A Phenomenological Inquiry into Digital Literacy through the Experiences of a Digital Immigrant Teacher

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Abstract

Being digitally-savvy is important, but there is an even more important aspect that goes beyond simply being digitally savvy, and that is being digitally literate. This study examines the lived experiences of a digital immigrant teacher, with particular attention to the use of technology in teaching and the role of digital literacy in supporting these practices. Qualitative research, especially phenomenological research, was equipped as the research design of this study. This research was conducted at one of the senior high schools in Teluk Kuantan with one participant involved in this study. The findings highlight several key themes, including his motivation to teach, emotional resilience, professional growth, classroom technology integration, adaptation to new teaching media, awareness of digital literacy, and both the challenges and benefits of using technology. In conclusion, despite still showing characteristics of a digital immigrant, the participant was still able to integrate digital tools effectively and maintain a positive attitude toward technology. This study suggests that digital literacy should be strengthened among teachers through training and workshop so that they can not only improve their teaching practices but also guide students in becoming critical and responsible users of digital information. Moreover, the contribution of this study lies in offering practical understanding of how digital literacy shapes teaching practices in real classroom contexts. Insights can inform schools and policymakers in designing programs that respond to the needs of teachers and students in the digital era.

Keywords: *Digital Literacy; Digital Immigrants; Digital Natives; Lived Experiences; EFL*

Introduction

Human interaction with technology is getting more connected in today's digital society. Recent progress in the digital technology has affected many areas of life, including the way people communicate, find information, and use different services (Haleem et al., 2022a). This time period is known as the "digital era" or the "information technology era," and it represents a shift in society where digital technology is used more in daily life (OECD, 2019). Digital tools now make it easier for people to carry out many different activities. People can easily communicate through social media, attend seminars, take classes, and purchase goods online. All of this happens because of advances in digital technology, which give people wider and more useful access (Haleem et al., 2022a).

Furthermore, the global COVID-19 epidemic in 2019 has accelerated the development of digital technologies. As a result, many parts of life, including education, have been significantly affected. In particular, the pandemic has brought significant changes to the ways English is taught and learned. Traditional pedagogical methods are being replaced as educators adapt to using digital materials. Consequently, teachers' digital teaching skills have improved significantly (Tümen-Akyıldız et al., 2021)

While the digital age offers many benefits for English teachers, it also presents significant challenges. One of the biggest challenges is the gap between English teachers who are "digital immigrants" and students who are "digital natives" (Elaoufy, 2023). On one hand, English teachers who are not used to digital technology in the classroom often face difficulties in incorporating it into their lessons (Johnson et al., 2016) .

On the other hand, digital natives students are generally skilled in using digital tools but may lack digital literacy (Erwin & Mohammed, 2022). Another problem that has arisen in the digital age is the spread of false and irresponsible information. On social media, there is a great deal of disinformation, hate speech, and slanders (Sultanbayeva et al., 2024). This phenomenon shows that digital literacy is not only about technical skills but also about the ability to choose, analyze, and evaluate information (Gilster, 1997). In this context, English teachers need to help students become not only proficient in using digital technology but also digitally literate. To achieve this, teachers need to create teaching methods that integrate digital literacy into English language learning.

Previous studies such as (Ammade et al., 2018; Gialamas et al., 2013; Haleem et al., 2022b; Hamidah, 2021; Svensson et al., 2022) have mostly focused either on digital literacy in other disciplines or on general technology use in the classroom, while the lived experiences of digital immigrant teachers remain underexplored. This gap is important because understanding these teachers' challenges and strategies can improve how digital literacy is taught. By examining the lived experiences of teachers through phenomenological approach, this study offers insights into their perspectives, decision-making, and classroom practices. Therefore, this study aims to examine the lived experiences of a digital-immigrant teacher in teaching digital literacy to digital native students in an EFL context.

