



DIGITAL STORYTELLING AS A MEDIUM OF DIALOGIC COMMUNICATION IN PUBLIC RELATIONS LEARNING IN DISTANCE EDUCATION

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Article Info

Article history:

Received Jan 22, 2026

Revised Feb 08, 2026

Accepted Feb 25, 2026

Keywords:

Digital Storytelling, Dialogic Communication, Distance Education, Public Relations, Digital Learning

ABSTRACT

This study aims to examine and analyze differences in employee performance. The development of digital technology has brought significant changes to learning processes in higher education, particularly within distance education systems. Although digital-based learning facilitates easier access to information, online learning practices often remain one-directional and provide limited opportunities for dialogue between lecturers and students. This study aims to analyze the role of the digital storytelling method in fostering dialogic communication in Public Relations learning within a distance education system. This research employs a qualitative approach using a case study method. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, observations of the learning process, and document analysis of students' digital storytelling projects. The findings indicate that the implementation of digital storytelling enhances student engagement in the learning process, encourages reflective dialogue between lecturers and students, and develops students' creative communication skills. This method also provides opportunities for students to express their experiences and critical perspectives through digital narratives. The findings suggest that digital storytelling can serve as an effective pedagogical strategy in fostering dialogic communication in distance learning within the field of Public Relations. Therefore, the integration of digital storytelling methods into digital learning environments can support the creation of a more participatory, reflective, and meaningful educational process.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The development of information and communication technology over the past few decades has significantly transformed various aspects of human life, including the field of education. Digital transformation has encouraged the emergence of innovative learning methods that enable educational processes to occur beyond the limitations of space and time. One notable manifestation of this transformation is the growth of distance education systems that utilize digital technology as the primary medium in the learning process.

Distance education offers numerous advantages, including flexibility in time and place of learning, broader access to digital information resources, and opportunities for students to engage in independent learning. However, the implementation of online learning systems also faces several challenges, particularly in creating effective interaction between lecturers and students. In many cases, online learning is still dominated by a one-way communication model in which lecturers act as content deliverers while students merely function as passive recipients of information.

This one-directional learning model often leads to a reduction in the quality of interaction in the educational process. Students are given limited opportunities to express their opinions, ask questions, or reflect on the learning materials. Consequently, the learning process becomes less dialogic and fails to effectively encourage the development of students' critical thinking skills.

In this context, the concept of dialogic communication becomes essential to be developed within the learning process. Dialogic communication refers to a communication process that emphasizes the open exchange of ideas between two or more parties, thereby creating a mutually enriching learning experience. In education, dialogic communication allows for a more equal relationship between lecturers and students, where both function as active participants in the learning process.

One approach that can be used to foster dialogic communication in learning is storytelling. Storytelling is a communication technique that utilizes narratives as a medium for conveying messages, experiences, and values. With the advancement of digital technology, storytelling has evolved into digital storytelling, which utilizes various digital media such as images, videos, audio, and text to present stories in a more engaging and interactive manner.

Digital storytelling functions not only as a medium for delivering information but also as a creative expression that enables students to develop critical and reflective thinking skills. Through the process of creating digital stories, students can integrate personal experiences, academic knowledge, and critical perspectives related to the issues discussed in the learning process.

In the field of Public Relations, storytelling skills represent one of the essential competencies that students must develop. Public Relations practitioners are expected to effectively communicate messages to diverse audiences through engaging and persuasive narratives. Therefore, integrating digital storytelling methods into Public Relations learning provides dual benefits: improving the quality of interaction in the learning process while simultaneously developing students' professional communication skills.

Based on this background, this study aims to analyze how digital storytelling methods can be used as a medium for fostering dialogic communication in Public Relations learning within distance education systems. This research is expected to contribute to the development of more participatory and dialogic digital learning innovations in higher education.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Dialogic Communication in Education

Dialogic communication refers to a communication concept that emphasizes open and equal two-way interaction among the parties involved in the communication process. In educational contexts, dialogic communication forms the basis for the creation of participatory and reflective learning processes.

The concept of dialogic communication is strongly influenced by the ideas of Paulo Freire, who emphasized the importance of dialogue in education. Freire criticized the traditional educational model known as "banking education," in which teachers are positioned as knowledge holders while students function merely as repositories of information. In such a model, the learning process is one-directional and does not provide opportunities for students to develop critical thinking.

As an alternative, Freire proposed a dialogic educational approach that positions teachers and students as partners in the learning process. Through dialogue, both parties can exchange ideas, experiences, and perspectives, thereby creating a more dynamic and meaningful learning process.

In higher education, dialogic communication is particularly important because students are expected not only to master theoretical knowledge but also to develop the ability to critically analyze and reflect on various social phenomena.

Digital Storytelling in Learning

Digital storytelling is a storytelling method that utilizes digital technology as the primary communication medium. This method integrates various multimedia elements such as images, videos, text, music, and voice narration to create engaging and communicative stories.

In educational contexts, digital storytelling offers numerous benefits. It can increase students' learning motivation, strengthen conceptual understanding, and encourage students to think creatively and critically.

The digital storytelling creation process generally involves several stages, including:

1. identifying story ideas
2. developing narrative scripts
3. collecting visual and audio materials
4. producing digital media content
5. presenting and reflecting on the story



Through these stages, students not only learn to understand academic materials but also develop the ability to communicate their ideas effectively to others.

Public Relations Learning in the Digital Era

The development of digital technology has significantly transformed Public Relations practices. Communication with the public is no longer conducted solely through conventional media but increasingly through digital platforms such as social media, websites, and digital video content.

