Internet Addiction and Digital Support: Do They Support Writing?

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Abstract. This study investigates three issues: 1) English students' levels of Internet addiction, 2) the types and intensity of use of digital support in writing, and 3) the correlation between Internet addiction and digital support in writing. A total of sixty third-year English students from a private university in Malang, Indonesia, participated in this study. They responded to a Survey of Internet addiction and Self-regulated Learning with Technology at the University (SRLTU) comprising ten items. The results of the descriptive statistics analysis depict that the students are highly addicted to the Internet. Despite their high addiction to the Internet, it is unveiled that students use digital support at a moderate level. The Internet, assessment, and communication tools are the digital support students frequently use in writing. The last analysis reveals that Internet addiction and the use of digital support are not significantly correlated, meaning that students' Internet addiction does not affect their use of digital support in learning writing. The pedagogical implications of this study are presented in the last session.

Keywords: Digital Support, Internet Addiction, Writing.

1 Introduction

The rapid development of technology has undeniably transformed various aspects of life, including communication, access to information, and academic practices. However, an emerging concern is the potential influence of problematic Internet use (PIU), more popularly known as Internet addiction. Internet addiction refers to an impulsive disorder due to excessive and uncontrollable Internet use, resulting in feeling agitated if disturbed when online and withdrawal from social contact in the real world [1]. Internet addiction encompasses excessive social media use, online gaming, online shopping, and compulsive web browsing via PC, console, laptop, or mobile device [2]. The findings of a systematic study indicate an upsurge in Internet addiction among younger generations [3], [4], meaning that most are students, especially students of high schools and universities [5]. This phenomenon of Internet addiction has garnered global attention due to its potential negative impacts on students' academic

performance. Moreover, current studies convincingly prove a negative correlation between Internet addiction and academic achievement [6]–[9].

Despite the concern about the opposing sides of Internet addiction on students, it is undeniable that the Internet serves students with unlimited digital learning support. These findings imply that technological advancement can advance students' learning if used wisely. Some previous research shows that using digital technology aids students in their English learning. Students value the usage of digital support in English learning [10]. [11] report that digital support'sunderstandable input and language production activities increase students' speaking skills. Furthermore, digital support improves students' language and listening skills [12]. It can also monitor and stimulate students' writing course performance [12]–[22]. These findings suggest that digital support can help students learn writing more efficiently and achieve learning success in this digital age if it is utilized properly and effectively [23].

Considering the issues of Internet addiction and the increasing trend of using digital support for learning, this research investigated English students' Internet addiction and using digital support in writing. In addition, it examined whether Internet addiction has a significant correlation with the use of digital support in writing. The research questions are formulated below.

a. What are the EFL university students' levels of Internet addiction?
b. What is the intensity of use and types of digital support used by EFL university students in writing?
c. Is there any significant correlation between Internet addictions and the use of digital support in writing?

2   Method

2.1   Research Design

This research applied a quantitative approach using a cross-sectional study design to answer the first two research questions about the levels of Internet addiction and use of digital support. Meanwhile, a correlational design was used to examine the last research question regarding the correlation between Internet addiction and the use of digital support in writing.

2.2   Research Setting and Participants

This research was carried out in English Education Study Program at a private university in Malang, Indonesia. The total participant was 60 fifth-year English students selected based on the purposive sampling technique. The participants had passed all writing courses and experienced writing a research article. Of 60, 42 (70%) are female, and 18 (30) 30% are male students. They are 19-24 years old.

2.3 Instruments

The Self-regulated Learning with Technology at the University (SRLTU), adapted from [24] and Internet addiction surveys, was used to collect data. The questionnaire was divided into three sections: background information about the participants (e.g., age and gender), a questionnaire on Internet addiction, and digital support. The digital support questionnaire consisted of ten items on a 5-Likert scale. The Digital support questionnaire was grouped into *communication tools, repositories, social networks, production storage tools, social markers and Really Simple Syndication (RSS), multimedia, assessment, Internet, management tools,* and *other technology.* Internet addiction in this research context covered the Internet and social media.

We utilized the 5-Likert scale interpretation suggested by [25] to analyze the survey responses: 1.00-1.79 for *never*, 1.80-2.59 for *seldom,* 2.60-3.39 for *sometimes*, 3.40-4.19 for *often*, and 4.20-5.00 for *always* used. We separated the five interpretations into three categories: *never* and *seldom* indicate low, *sometimes* implies moderate, and *often* and *always* refer to high. The categorization was used to classify the levels of Internet addiction and the use of digital support.

2.4 Data Collection Procedures

Before the data collection, the targeted participants of this study were given a letter of consent. The participants responded to questionnaires distributed online via a Google Form. It took about 10 minutes to answer the online questionnaire about their Internet addiction and use of digital support in writing. To collect responses from all subjects, it took a week.

