



ASSESSMENT OF DIGITAL LITERACY FOR DIGITAL NATIVES IN THE NEW NORMAL

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Abstract

Rapid technological innovation guides people to the digital landscape, which has become the new normal. Individual demands, which are constantly changing, were satisfied by digital technology. The emergence of a new norm lightens our load in daily life, particularly at work. With automation features, smart work with smart devices makes it quick and simple. However, different people use digital devices in different ways. The question of whether digital literacy is necessary for people to succeed in the digital age and whether digital devices are used with the appropriate skills to produce positive results arises. The purpose of this article is to investigate the level of digital literacy among mobile phone users who are digital natives (generation Z). As a result, research Objectives and Hypotheses were formulated. Online surveys and the appropriate instruments were employed as part of the research technique to Measure respondents' level of digital literacy based on digital competency when utilizing mobile devices. Students who are technologically advanced from birth lack the skills to adapt to their environment. They strive hard to survive in the digital age as they encounter difficult circumstances. The government and institutions should concentrate on improving students' lives in terms of digital literacy and upgrading their skills in using digital gadgets because digital natives are biased based on the digital divide that exists in our society. Individuals, companies, and our society would benefit from the positive outcome based on digital literacy as we adapt to the new normal.

Keywords: digital literacy, digital divide, digital natives.

Introduction

Rapid technological innovation guides people to the digital landscape, which has become the new normal. Global residents of all ages must possess a set of digital skills in order to live, work, learn, and participate in contemporary society. The advancement of society and digital technology are closely related. The digital world has transformed how consumers and organizations interact and opened up new opportunities by enabling unlimited access to information sources. The ability to communicate and obtain information in a culture where digital technologies like internet platforms, social media, and mobile devices are used more frequently is known as digital literacy. Reading, writing, and perceiving information using different digital media platforms is simply known as digital literacy. The government should prioritize improving digital literacy and closing the digital divide. Today, poor adoption of Digital Literacy was due to factors like lack of familiarity, trust in technology, low digital proficiency, inability to utilize, inadequate network connectivity, complicated nature, and sociological, cultural, and economic issues that are firmly ingrained in contemporary society must be resolved before reaching digital literacy. In the digital era, people must have the essential knowledge, learned abilities, and forming of habits to utilize digital devices efficiently. The capacity to use digital devices and one's level of basic literacy both contribute to the analysis of one's digital skills performance. There are still gaps in terms of digital literacy that need to be filled resulting in the growth of both society and individuals. Technology advancements should improve people's lives rather

than hinder them. Due to the new normal, there is a significant need to satisfy the desire for digital Skills to confront the world. It established a new trend focused on digital Skills for all aspects of work life.

Statement of problem

Individual demands, which are constantly changing, were satisfied by digital technology. The emergence of a new norm lightens our load in daily life, particularly at work. With automation features, smart work with smart devices makes it quick and simple. However, different people use digital devices in different ways. The question of whether digital literacy is necessary for people to succeed in the digital age and whether digital devices are used with the appropriate skills to produce positive results arises. As a result, this article is to investigate the level of digital literacy among mobile phone users who are digital natives (generation Z).

Conceptual Definition

1. Digital literacy means having the ability to communicate and obtain information in a culture where digital technologies like internet platforms, Social media, and mobile devices are used more frequently.
2. Digital Divide referred to any disparities between groups or nations measured in terms of access to, usage of, or knowledge of information and communication technologies (ICT).
3. A digital native refers to a person who was born after digital technology became widely used.

Research Objectives

1. To investigate the level of digital literacy among the digital natives (Z-generation) in the Tiruchirappalli district.
2. To study the relationship between demographic variables and the level of digital Literacy.

Research Hypothesis

The hypothesis guiding the research was

1. H_0 : The level of Education variable has a significant relationship with the level of digital literacy.

Literature Review

The researcher used frameworks created by other scholars to find a variety of sources to explore digital literacy. They examine many aspects of digital literacy, including digital competency, digital skill, and digital intelligence. The terms mentioned above can be used to determine the level of digital literacy. Researchers frequently employ the digital literacy framework created by ICT Watch Indonesia, the Provincial Government of British Columbia Canada, and the DQ Institute Singapore.

Based on the Digital Competency Framework (Digcomp) given by the European Union, the current study measures the level of digital literacy among the digital natives(Z-generation) in the Tiruchirappalli district. The government created the Digcomp framework, which has a specific set of five competencies. This framework includes a revised version of the add-on feature. The Joint Research Centre of the European Union develops the concept of DigComp (Digital Competence Framework for citizens). This framework has 21 items for measuring the competence of individuals using a digital device.

The framework consists of 5 competencies areas namely

1. Information and data literacy and
2. Communication and Collaboration
3. Digital Content Creation
4. Safety
5. Problem-solving.

Research Methodology

The study was descriptive in nature. It outlines the characteristics of a population or phenomenon under investigation. For data collecting, the researcher used both primary and secondary sources. Secondary data was gathered from journals, articles, and books, while the Primary data was collected from Tiruchirappalli students who pursue higher education and are digital natives (Z generation). The study received 150 replies, of which 134 were legitimate. A questionnaire was utilized to collect data using the convenience sampling method.

Research Tool

Based on digital Competency, a questionnaire was designed to measure the level of digital literacy among digital natives (the Z generation). It was broken up into three sections. First, information and data literacy was measured. The creation, communication, and collaboration of digital content were the main topics of the second section. The final component evaluated digital literacy in terms of safety and problem-solving skills. The demographic information pertaining to the respondents was included in the questionnaire's final section. The test score approach was finally used to calculate the results for the 30 items to measure digital literacy.