Therefore, Public Relations education must adapt to these developments by integrating various digital communication skills into the learning curriculum. One of the increasingly important competencies in modern Public Relations practice is digital storytelling, which enables communicators to capture audience attention within highly competitive media environments.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study employed a qualitative approach using a case study method. The qualitative approach was chosen because this research aims to gain an in-depth understanding of the dialogic communication processes that occur in digital learning environments.

The research subjects consisted of Public Relations students participating in digital storytelling-based learning within a distance education system.

Data collection techniques included:

1. In-depth interviews with lecturers and students
2. Observation of online learning processes
3. Document analysis of students' digital storytelling projects

Data analysis was conducted through three main stages: data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Implementation of Digital Storytelling in Learning

The results of the study show that the implementation of digital storytelling in Public Relations learning was conducted through a project-based learning approach. In this approach, students were assigned to design and produce digital stories related to communication issues, organizational branding, or social campaigns relevant to course materials.

The implementation process consisted of several stages. The first stage was idea exploration, in which students identified communication themes or issues to be developed in their digital stories. At this stage, students were encouraged to observe various social phenomena related to public communication practices, such as social campaigns, organizational communication, and digital communication strategies implemented by institutions.

The second stage was narrative development. In this stage, students created storylines that served as the basis for producing digital content. The narratives were not merely sequences of events but were also designed to convey clear communication messages to the audience. In the context of Public Relations learning, students were required to design persuasive communication messages that also provided informative value to the public.

The third stage was digital content production. Students utilized various digital technologies to produce their stories in the form of videos, animations, or multimedia presentations. This production process involved integrating visual and audio elements such as images, videos, music, text, and voice narration to create engaging and communicative stories.

The final stage was presentation and reflection. Students presented their digital storytelling projects in online classes. These presentations were followed by discussion sessions between students and lecturers that explored the story content, communication messages conveyed, and the relevance of the stories to the Public Relations concepts studied in the course.

The implementation of digital storytelling demonstrates that students are not merely recipients of information but active creators of content within the learning process. As a result, learning becomes more participatory and provides opportunities for students to develop creativity and communication skills.

Increased Student Participation in the Learning Process

One of the key findings of this study is the increase in student participation following the implementation of digital storytelling. In conventional learning models, students often function merely as listeners who receive information delivered by lecturers. Interaction is usually limited to short question-and-answer sessions involving only a few students.

However, after the introduction of digital storytelling, student engagement in classroom discussions increased significantly. Students became more active in expressing ideas, presenting opinions, and responding to the work produced by their peers.

This increased participation occurs because digital storytelling allows students to express their ideas more freely and creatively. Students are not only expected to understand theoretical concepts but also to apply those theories in digital works that convey meaningful communication messages.

Additionally, the digital storytelling process encourages collaborative work. In several projects, students worked in small groups, requiring them to discuss ideas, share perspectives, and make collective decisions when designing their stories. This collaborative process indirectly increases social interaction among students and strengthens the dynamics of classroom learning.

These findings indicate that digital storytelling can serve as an effective learning strategy to increase student engagement, particularly within distance education contexts where direct interaction between lecturers and students is often limited.

The Emergence of Reflective Dialogue between Lecturers and Students

Another important finding of this study is the emergence of reflective dialogue between lecturers and students during the learning process. Reflective dialogue refers to a form of communication that not only aims to convey information but also encourages critical reflection on knowledge and experiences.

During digital storytelling presentations, students explained not only the technical aspects of their projects but also the reasons behind the selection of their themes and the communication messages embedded in their narratives. This opened opportunities for lecturers to pose reflective questions that encouraged students to think more deeply about their work.

The discussions that emerged were not limited to technical aspects of video production or digital tools but also addressed the substantive communication messages conveyed in the stories. Students were encouraged to evaluate whether their messages aligned with the intended communication objectives and how these messages might influence audience perceptions.

This dialogical process reflects the principles of dialogic communication emphasized in critical pedagogy. In this perspective, learning is not merely a process of knowledge transfer from lecturer to student but a dialogical interaction where both parties actively exchange ideas.

Through reflective dialogue, students gain deeper understanding of the learning materials while simultaneously developing their ability to critically analyze communication phenomena in society.

Development of Creativity and Critical Thinking Skills

The implementation of digital storytelling also contributed positively to the development of students' creativity. The process of creating digital stories requires students to combine visual, audio, and narrative elements creatively to produce engaging and communicative content.

Students must design unique story concepts, select relevant visual materials, and construct narratives that can attract audience attention. This creative process not only enhances students' technical skills in using digital technology but also develops their ability to communicate ideas effectively.

In addition to fostering creativity, digital storytelling encourages the development of critical thinking skills. In the process of producing digital stories, students must analyze various sources of information and determine how these materials should be presented in meaningful narratives.

Students are also required to consider audience perspectives when designing their stories. This encourages them to view issues from multiple viewpoints and understand how communication messages can influence public perceptions and attitudes.

These findings indicate that digital storytelling functions not only as an engaging learning medium but also as an effective tool for developing higher-order thinking skills among university students.

5. CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that digital storytelling can serve as an effective learning method in fostering dialogic communication in distance education. The method not only increases student participation but also encourages critical reflection, which is a central element of dialogic learning. The integration of digital storytelling in Public Relations education can help students develop creative communication skills that are relevant to the needs of the communication industry in the digital era. Therefore, digital storytelling represents an important pedagogical innovation in the development of digital learning models in higher education.



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