

ENGLISH TEACHERS' DIGITAL LITERACY COMPETENCES: A CASE STUDY ON MILLENNIAL AND GEN-Z TEACHERS IN ISLAMIC JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL

Sheila Dewi Oktavia

English Education Department, UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung, Indonesia
sheila.dwoktv@gmail.com

Anugrah Imani

English Education Department, UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung, Indonesia
anugrah.imani@uinsgd.ac.id

Dahlya Indra Nurwanti

English Education Department, UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung, Indonesia
dahlyanurwanti@uinsgd.ac.id

Abstract

This study employed a qualitative method with a case study design to investigate the digital literacy skills of English teachers within the context of Islamic Junior High Schools in Bandung. The participants consisted of four purposively selected English teachers. Data were collected through questionnaires aimed at assessing the teachers' digital literacy competencies, followed by in-depth interviews to explore their experiences and perspectives further. Additionally, written reflections were used to validate the seriousness and authenticity of participants' responses. The findings indicate that the participants demonstrated a relatively high level of digital literacy, despite the implementation being recent. The results also suggest that generational differences play a significant role in shaping teachers' digital literacy capabilities, which, in turn, influence their teaching practices. This supports the notion that digital literacy enhances the effectiveness and efficiency of instructional processes while also fostering greater student engagement and motivation.

Keywords: Digital Literacy skills, English teachers, teaching

INTRODUCTION

Digital technology cannot be separated from everyday lives in this era, particularly in the field of English education. Through a variety of digital technology platforms, English teachers and students can quickly access teaching and learning materials. Teachers and students need to be digitally literate to use digital technologies. Several studies corroborate this, showing how crucial digital literacy is for English teachers in order to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of their instruction as well as increase students' enthusiasm for language learning in the age of digital learning.

In recent years, the integration of technology into education has become increasingly common, which has led to changes in traditional teaching methods and requires educators to adapt to the digital environment. This transformation is especially important for English teachers who are responsible for teaching students essential skills such as English language proficiency and digital literacy, which are critical to thriving in today's interconnected world. The emergence of the Millennial and Gen-Z groups as educators has led to unique perspectives and competencies regarding the use of technology in the classroom. The digital era has revolutionised all aspects of life, and regardless of personal preference, adapting to current trends and the millennial generation is necessary in all areas of work (Postelnicu & Câlea, 2019). This reality motivates the education industry, particularly English teachers, to adapt

every learning process to the advancements in information technology and communication (Nariyati et al, 2020).

In line with the description above, digital literacy skills are regarded as one of the most important things to support student learning in an academic context, particularly when learning English. According to Brown and Lee (2015), a variety of technologies can be useful resources for teachers and language learners. It should be noted that the benefits of using technological tools may be important when considering how teachers use a technology-based approach to language teaching when integrating technology into learning. Pratolo and Solikhati's study (2020) demonstrates that employing computers and cellphones in addition to training educators might enhance Indonesians' digital literacy abilities. In Islamic schools, where technology and religious education are important, it is crucial to understand the level of digital literacy competency for Millennial and Gen-Z English teachers. Although digital literacy has been a significant focus in general education, there is a need for more research to explore digital literacy competencies for English teachers in Islamic schools. With the growth of digitalisation, Islamic schools are adapting to the digital era. The advancements in digital technology have brought significant changes to life, providing easy access to various kinds of religious information to the general public.

The purpose of this research is to examine the digital literacy skills of English teachers in Islamic Junior high schools and how these skills are reflected in their instruction. The focus of this research is to study the digital literacy skills of the Millennial Generation and Gen English teachers in Islamic schools. Evaluating their digital literacy levels enables the identification of targeted training and professional development needs to improve the quality of English language instruction in Islamic educational contexts. Rosyida (2020) states that in the context of modern Islamic school education, digital literacy is utilised to support learning, access information and data, evaluate information, and serve as a curriculum supporting media to encourage the development of media-savvy human resources capable of analysing content. Therefore, the goal of this study is to investigate how English instructors at a private high school use digital literacy and how this is represented in their education.

