016) which found that digital-based learning generates opportunities for self-learning and self-rebuilding of knowledge, which enables learners to address their unique interests and learning needs and deepen their knowledge and understanding. They also claimed that individual learners need to take greater responsibility for their learning through digital technologies, and thus they will become more independent in how to navigate and manage their own learning, which made learners trust digital technologies in their studies and educational progress even more than their teachers, as one participant explained: ***"As for learners enjoying self-learning at home through digital technologies, yes most learners prefer self-learning to the point that they have more confidence in technologies than their teachers, they engage and interact with them positively, to the point that they have become able to dispense with the teacher" (T3).***

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This is what was agreed upon by the study (Bueno-Ravel & Gueudet, 2009; Jacobsen, 2020; Pillutla et al., 2020) that motivated and confident learners in digital technologies can make use of learning resources via digital platforms to clarify and reinforce what they have learned in lectures, through YouTube, social media, tablets, mobile devices, and digital games (Camilleri & Camilleri, 2022; Hatzipanagos & John, 2017; Johannesen et al., 2019). This was confirmed by the study (Awidi & Paynter, 2024) which showed that learners' responses to the following item ("I feel confident in using digital technologies to support independent learning") indicated the extent of learners' satisfaction with that.

Likewise, independent learning develops and empowers learners with skills and competencies that can ensure they are equipped to learn without relying on external support, thus developing critical thinking, problem solving and self-regulation skills (Lo et al., 2024), project skills and independence skills, as one participant put it: ***"…these technologies have provided learning opportunities to bring them into the present to do experimental projects. There are a lot of examples of this, for example, in history, when we look at specific case studies even in sociology, even in geography, all these different subjects, students must go away and do a lot of research, … for example, I would like them to go away and do a case study on a particular country, … I think if students have that opportunity, they come back and present their findings. That really helps them develop as individuals. Another way is that students have the Independent Project Qualification in Years 12 and 13, where students must write a 5,000-word thesis on whatever topic they want to present on and they do a lot of research, … so yes, I agree that it gives an opportunity to develop project skills and independence skills." "Also" (T2).*** Another participant agreed: ***"… I think if you allow students to have the opportunity to do some independent learning using their own technology alone, they will use that, … learn this whole lesson, maybe parts of the lesson, they can do some self-research or use technology to do that, you know, like create this essay and create this presentation about this topic" (T1).***

The daily blogs executed by the school also showed a kind of independence among male and female students in learning processes based on digital technologies. Hence, it can be said that there are proactive initiatives by students to use digital technologies whether inside or outside the school. Also, digital technologies created a kind of competition among students, which encouraged them to be independent in their knowledge to reach high levels that qualify them to obtain exceptional grades. It is also noted through daily observations that in the event of emergencies and continuing to study from home, students have a high rate of independence in continuing learning and not stopping it no matter the challenges, which is consistent with a number of studies that have shown that emergency situations supported by digital technologies enhance learners' independent learning skills (Alhalafawy & Zaki, 2022; Saleem et al., 2024).

Independent learning also prepares learners for the future and lifelong learning, as Hayta and Yaprak (2013) confirmed when they said, "Flexible and independent lifelong learning is essential for success in the information age." Many studies, such as (Grande et al., 2022; Khalid et al., 2020), have provided evidence that independent learning skills can be a positive indicator of academic performance, and are often associated with positive outcomes (Berthold et al., 2007) and thus have better grades (Meyer et al., 2008). It can also improve self-efficacy and learning motivation, as self-efficacy plays an important role in a person's success, and thus increases other skills such as critical and creative thinking and taking the initiative to do something. Self-efficacy and learning motivation have a positive relationship, as a person with high competence will also have high motivation, which results in improved learning outcomes (Kamriana & Salim, 2024). Studies such as (Koparan et al., 2009), (LEWELLYN & JONES, 2003), and (Yılmaz & Ekinci, 2001) have also found that there is a positive relationship between academic performance, total income, family support, and self-efficacy, and this is what the results of this study confirmed.

Affluent Learning

Affluent learning means the extent to which digital technologies are available to learners from high-income families, whether in schools or at home, and the ease of accessing their resources and sources, obtaining information, retaining it, and improving its presentation, as one participant indicated: ***"So I think that using digital technologies in the educational process is a good thing, because it pushes students***

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to go out into the wider world, and engage in different sources and search for them, especially in the humanities, such as history, geography, and sociology, they need to do a lot of research, so you can get some information from textbooks, but there are many other resources that need to be utilized" (T2). This was confirmed by another participant: "***I felt a change in the direction of study due to digital technologies, as I use the iPad to review previous exam questions, and answering questions has become easier for me, it has made it easier for me to access more questions and more things. So, I can finish more things in less time, and therefore it is more efficient for me" (P3).*** This result is in line with the findings of the study by Haleem et al. (2022) Digital technologies continue to play a key role in delivering education even outside the classroom, enhancing creativity and a sense of success, making education more interactive, increasing enthusiasm for learning, and thus making knowledge-sharing easier.

Again, it is no secret about the importance of the family's role in making their children's lives easier, especially with regard to education, as most of them see their children's education as a real investment for them, as they provide better educational resources for their children, including schools, after-school private lessons, social activities, etc., all in order to achieve their future and thus increase self-esteem and self-confidence (Liu, 2024). This is consistent with the daily observations that were recorded, which showed how digital technologies can facilitate the learning process and make it smoother. Affluent learning appeared in many observations that the research team observed, whether inside classrooms or inside laboratories, as well as through the distance learning systems that the school used to interact with learners.

Implications

Based on the results, the digital educational life behaviours generated by using digital technologies in the educational process have led to preparing students to practice specific behaviours related to educational ambition, educational satisfaction, independent learning, and affluent learning. This means that it is possible to build on this by creating mini experiences that include educational life situations that can contribute to enhancing indicators of ambition, satisfaction, independence, and affluent learning among students in multiple school environments without requiring the entire school to be a rich school. The basic reflection indicates the possibility of developing a digital educational life with specifications that include the intensive use of technology in educational situations, which can contribute to providing an educational climate that enhances the abilities of male and female students to learn in a qualitative way. Educational institutions can rely on the results of the research in establishing new rules related to the goal of using digital technologies in managing students' educational life and improving their learning journey so that this journey is enveloped in indicators of ambition, satisfaction, independence, and affluent learning.

Limitations

Although one of the research team members worked in this type of schools, the daily observations and qualitative analysis were limited to a period of two months according to the time limits outlined for the research experiment, but it can be said that this period may be somewhat short and requires longer periods of time in order to reach a deeper exploration of this culture, which makes the research team recommend conducting similar studies but over longer periods of time and greater experience. The experiment, experience, and analysis were limited to intermediate and secondary schools, and therefore the research team recommends the need to consider the primary stages and early grades where digital educational life can lead to other behaviours.

Conclusion

This study aimed to examine the behaviours associated with digital educational life that are practiced in affluent schools because of the intensive use of digital educational technologies. The results showed that the most important of these behaviours associated with digital educational life are closely related to four behaviours that are transformed in many aspects into practice: educational ambition, educational satisfaction, independent learning, and affluent learning. The results of the current study can lead to the development of educational experiences to improve indicators of ambition, satisfaction, independent

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learning, and affluent learning through expanded or mini models to benefit from the general context of digital educational life provided by some schools, whether these schools are affluent or regular schools that have typical experiences in using digital technologies. Future studies in this context can focus on examining educational life behaviours based on artificial intelligence, the roles of digital technologies in enhancing happiness, and resilience behaviours among affluent groups.

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