Digital-Immigrant Teachers vs. Digital-Native Students

As Prensky (2001) mentioned in his article on "Digital Natives, Digital Immigrants", Digital Immigrants are people who did not grow up in the digital age. He explained that since these so-called digital immigrants were not raised with modern technologies, they need to learn how to adapt to using digital tools. In addition, (Kurt et al., 2013) defines digital immigrants as individuals who were not born and in the digital age and are inexperienced with technology usage. Hence, they must adapt to its use for professional purposes. On the other hand, digital natives are those who are familiar with digital technology and have a natural ability to interact with it (Prensky, 2001). They are growing up in a time of rapid technological change. Moreover, the internet, social media, and mobile devices shape how they learn, communicate, and access information.

To conclude, the difference between digital natives and digital immigrants lies in their familiarity with and understanding of digital technology. Digital natives, born and raised in the digital age, are comfortable and skilled with digital tools because they have grown up using them and are innately interested in interacting with technology. Digital immigrants, on the other hand, were born before the widespread adoption of digital technology and often face challenges in adapting to and incorporating these tools into their daily lives and teaching practices.

Digital Literacy

Digital literacy is rooted in connectivism theory, which holds that knowledge exists within networks and that learning is the ability to navigate and make connections within these networks. Building on this idea, experts recognize that digital literacy is a concept with several different dimensions, as it encompasses technical skills, critical thinking, and the ability to create and share knowledge within these networks. In general, experts define digital literacy as an individual's ability to use, analyze, assess,

and actively engage in a constantly changing digital world. According to Gilster (1997), digital literacy as the ability to receive and use information presented in different formats and from various sources through computers. It also involves the ability to gather information efficiently, evaluate the quality and reliability of information sources, and present information effectively using digital tools and technology.

Meanwhile, Belshaw (2014) suggested that digital literacy is the ability to read and write. However, beneath this simple definition lies much greater depth which raises several important questions. Belshaw himself offers eight fundamentals of digital literacy that include cultural, cognitive, constructive, communicative, confident, creative, critical, and civic. Moreover, he explained that these elements are all important, however some may be more relevant in certain situations. He also noted that the cultural element should be considered first to emphasize the role of context. Furthermore, Eshet (2002) defined digital literacy as the ability that involves a combination of cognitive, social, and technical skills that help individuals meet their needs.

Overall, digital literacy includes mastery of digital technology, understanding digital information, thinking critically and creatively, and being aware of its social, cultural, and ethical impacts. As technology develops and our interactions with the digital world changes, the idea of digital culture also evolves.

Are Digital-Native Students Digitally Literate by Default?

Teachers play a key role in helping students who are already digitally skilled to develop digital literacy skills. It is because becoming digitally-savvy does not necessarily mean a student is digitally literate. According to McCarron and Frydenberg (2023), today's students are skilled at using digital devices, but they lack the ability to create, assess, and share the information they encounter in both professional and informal context. Moreover, Mentzer et al. (2024) found out that although 32% students surveyed considered themselves tech-savvy. However, the results suggested that they still need to improve their digital literacy skills, particularly in collecting, managing, and assessing data quality. Moreover, the findings also pointed out that most students could only do basic tasks and needed guidance, except in interpretation, where they performed slightly better.

In this way, digitally savvy students may have a high level of technological ability in using digital tools. However, digital literate students do more than just use technology. They can critically evaluate digital information, understand the social and cultural context of technology, and apply their technological knowledge and skills effectively in relevant situations.

The Role of Digital-Immigrant English Teachers in Developing Students' Digital Literacy

Digital immigrant teachers may not have the skills and knowledge to use digital technologies at first. However, they can learn these skills through proper training and professional development (Belshaw, 2014). This means that digital immigrant teachers are able to help students improve their digital literacy. They can improve their understanding of digital literacy and related areas, such as online safety, digital ethics, and the ability to create digital content. They can do this by attending training sessions and seminars or by using self-directed learning resources (Munawaroh et al., 2022).