METHOD

The design of this study is qualitative, employing a case study approach. The focus of this research is to study the digital literacy skills of the Millennial Generation and Gen English teachers in Islamic schools. Assessing teachers' digital literacy helps determine the training needed to improve English teaching in Islamic schools. This research employed both questionnaires and interviews as data collection methods. This section outlines the procedures used to gather the data. To ensure the credibility of the findings, data triangulation was applied through interviews, questionnaires, and written reflections. The participants included two English teachers from Islamic junior high schools in Bandung, representing both the Millennial and Generation Z cohorts. The aim was to explore their digital literacy competencies and examine the impact of these competencies on student learning. The case details were carefully defined and framed to provide a structured analysis of the issue.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted to obtain in-depth insights into the teachers' digital literacy skills, particularly in the context of English language instruction. This approach allowed for open-ended responses and interactive, two-way communication, enabling the researchers to explore participants' perceptions more comprehensively. The interviews were specifically designed to address the study's first and second research questions.

FINDING AND DISCUSSIONS

Findings were generated from the data collected to respond to the research objectives. This study had two important objectives. The first is to aim for millennial English teachers' digital literacy competencies. The second objective was to examine the Gen-Z English teachers' digital literacy competencies. Data were collected through interviews and questionnaires. The study was conducted over two days through WhatsApp chat on August 8 and 9, 2024. The data collection was thoroughly analysed to answer the research questions. The results of the study are shown in the following section.

This research examines English teachers' digital literacy competence: A case study on Millennial and Gen-Z Teachers in Islamic Junior High School. In this discussion section, the researcher answers the research questions.

How are the millennial English teachers' digital literacy competencies in Islamic Junior High School

For the first research question, the researcher used a questionnaire, an interview, and a written reflection based on Kurnia's (2021) framework. Then, the researcher interviewed four teachers about their abilities in digital literacy based on the theory of Hague and Payton (2010).

Table 4. 1 Questionnaire adapted by Kurnia (2021)

Code	Statement 16	Alternative Options			
		Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
T1M	As a teacher, I select information and content that is indicated as predatory. <i>Sebagai seorang guru, saya memilih informasi dan konten yang dianggap predator.</i>				✓
T2Z			✓		
T3M					✓
T4Z			✓		

Table 4. 2 Teachers' responses to question 4 through interviews

Question 4: What digital tools do you usually use during your teaching? For what purposes do you use them? <i>Alat digital apa yang biasanya Anda gunakan selama mengajar? Untuk tujuan apa Anda menggunakannya?</i>	
Respondent	Reason
Millenial	
T1M	Of course not, only at certain times, and that is if the learning media (laptop and infocus) are not used by other subject teachers. <i>Tentu tidak, hanya waktu waktu tertentu saja, itupun kalau media prmbelajaran (laptop dan infokus) tidak digunakan oleh guru mata pelajaran lain.</i>
T3M	Students can use mobile phones to search for information, translate, listen to songs, and also play games that contain learning materials.

	<i>Anak-anak dapat menggunakan handphone untuk searching informasi, translating, listening song, juga bermain game yg berisi materi pembelajaran.</i>
Gen-Z	
T2Z	Laptop, LCD Projector, speaker, and mobile phone. Applications such as WhatsApp, Google Forms, PPT, Google Meet, and Canva. The goal is to make learning more interesting, better understood by students, and to teach students to understand better. <i>Laptop, LCD Projector, speaker and handphone. Aplikasi seperti whatsapp, google form, ppt, google meet, canva. Tujuannya untuk membuat pembelajaran lebih menarik, lebih dipahami siswa serta mengajarkan siswa untuk lebih memahami.</i>
T4Z	To make learning easier, such as using a cellphone. <i>Untuk memudahkan dalam pembelajaran seperti menggunakan handphone.</i>

<p>Learning from the new strategy:</p> <p>1. How do you feel when your digital literacy skills are tested? <i>Bagaimana perasaan Anda ketika keterampilan literasi digital Anda diuji?</i></p> <p>2. What did you learn about yourself as you worked on this project? <i>Apa yang Anda pelajari tentang diri Anda saat mengerjakan proyek ini?</i></p>	<p>T1M:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. I am afraid that when I feel capable, the results are still lacking, and so far, I have not tried to develop it anymore 2. I realise that there is still a lot that I do not know about digital literacy
	<p>T3M:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Sometimes it feels confusing and dizzying 2. I realize that there are still many things to learn and update
	<p>T2Z:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Happy, because it becomes a benchmark 2. Technology is getting more and more sophisticated
	<p>T4Z:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. I will continue to learn things that I do not know about digital literacy 5. I realize that technology is developing very rapidly, and if we do not learn, we will be left behind

