

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

The integration of digital technology in education has become essential globally. While schools are increasingly equipped with digital tools, their effectiveness relies on teachers' digital literacy. In Indonesia, the recent rapid digital adoption and the current Merdeka Belajar curriculum require the active use of digital platforms to support student-centered learning. However, research indicates that the sustainability and quality of technology-enhanced learning remain inconsistent across educators due to varying levels of digital competence (Rosmayanti, 2025).

This inconsistency in technology integration is often closely related to generational differences among educators. While Prensky (2001) strict binary of “Digital Natives” versus “Digital Immigrants” has been criticized for being overly simplistic (Bennett et al., 2008), recent empirical evidence confirms that distinct generational shifts in technological adaptability still exist. Research shows that digital nativity and pedagogical tech-competence increase significantly from Generation X to Generation Z, with newer cohorts demonstrating higher effectiveness in utilizing interactive media to raise student achievement outcomes (Çoklar & Tatli, 2021; Nhu Nguyen, Ben Ost, 2025). Consequently, in schools with

a multigenerational faculty, teachers may approach the exact same digital tools with fundamentally different mindsets and pedagogical strategies.

This unique dynamic is evident at SMA Islam Al-Azhar, a prominent institution that actively invests in digital infrastructure to support its modern curriculum. The school employs a diverse demographic of teachers, ranging from senior educators (Gen X) to fresh graduates (Gen Z). Despite the school's expectation that all teachers integrate technology to improve English language teaching, preliminary observations conducted during a teaching practicum showed a clear difference. Younger teachers intuitively adopt interactive platforms to motivate students, whereas senior teachers tend to utilize technology primarily for simple, teacher-centered content delivery. As a result, students receive vastly different learning experiences depending entirely on the generation of their teacher.

Despite the critical impact of these generational differences, a substantial gap remains in the existing literature regarding how they manifest in *actual* teaching practices. Most prior studies on technology integration have focused heavily on teachers' self-efficacy, attitudes, or reported perceptions (Kadluba et al., 2025). Such research tends to rely on surveys or surface-level indicators, failing to capture the concrete instructional practices inside the classroom. High confidence does not always equate to effective pedagogy; a teacher might feel confident using a digital tool but only utilize it for low-level analog substitution rather than fostering active student engagement.

To address this gap, this study explores the generational differences in the actual use of digital tools for teaching English at Al-Azhar School, moving the academic conversation from “who is more confident” to “how instruction actually differs.” To comprehensively capture this phenomenon, the study employs a dual-lens analytical approach. The Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (TPACK) framework is used to diagnose teachers’ internal cognitive understanding and reasoning. However, since TPACK does not explicitly categorize observable actions, it is complemented by the Digital Pedagogy for Sustainable Educational Transformation (DP4SET) framework. DP4SET functions as an observational tool to specifically classify the practical pedagogical purposes of digital tool usage, such as presenting, practicing, or motivating. By combining TPACK and DP4SET, this research provides a comprehensive overview of how English teachers from different generations translate national technological demands into their daily classroom realities.

1.2 Research Questions

Based on the background of the study, this research is guided by the following research questions:

1. How do teachers from Generation X, Y, and Z use digital tools for presenting, practicing, and motivating students in English classrooms, as characterized by the TPACK framework?

2. What specific challenges do teachers from different generations face in using digital tools for teaching English?
3. What strategies do teachers from different generations use to overcome these challenges?

1.3 Purposes of the Study

The primary objective of this study is to analyze how generational differences affect the use of digital tools in English language teaching at Al-Azhar School. Specifically, this study aims:

1. To describe how teachers from Generation X, Y, and Z use digital tools (whether for presenting, practicing, or motivating) in their actual classes.
2. To identify the specific challenges that make it difficult for teachers from different generations to use digital tools effectively.
3. To explore the strategies that teachers use to overcome these challenges and meet the school's expectations.

1.4 Scope of the Study

This study focuses on the use of digital tools by English teachers at Al-Azhar School. The participants of this study are English teachers from different generations, categorized as teachers from Generation X, Y, and Z. To ensure a realistic and feasible scope, this study employs a qualitative approach involving approximately three English teachers (1 from each generational cohort). The study

specifically examines three main aspects: (1) how teachers use digital tools for presenting, practicing, and motivating; (2) the challenges they face in using these tools; and (3) The strategies they use to overcome those challenges. Methodologically, this study relies on classroom observations, interviews and photo elicitations. Therefore, this research does not aim to measure students' learning outcomes or compare curriculum effectiveness. The findings are specific to Al-Azhar School and are not intended to be generalized statistically.

1.5 Significance of the Study

1.5.1 Theoretical and Methodological Significance

Theoretically, this study enriches the existing literature on digital education by demonstrating how the Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (TPACK) framework can be effectively combined with the Digital Pedagogy for Sustainable Educational Transformation (DP4SET) framework. This dual-lens approach provides a more comprehensive model for understanding technology integration, linking teachers' internal cognitive beliefs (TPACK) directly with their external, observable classroom actions (DP4SET). Methodologically, this study introduces the use of *Participant-Generated Photo Elicitation* in ELT qualitative research. It provides empirical evidence on how visual methodologies can effectively uncover latent psychological dimensions, such as technostress and pedagogical reasoning, across generations, offering a robust alternative to conventional interview techniques.

1.5.2 Practical Significance

Practically, this study offers direct benefits to several key stakeholders within the educational ecosystem:

- 1) For English Teachers: The study helps educators at Al-Azhar School reflect on how their generational backgrounds influence their teaching styles and digital technology adoption. By mapping these differences, it encourages the creation of cross-generational peer support systems, where senior teachers can adopt dynamic digital strategies from younger colleagues, while younger teacher can learn how to balance technology with strong foundational pedagogical principles from experienced mentors.
- 2) For School Management and Policymakers: The results provide evidence-based insights into why standard digital tools are utilized differently across age cohorts. This understanding is crucial for school administrators to move away from “one-size-fits-all” professional development. instead, the management can design tailored training programs, focusing on alleviating technostress and building technical confidence for older generations, while emphasizing pedagogical depth for younger generations.
- 3) For Future Researchers: This study serves as a valuable baseline for future educational researchers. By shifting the focus from generalized “teacher perceptions” to specific “actual classroom practices” through a

generational lens and visual methodologies, it provides a solid foundation for further investigations into multigenerational school faculties in Indonesia.

1.6 Novelty of the Study

This study presents a novelty that significantly differentiates it from existing literature on technology integration in English Language Teaching (ELT). Methodologically, this research introduces the *Participant-Generated Photo Elicitation* technique as the primary stimulus in the interview process. In contrast to standard verbal interviews that currently dominate qualitative ELT research, this visual methodology empowers teachers to construct their own pedagogical narratives, thereby significantly reducing recall bias and uncovering deeper emotional and cognitive realities, such as technostress and implicit pedagogical beliefs, that are often overlooked in conventional interview settings. Furthermore, the theoretical novelty of this study lies in the unique combination of two distinct frameworks: *Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge* (TPACK) to diagnose internal cognitive understanding, and *Digital Pedagogy for Sustainable Educational Transformation* (DP4SET) to classify externally observable pedagogical actions in the classroom. This dual-lens approach effectively bridges the empirical gap between what teachers believe they know and what they actually practice in the field. Contextually, by comparing three generational cohorts (Generation X, Y, and Z) through a symmetrical 1:1:1 qualitative sample within a single institutional culture at Al-Azhar School, this study provides a focused “thick

description.” This shifts the academic discussion from mere generic demographic surveys toward uncovering the concrete, day-to-day instructional differences and adaptations across generations of educators.



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