Previous research shows that even though digital native students are naturally good at using technology, they often lack strong digital literacy skills (McCarron & Frydenberg, 2023; Mentzer et al., 2024). This means they might know how to use devices but still struggle with using them safely and effectively. In this situations, digital immigrant teachers can play an important role because they are usually have better literacy than their students (Prensky, 2001). Their roles include helping students evaluate the reliability and quality of online information (Sultanbayeva et al., 2024).They can also help students learn about online privacy, digital ethics, and how to behave responsibly on the internet (Pakpahan & Gunawati, 2023).

However, it is important to note that to guide digital native students effectively, these teachers need more than just basic literacy. They also need a good understanding of digital literacy and how to integrate them into practice.

The Implementation of Digital Literacy Skills in English Classroom

In learning English, teachers can use different strategies to help students develop their digital literacy skills. A helpful strategy is to use project-based activities that allow students to find, assess, and use online resources while English learning (Sah et al., 2024). Besides, encouraging students to work and communicate together online is another important way to help them improve their digital literacy (Kwiatkowska & Wiśniewska-Nogaj, 2022; Ojobor et al., 2021). Moreover, the ability to critically evaluate online content is also an essential part of developing English skills (Orhan, 2023; Sultanbayeva et al., 2024; Trixa & Kaspar, 2024). Teachers can help students find reliable information sources, check the accuracy of facts, and understand the significance of the knowledge they acquire.

Furthermore, motivating students to create their own digital content in English can be be an effective strategy (Iskandar et al., 2022; Nguyen & Habók, 2025). Teachers can assign projects that require students to create blogs, videos, podcasts, or digital presentations in English, which helps students develop their digital communication and creative skills. However, to help children develop the digital literacy skills needed to thrive in today's era, it is important that teachers provide students with proper guidance, training, and support throughout the learning process.

Research Method

Since the research aimed to explore and gain a deeper understanding of a Digital-Immigrant Teacher's lived experience in teaching digital literacy to digital native students in an EFL context, a qualitative phenomenological approach was employed. In addition, one participant was selected for the study using purposive sampling. He is referred to as Mr. Daniel, which is a pseudonym used to protect the anonymity and confidentiality of the research participant. Mr. Daniel is an English teacher at one of schools in Teluk Kuantan.

Moreover, there were several guided the selection of this participant. First, since the objective of the study is to find out a digital immigrant teacher's lived experience in teaching digital literacy to digital native students, the participant needed to fit the criteria of a digital immigrant teacher. It is important to note that the categorization was not based on the teacher's technological competency in the classroom. Instead, the selection was guided by Prensky's (2001) theory which defines digital immigrants as individuals born before 1980. Accordingly, one participant from the school who met this criterion was purposely selected.

Another reason for choosing a single participant is that qualitative research does not require a specific number of participants. Moreover, since qualitative descriptive research design was employed in this study, an in-depth interview was conducted to facilitate data collection. Furthermore, to analyze the data, this study used Creswell and Creswell's (2018) steps of data analysis, which include data organization and preparation, data review, data coding, theme identification, theme interpretation, presentation of findings, and validation of accuracy. Lastly, the findings will be presented in a narrative form.

Finding and Discussion

Description of Teachers' Lived Experience

His name is Daniel. The interview with Daniel was conducted on November 20th, 2024, at one of the Islamic schools in Teluk Kuantan, Kuantan Singingi. The session was initially scheduled for 19th but

had to be postponed due to heavy rain. Daniel, who was born in 1980 and is currently 45 years old, serves as an English Teacher at MAN ABC. He apparently has been teaching in MAN ABC since 2011. Before teaching in his current school, he used to teach in two Senior High Schools in Teluk Kuantan namely SMAN ABC Teluk Kuantan and SMA ABC Kuantan Mudik.

When asked about his reason for becoming a teacher, Daniel explained that his decision to study English Education was initially influenced by his parents' suggestion, as he was uncertain about his future major. Despite his limited background in English, he gradually developed motivation through the support of his classmate, who later become his wife, and this encouraged him to pursue a career as an English teacher. As he recounted:

... Honestly, I never imagined I would enter the English Education program, let alone become an English teacher. Back then, I did not know which major to choose at university. My parents, who are both teachers, suggested that I take English, and I followed their advice... Up to the third semester, I still wondered if I had made the right decision because I had no background in English, except what I had learned from elementary to high school. Eventually, I became close to a classmate who later became my wife. From that point, I felt more motivated to study harder and decided to become an English teacher...