From the results of twenty questionnaire tables (see Tables 4.1–4.20), the study discovered that the millennial English teachers had rather low levels of digital literacy, and they could use these skills to enhance classroom instruction (See Tables 4.16, 4.24, questions numbers 4 and 5). Aside from that, the teachers reported that they felt they had good digital literacy abilities and could use them when teaching in the classroom. They felt the benefits of having such skills based on the answers to the questionnaire. Both of them provided good answers to every questionnaire, even though the results were not all the same. This is consistent with the notion put forward by Gilster (1997), which holds that digital literacy is the ability to use digital devices to engage, communicate, publish, and obtain information.

A positive learning environment and the teacher's personality play an important role in building students' confidence. To understand teachers' perspectives on their digital literacy skills, interviews were conducted based on Larsson's (2003) theory, which views digital literacy as a vital life skill in the modern era. The interviews revealed deeper insights into the teachers' digital literacy abilities. Although their approaches varied, the teachers shared similar views on the importance of digital literacy. They agreed that having these skills allows them to be more creative with technology, receive positive feedback from students, and use digital tools to support different academic goals. (See table 4.26)

How are the Gen-Z English teachers' digital literacy competencies in Junior High School

For the second research question, the researcher used a questionnaire interview and written reflection based on Kurnia's (2021) framework. Then, the researcher interviewed four teachers about their abilities in digital literacy based on the theory of Hague and Payton (2010).

In transcript 2, the teacher posed a question to Dini by saying, "*The reason why?*" (see sentence #2) This question indicates that the teacher asked Dini to give the reason for her statement, "**Why did** this text only talk about Haringga, that is, oppression by Bobotoh in the GBLA stadium?" (see sentence #1) It is in line with Golding (2011), who states that the "*why*" question is aimed at getting the students' reason for their answer.

Transcript 2 indicates that Dini could answer the question delivered by the teacher by saying "*Because Haringga is a Persija fan, as we know.*" (see sentence #3). Dini's answer shows the student's ability to use reasoning skills. Her answer was equipped with the reason indicator "because," which indicates the presence of the reason to reinforce her statement.

Table 4. 3 Questionnaire adapted by Kurnia (2021)

Code	Statement 11	Alternative Options			
		Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
T1M	As a teacher, I can install and uninstall the software applications that I use. <i>Sebagai guru, saya dapat memasang dan menghapus aplikasi perangkat lunak yang saya gunakan.</i>		✓		
T2Z		✓			
T3M			✓		
T4Z		✓			

Table 4. 4 Teachers' responses to question 9 through interviews

Question 9: Do you think the application of digital literacy skills is effective in delivering English material to students? <i>Menurut Anda, apakah penerapan keterampilan literasi digital efektif dalam menyampaikan materi bahasa Inggris kepada siswa?</i>	
Respondent	Reason
Millennial	
T1M	Yes, it is very effective in terms of function.
T3M	Quite effective.
Gen-Z	
T2Z	Yes, I think it is quite effective nowadays, accompanied by extra guidance from teachers to students.
T4Z	Very effective, students become more enthusiastic.

From the results of twenty questionnaire tables (see Tables 4.1–4.20), the study discovered that Gen-Z English has high levels of digital literacy, and they could use these skills to enhance classroom instruction (see Tables 4.11, 4.29, Question numbers 4 and 5). Apart from that, based on their responses to the questionnaire, the teachers stated that they believed they had high digital literacy skills, could use them when teaching in the classroom, and felt that having such skills was beneficial. Even though the findings were not all the same, they both gave thoughtful responses to every query. This is in line with the theory advanced by Gilster (1997), which states that digital literacy is the capacity to interact, communicate, publish, and gather information via digital technologies.