To test the research's hypotheses, statistical tools were employed. The data were finally examined using the Excel applications and SPSS.

Analysis

30 items were used to measure digital literacy, and they were split into the three categories below:

A. Knowledge of Information and data literacy —6 items

B. Knowledge of content creation, communication, and collaboration – 15 items

C Knowledge of safety and problem-solving – 9 items

The percentage of correct responses provided by the respondents served as the basis for calculating the overall digital literacy score. In addition to the respondents' Demographic Variables, which include their gender, age, and educational Level.

The profile of the respondents to this study is shown in Table 1.

		Frequency	Percent
Gender	Male	83	61.5
	Female	52	38.5
Age	Less than 18 Years	25	18.5
	19 to 22 Years	88	65.2
	More than 23 Years	22	16.3
Level of Educational	Graduate	48	35.6
	Post Graduate	87	64.4

Based on digital competency, Table 1 lists the elements of digital literacy. The level of digital literacy is anticipated to be influenced by demographic Variables like gender, age, and educational Level.

Table 2: Overall Digital Literacy Score Descriptive Statistics

Central Tendency	Value
Mean	46.7
Median	57.0
Mode	57.0
SD	5.13
Minimum	0.70
Maximum	100.0

The descriptive statistics of the scores for digital literacy are shown in Table 2. Based on the median score of 57 and the average percentage of respondents who answered each question correctly, we may divide the respondents into two groups: low digital level and high digital level, who, respectively, scored below and above the median score.

Knowledge of Information and data literacy (KIDL)

The percentage of respondents who correctly answered each question is displayed in descending order under the performance of digital natives in terms of information and data literacy. The respondents' scores were higher than the median percentage but lower than those for the following categories: Browser (90.5%), Mobile Phone Components (85.7%), Information Filtering Knowledge (76.2%), Knowledge of Secondary Memory (42.9%), Types of Search Engine (38.1%), and Knowledge of Various Software and Abbreviation of KYC (71.4%), Knowledge of Financial Technology (33.3%).

Knowledge of content creation, communication , and collaboration (KCCC)

Percentage of respondents correctly answered questions about their knowledge of collaboration, communication, and creation of digital content. The respondents performed more than the median percentage in several categories, including WhatsApp features and computer tool components (95.2%), social networking sites (90.5%), technology usage and computer language knowledge (81%), Bluetooth and web application features (76.2%), and netiquette knowledge (57.1%). Social media as a business tool (52.4%), tethering knowledge (47.6%), social media optimization and blog importance (42.9%), web-based email knowledge (19%), and understanding of social media collaboration with postal service (52.4%) all received lower scores than the median.

Knowledge of safety and problem-solving (KSPS)

Percentage of respondents that correctly answered questions for safety and problem-solving. The percentage of respondents who scored above the median was 85.7% for the concept of authentication, 66.7% for knowledge of bank norms and features of cybercrime, and 57.1% for knowledge of suspicious mail. The percentage of respondents who scored below the median was 52.4% for the concept of phishing, 47.60% for knowledge of email scams, 33.3% for knowledge of text message scams, 23.8% for knowledge of voice mail scams, and 9.5% for knowledge of bogus websites. Test score was used to determine the level of digital literacy of respondents.

Hypothesis testing among levels of education and digital literacy.

H₀: The level of Education variable has a significant relationship with the level of digital literacy.

Table 3: level of education and digital literacy

Education	DL	KIDL	KCCC	KSPS
Graduate	21.08	11.46	7.85	1.77
Post Graduate	23.55	13.25	8.55	1.75
t-statistic	2.742	2.848	1.86	- 0.130
Sig.	0.007	0.005	0.65	0.897

Table 3 shows the mean scores for digital literacy of (KIDL) Knowledge of Information and Data Literacy, Knowledge of Digital Content Creation, Communication, and Collaboration (KCCC), and Knowledge of Safety and Problem-Solving. Based on demographic factors, particularly education level, to evaluate the difference in digital literacy test results using the t-test. The test reveals a significant difference between the average digital literacy score and educational level, demonstrating that postgraduate respondents have higher levels of digital literacy than graduate respondents ($t=2.742, p0.05$).

Conclusion

The objective of the research was to evaluate the level of digital literacy among the digital natives (Z-Generation), students who pursue higher education in the Tiruchirappalli District. Researchers discovered that, on average, 47% of students correctly answered questions about digital literacy, with a median score of 57. The second objective was to examine the relationship between demographic Variable and the level of digital literacy; it was discovered that there were considerable differences between graduate and post-graduate students in terms of digital literacy scores. Students who are technologically advanced from birth lack the skills to adapt to their environment. We have many opportunities in every industry, but the right person will only be able to take advantage of them if he has the necessary skills; therefore, digital skill in every field is necessary. Although the current present set of respondents is familiar with it, they do not effectively use it. Only a small percentage of respondents are so good in what they do as to defy the social norms of competence. According to the data, respondents with little digital literacy would strive hard to survive in the digital age as they encounter difficult circumstances. The performance of the current Z Generation in using digital skills for mobile phones was evaluated based on digital competency, but they must boost utilization in terms of productivity level in order to improve their standard of living.

Recommendation

A few respondents have numerous problems in their lives, including bias in their education because of the pandemic. The government and institutions should concentrate on improving students' lives in terms of digital literacy and upgrading their skills in using digital gadgets because digital natives are biased based on the digital divide that exists in our society. Programs that promote digital literacy education and awareness should be prioritized in their higher education. Learning for life benefits Individuals, companies, and our society from the positive outcome based on digital literacy as we adapt to the new normal. Success is not only dependent on technological development; it also involves the individual in utilizing the technology to improve their own lives. Therefore, one must be digitally literate to participate in the current scenario.

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