Daniel reflected on his early experiences as an English teacher and said they were both enjoyable and challenging. He felt happy when students appreciated his lessons and took part in the activities. At the same time, he admitted that he was worried they might get bored or not understand his explanations. He recalled:

…Of course, I felt happy, but I also felt nervous and a bit scared. I was happy when the material I taught was well received… on the other hand, I also felt worried if the students got bored with my teaching style or if the material I delivered was not understood well by them.

In addition, in his first years of teaching, many of his lesson plans did not go as expected, and this often left him frustrated. To address this, he began preparing alternative lesson plans, a bit he continues to maintain. He concluded that "experience is the best teacher… Sometimes plans just do not work out, and that's okay. There is always plan B, C, or even Z".

He expressed that his teaching experience remained largely similar over time, although it became more demanding during the COVID-19 pandemic. The sudden shift to remote learning required teachers to strengthen their technological skills. As he shared, "Actually, it is almost the same, but now it is more about challenges, especially when covid happened. Teaching became remote. On top of that, we also had to be able to master technology. So, it's something like that"

After sharing his teaching experiences, he was asked about his understanding of the notion of digital immigrant and digital native. He admitted that he first encountered these terms when he was invited to participate in the research. He explained that he even had to search for the meaning of digital immigrant to understand it better. He added that through this process he realized he belongs to the digital immigrant category, and he jokingly questioned whether that meant he was digitally illiterate.

In this case, to avoid confusion, Daniel was informed that being a digital immigrant did not mean being digitally illiterate. The term was used as a way to differentiate between people born before and after technology became common. Once he understood this explanation, the discussion continued to talk about his understanding of digital literacy. He said that he had already been familiar with the term digital literacy for a long time.

The interview then focused on his views about digital literacy in Indonesia. According to him, the level of digital literacy in Indonesia was still relatively low. He shared that he had long been familiar with the idea of digital literacy. He thought that digital literacy in Indonesia was still relatively low. He also

said the national index was around 3.3 or 3.5 out of five. According to him, this happened because not everyone has the same access to technology, and many people have limited skills to use, understand, and evaluate digital information critically. He emphasized that the core of digital literacy lies in the ability to use, evaluate, and share information in a critical manner. He also underlined how important it is to master technology. As he explained:

I think I first heard the term digital literacy quite a long time ago…As far as I know, digital literacy in Indonesia is still relatively low… the ability of people to evaluate and create information critically is relatively low too … I recommend that students and teachers master technology, especially for online teaching and distance learning.

He further said that in his school they mainly used two platforms: the e-learning system from the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Google Meet as the main tools for teaching. For him this meant that teachers in the madrasah had no excuse not to improve their digital competence, especially since most students were already tech-savvy. He concluded that if his students could adapt to technology, then he could as well.

Furthermore, Daniel expressed that he frequently used digital technology in his teaching, with the e-learning application playing a central role during the pandemic. He said that e-learning was an application launched by the Ministry of Religious Affairs, and its latest version offered more advanced and effective features than before. The platform offered not only online meetings tools but also options for sharing videos, audio, pictures, and documents. In addition, he also mentioned that, in some cases, he combined it with Google Meet or google to support learning activities.

The interview kept continuing as he explained the challenges faced by both teachers and students in the teaching and learning process during this pandemic and how to deal with it. He stated that he realized that not all students were capable to own a smartphone, but he was glad that all students in class twelve had smartphones. He said that the challenge might be because of lack of data package. But that was already solved as the minister of religious affairs gave subsidies for data packages to students every semester. In addition, he added that to reduce the use of package data, he would also use WhatsApp for teaching. Furthermore, he pointed out that if students' connections were still low, he would suggest them to go to their family's houses which had a better connection.