Table 4. 5 Teachers' responses to question 6 through interviews

Question 6: How enthusiastic are students in responding to the use of digital technology in applying their digital literacy skills during teaching and learning activities? <i>Seberapa antusias siswa dalam menanggapi pemanfaatan teknologi digital dalam menerapkan keterampilan literasi digital Anda selama kegiatan belajar mengajar?</i>	
Respondent	Reason
Millennial	
T1M	Very enthusiastic.
T3M	Very enthusiastic because it makes learning more fun.
Gen-Z	
T2Z	Around 75% of students are more interested and enthusiastic in learning when using digital media. Although in terms of the level of understanding of the material by students, it is sometimes still not achieved.
T4Z	The students were very enthusiastic.

A positive learning atmosphere is very beneficial to students, who also gain self-confidence partly as a result of the teacher's character and beliefs. Interviews were then conducted to find out more about the teachers' perspectives on their degree of digital literacy. This interview is based on Larsson's (2003) idea, which maintains that in this digital age, being

able to comprehend and use digital literacy is an essential life skill. Digital literacy is a necessary skill for survival. These interviews revealed the teachers' competency with digital literacy and gave rise to several more in-depth perspectives from them. Though there are differences in the applications of digital literacy, the teachers' perspectives remain consistent. Still not all that different, however. If they are digitally literate, they could be more imaginative when it comes to technology. (See table 4.26)

CONCLUSION

Based on questionnaires and interviews, it can be concluded that using digital literacy to learn English is enjoyable for pupils. The fact that the school only has two projectors is an issue, but it does not stop teachers from incorporating digital literacy into the English classroom. These challenges serve as a motivator for them to develop their inventiveness. Teachers and students who possess digital literacy abilities benefit from increased self-assurance, efficacy, convenience, and enthusiasm in learning.

The conclusion from the interview results above is based on the theory put forward. According to Martin (2008), having and applying digital literacy skills has many perceived benefits. Therefore, digital literacy is a type of complex talent that refers to new skills that humans must have in order to interact with today's digital environment.

In conclusion, they have done the core work of implementing digital literacy skills in the classroom teaching process. They seem to be very skilled at implementing it. This shows that they often use digital literacy in Generation Millennial and Gen-Z. Then, the respondents seemed to feel the benefits of their digital literacy skills. The benefits felt during observation were that students enthusiastically responded to the digital itself; they were very responsive and understood the material easily. This is supported by the theory of Nuroh et al. (2022). They have investigated how digital can make teaching effective, and their findings reveal that there are many advantages to using digital in teaching English in the classroom.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Brown, H. D., & Lee, H. (2015). *Teaching by principles: An interactive approach to language pedagogy* (4th ed.). Pearson Education.
- Gilster, P. (1997). *Digital literacy*. Wiley Computer Publishing
- Hague, C., & Payton, S. (2010). *Digital literacy across the curriculum. Key to themes: A Futurelab handbook*. Futurelab.
- Kurnia, C. (2021). *Correlational study between students' digital literacy and English communicative competence* (Doctoral dissertation, Universitas Islam Sultan Agung Semarang).
- Larsson, L. C. (2003). Improving your productivity with a PDA: Some suggestions. *Library Hi Tech*, 21(4), 426–439. <https://doi.org/10.1108/07378830310509736>
- Martin, A. (2008). Digital literacy and the “digital society.” In C. Lankshear & M. Knobel (Eds.), *Digital literacies: Concepts, policies, and practices* (pp. 151–176). Peter Lang.
- Nariyati, N. P. L., Sudirman, S., & Pratiwi, N. P. A. (2020). EFL pre-service teachers' perception toward the use of mobile-assisted language learning in teaching English. *International Journal of Language Education*, 4(2), 38-47. <https://doi.org/10.26858/ijole.v4i2.10052>
- Nuroh, E. Z., Kusumawardana, M. D., & Destiana, E. (2022). Developing digital literacy skill for initial teacher education through digital storytelling. *KnE Social Sciences*, 475–496. <https://doi.org/10.18502/KSS.V7I10.11250>

- Pratolo, B. W., & Solikhati, H. A. (2020). The implementation of digital literacy in Indonesian Suburban EFL classes. *International journal of scientific and technology research*, 9(1), 1508-1512.
- Postelnicu, C., & Câlea, S. (2019). The fourth industrial revolution. Global risks, local challenges for employment. *Montenegrin Journal of Economics*, 15(2), 195-206.
- Rosyida, I. (2020). Pengelolaan Pembelajaran Literasi Teknologi di Boarding School. *Jurnal Syntax Admiration*, 1(6), 696–710.