Furthermore, Daniel reflected on his experience teaching digital native students who were already skilled in technology. He admitted that the gap between teachers and students sometimes made him feel inadequate, but he saw it as a motivation to improve his technology skills. One way he did this was by learning from his students, such as how to edit videos. At the same time, he emphasized the importance of guiding students to use technology productively so it would benefit rather than harm them. He also noted the risk of students misusing technology, such as spreading misinformation and cheating. To minimize this, he applied strict submission schedules. As he explained:

For assignment, I usually base the task on the class schedule…For example, if my class is from 7:15 to 9:00, students are not allowed to submit after 9:00. When I use Google Classroom… student can only upload within a specific window…This is set to manage timely submission.

When asked whether the strategy applied was effective or not, Daniel answered that he could not make sure whether or not the strategy he applied was effective to prevent students from cheating. However, he pointed out that they, the teachers, always gave advice to and reminded them to always obey and be pious of God. Besides, he always emphasized to his students that cheating and spreading hoaxes were not allowed and forbidden in Islam. Thus, with that emphasis, he believed that although it was not 100% successful, at least there would be self-awareness coming from them and made them not cheat and spread hoaxes.

Continuing his story, Daniel Shared that he did not find difficulty in implementing digital technology in his classroom, as everything generally worked well. He believed that he was able to adapt to technology effectively and noted, "Alhamdulillah, for the use of technology, whether social media or e-learning… there are no major problems". Even so, if given the choice, preferred offline class over online class ones. He explained that in offline classes, he could directly interact and see the obstacles students faced, unlike in online learning where problems such as unstable internet connection or limited storage sometimes caused his device to lag. As he said, "…I prefer offline classes because I can directly monitor and interact with students…". Nevertheless, although he preferred offline classes more, it did not mean he disliked online classes. He stated that if students requested a hybrid model, he would be open to it.

Moreover, knowing that digital literacy was closely related to analyzing, evaluating, and sharing data, Daniel was asked if he ever encouraged his students to share information wisely and critically. His answer was yes. He explained that whenever he gave assignments, he always asked his students to include references in their work. Besides, he emphasized that he encouraged his students to read the sources he provided in order to prevent them from accessing misleading information or hoaxes.

Furthermore, when asked about his approach to teaching English speaking in the classroom, he then gave examples when he taught reports to his students. He said that when he taught about reporting to his students, he asked his students to record themselves and report about their activities in monologue. The first thing he did was ask students to search about the places they wanted to report. While reporting the places, he asked the students to tell them what was good about the place, the facilities provided, as well as the ticket entrance of the place.

After explaining his teaching practices in the classroom, Daniel described the benefits of implementing technology in his lessons. He narrated that although it initially felt awkward, it did not take him long to get used to it and eventually enjoy the process. He shared that he gained many benefits from implementing technology in the classroom. Moreover, since his profession required him to master various skills, including creating his own learning media, he was compelled to learn how to make and edit videos independently. As a result, he became familiar with video editing, utilizing applications such as Kinemaster, using greenscreen, and removing background.

Furthermore, he expressed that he could not tell whether teachers' digital competency in MAN ABC was already on par with their students because there should be a test to measure it. Besides, he also shared that every teacher had different capabilities in using technology. However, if he was asked about his individual capability in using technology. He could confidently say that he could have been on par with his students now. At least, if schools asked him to make learning media by using technology, he still could adapt easily to it. Not only that, since Daniel said he also taught in Universitas Terbuka for these past five years, it also enabled him to learn and explore more about technologies to use for teaching. Daniel added that he used Microsoft Team and LMS to teach his students at Universitas Terbuka. In addition, Daniel also revealed that he used to teach his students by using Instagram. It was when he taught his student about captioning. During the teaching caption, he said that he asked his students to upload a picture and then give a caption according to the picture they uploaded. Next time, he will try to use TikTok or Instagram reels in teaching speaking.

Interpretation of Digital Immigrant Teacher's Experience

This section presents the interpretation of digital immigrant teacher's experience in teaching digital literacy to digital native students in the EFL context.

Teacher Motivation

It is undeniable that motivation plays an important role in influencing someone's determination in reaching a goal. Motivation is what pushes someone to continue working on tasks, and it is also what drives a person to stay engaged until the goal is accomplished. From Daniel's story, it is clear that

motivation was very important in his journey to becoming a teacher. At first, he was not sure what major to choose and just followed his parents' advice to apply for English education. His doubt grew because he lacked a background in English, which made him question his decision. However, the turning point happened when he met a classmate who later became his wife. Being around her gave him a strong personal motivation to study harder and do better. He admitted that he did not want to seem incapable in front of her, and this became the reason that made him work hard.

Furthermore, motivation has a role in shaping Daniel's professional growth. In this case, external factors such as his students' abilities served as a source of motivation for him to adapt and keep learning. His motivation to keep up with his students inspired him to actively engage with technology and use it more effectively in teaching.

Emotional resilience and professional growth

Daniel expressed that emotions and professional growth are closely connected in a teacher's journey. At the beginning of his career, he experienced a mix of happiness, nervousness, and worry. He felt happy and proud when students enjoyed his lessons and gave him feedback. This motivated him and made him more confident as a teacher. At the same time, he felt nervous and worried that his students might get bored with his teaching or have trouble understanding the material, especially when the lesson plan did not go well. These feelings, however, became a turning point in his growth. Instead of giving up, he learned to make back up plans, such as plan B or C, which helped him become more organized and resilient. His reflection, "experience is the best teacher," highlights that emotional struggles and positive feelings alike have shaped his professional identity.

Technology integration in the classroom

The integration of digital media has become an essential part of teaching and learning, where technology serves both as a teaching tool and as a medium for distance learning. In this context, Daniel describes how he and his colleagues integrated different digital platforms to support both teaching and online learning, particularly during the Covid-19 pandemic. At his madrasah, the main platform used was an e-learning application provided by the Ministry of Religious Affairs. However, Daniel often combined it with other tools such as Google Meet, Google Classroom, or Microsoft Teams to overcome the limitations of the system. Moreover, for communication and task submission, Daniel often relied on practical platforms such as WhatsApp and Instagram. These practices show how he tried to make learning more engaging and adapt to the digital habits of his students. In addition, although Daniel admitted that he was not yet fully familiar with all platforms, he still showed openness to experimenting with different media and encouraged students to present their work in creative formats. For instance, activities like video projects and role-plays were uploaded on YouTube as part of English Saturday, and Instagram was introduced as a space for students to share assignments such as caption.

Technology adaptation in teaching

This theme refers to how Daniel adapted to technology in the classroom. In this case, Daniel emphasized the need for both teachers and students to master technology. In practice, he made use of simple but accessible tools such as WhatsApp groups when students lacked internet stability or devices, and he also relied on government support for internet assistance to reduce barriers. Moreover, to ensure structure and discipline, he used Google Classroom to set clear time limits for assignments. At the same time, he valued flexibility by combining online and offline learning whenever possible, depending on the situation.

It is easy to assume that digital natives can easily adapt to every new technology in this digital era. However, how about Daniel, who was born before the digital era? Would it be easy for him to adapt to current technology? This finding showed that adapting to new technology was quite challenging for Daniel. Nevertheless, instead of avoiding technology which he admitted was difficult, he maintained a

positive attitude and believed that he needed to master it. In conclusion, although Daniel can be categorized as a digital immigrant, he was still able to keep up and adapt well to technology.

Digital literacy awareness

This finding reflects Daniel's views and practices related to digital literacy in the classroom. He understood digital literacy as the ability to use, evaluate, and share technology critically. Moreover, he acknowledged that the level of digital literacy in Indonesia is still relatively low. In his teaching, he tried to address this by guiding students not only in accessing information but also in using it responsibly. For example, to prevent cheating, he emphasized moral values by reminding students that dishonesty is haram, which hoped this ethical approach would strengthen their awareness. He also suggested reliable online sources for students, such as websites from Ministry of Religion of English learning platforms, to help them practice choosing appropriate materials. In addition, he designed tasks that required students to use digital literacy skills in creative ways, such as making a video monologue about tourist attractions and sharing them online. These practices show that Daniel viewed digital literacy as a technical skill and a combination of ethics, critical thinking and creativity in the learning process.

Technological challenges

Challenges are a natural part of being a teacher, and the Covid-19 pandemic has made them even harder. Daniel admitted that digital inequality was still a big issue because not all students had access to stable internet or proper devices. In addition, both Daniel and students were sometimes unfamiliar with some digital platforms, which caused further challenges. These challenges show that effective teaching depends not only on teaching skills but also on the ability to adapt to external constraints and the demands of technology.

Technological Benefits

Using technology in teaching also benefits teachers' professional development. Daniel's experiences showed that the shift to online learning during the pandemic created many difficulties, but it also opened opportunities for development. At first, he and other teachers had to learn how to master e-leaning applications to support distance learning. This process pushed them to stay active and independent in learning digital skills, such as making and editing videos or using applications from the Play Store. Moreover, Daniel admitted that using these tools felt challenging at the beginning, but after a while he started to enjoy the process. This suggests that learning to use technology can strengthen Daniel's creativity and confidence as well as making students more engaged.

The findings of this study highlight how crucial motivation, emotional resilience, professional growth, classroom technology integration, adaptation to new teaching media, and awareness of digital literacy in Daniel's teaching practice. His motivation, shaped by social support, aligns with Ryan and Deci's self-determination theory (2000). In addition, Daniel's emotional resilience in handling online learning shows how significance emotional stability is for effective teaching, as expressed by (Jennings & Greenberg, 2009). Moreover, his adaptation of technology, including e-learning platforms and assignment management, supports (Koehler & Mishra's (2008) model. Meanwhile, Daniel's awareness of digital literacy and critical technology use fits with the principles of 21st century skills (OECD, 2019), whereas challenges such as internet connection issues and devices limitations reflect findings by (Alsayed & Althaqafi, 2022; Emawati et al., 2024; Hattem & Lomicka, 2016).

In general, this study shows that 21st century teachers do more than just teach content. They also adapt to changes, use technology effectively, manage their emotions, and help students learn in a rapidly changing digital environment.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this study highlights Daniel's motivation, emotional resilience, and professional growth, along with his ability to adapt to technology in the classroom. Although categorized as a digital immigrant, and still has some traits of one, such as preferring offline learning, Daniel showed that he can successfully integrate digital tools into his teaching. He is not resistant to technology. He made use of accessible platforms such as WhatsApp, Instagram, Microsoft Teams, Google Classroom, and YouTube to support students. Another important point is that Daniel is aware of digital literacy. He emphasizes that digital literacy is not just about using technology, but also about how teachers and students evaluate, manage, and share information responsibly. By guiding students to use credible sources and reminding them of ethical values such as avoiding cheating, Daniel showed that digital literacy involves both technical skills and moral awareness.

However, this study has its limitations. Since it focused only on one teacher's experience, the findings may not reflect what other teachers experience in different contexts or school. In addition, the data were collected mainly through interviews, which means that the results depend on what the teacher reported and might not capture all the details of what really happens in the classroom.

Based on these limitations, future research could explore the experiences of a larger group of teachers to provide broader insights into how digital immigrants and digital natives understand the practice digital literacy in the classroom. It would also be valuable to examine students' perspectives, since their ability to search, evaluate, and use information critically is a central part of digital literacy that shapes learning outcomes and motivation. Furthermore, training programs and workshops should place stronger emphasis on developing digital literacy for teachers. This includes not only technical skills, but also the critical and ethical dimensions of literacy, so that teachers can guide students to become responsible and thoughtful users of digital information. Lastly, the contribution of this study lies in offering practical understanding of how digital literacy shapes teaching practices in real classroom contexts. Insights can inform schools and policymakers in designing programs that respond to the needs of teachers and students in the digital era.

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