2.5 Data Analysis

The research data were analyzed using SPSS version 26. Descriptive statistics analysis was performed to answer the first two research questions related to the levels of Internet addiction, the intensity of use, and the types of digital support the English students utilize in writing. Furthermore, Pearson Correlation was used to measure whether Internet addiction and the use of digital support are significantly correlated.

3 Results and Discussion

Some statistical analyses were performed to examine the EFL university students' levels of Internet addiction, the intensity of use and types of digital support used by EFL university students in writing, and the correlation between Internet addiction and digital support. The description of the results is the following.

3.1   Results

3.1.1   EFL University Students' Levels of Internet Addiction

The first analysis deals with the students' levels of Internet addiction by determining the mean score using descriptive statistics. The analysis result is described in Table 1.

Table 1 Levels of Internet Addiction

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Internet Addiction	60	4.18	.70

The results of the descriptive statistics depict that the mean students' level of Internet addiction is 4.18. It means that their level of Internet addiction is high.

3.1.2   The Intensity of Use and Types of Digital Support

The result of descriptive statistics, shows that the general use of digital support in writing is 3.03. It means that the students' use of digital support is moderate . They sometimes make use of digital support to help them write.

Table 2 Intensity of Use and Types of Digital Support

Digital Support Types	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Rank
Management Tools	60	4.22	.88	1
Internet	60	3.90	1.10	2
Assessment	60	3.40	1.03	3
Repositories	60	3.38	1.04	4
Social Networks	60	3.33	1.04	5
Communication Tools	60	3.03	.60	6
Other Technology	60	2.90	1.22	7
Production Storage	60	2.75	1.30	8
Social Markers & RSS	60	2.73	1.27	9
Multimedia	60	1.50	.75	10
Overall		3.11		Moderate

Based on Table 2, the top   student use the *Internet*, **Assessment Tools**, and *Communication Tools*, the most frequently used digital support. They use *Other Technology*, *Production Storage*, *Social Markers, and RSS* the least frequently.

3.1.3   Correlation between Internet Addiction and Digital Support

The further analysis deals with the correlation between students' Internet addiction and their use of digital support. Pearson correlation was performed to obtain the result, as presented in Table 3.

Table 3 Correlation between Internet Addiction and Digital Support

		Digital Support	Internet Addiction
Digital Support	Pearson Correlation	1	.002
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.987
	N	60	60
Internet Addiction	Pearson Correlation	.002	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.987	
	N	60	60

Table 3 depicts that the significant value is .987, which exceeds .05. the correlation between Internet addiction and digital support is insignificant. In other words, the levels of Internet addiction do not significantly affect the use of digital support.

3.2   Discussion

This research explores issues related to the EFL university students' levels of Internet addiction, the intensity of use and types of digital support they use in writing, and the correlation between Internet addictions and digital support in writing.

Based on the abovementioned findings, the students are highly addicted to the Internet. This finding approves that younger people [3], [4], exceptionally high school and university students, are at risk of high Internet addiction [5], [26]. It aligns with a report that school and university students have a positive attitude and good Internet skills [27]. Conversely, a previous survey report indicates that students' addiction to the Internet and social media ranges from mild to moderate, with only a few experiencing severe addiction [28]. The previous research was conducted two years ago during Covid-19. It might indicate that students' Internet addiction is increasing over time, as [29] concluded.

Unfortunately, high Internet addiction does not go along with using digital support, which is at a moderate level. It is not a surprising finding given that prior research has shown that despite being avid users of digital technology, university stu-

dents infrequently use digital support when writing [24]. Additionally, it has been claimed that only proficient students use digital support for learning [11]. In writing, digital support is used to perform basic tasks like brainstorming, translating, and checking for plagiarism [30]. The *Internet*, *Assessment*, and *Communication Tools* are the most frequently used digital support. Again, it confirms that the students use digital support for simple tasks, i.e., browsing certain websites for brainstorming and reviewing materials, online dictionaries ,and translators for translating, and online chatting platforms for communicating with peers. Meanwhile, they use *Other Technology*, *Production Storage*, *Social Markers , and RSS* the least frequently. Most students seem unfamiliar with the three types of digital support. Insufficient knowledge of digital support platforms hinders students from optimally using the available digital support [31].

This last finding reports an insignificant correlation between Internet addiction and the use of digital support. As discussed earlier, the students are highly addicted to the Internet, while they use digital support in writing moderately. It denotes that students have not used the Internet for learning despite their high Internet addiction. It is reasonable since they use digital support mainly for reading websites, downloading/streaming movies, playing computer games, and chatting with peers [9]. It also reported that most students' online time was spent on social media [3]. Again, learning is not the purpose of their digital or online activities. This finding infers students' lack of digital literacy, as concluded by [32], and indicates students' inability to transfer their digital skills to the learning context [33]. Higher degrees of digital literacy benefitted students' academic performance regarding the high output of learning outcomes [34]. Moreover, when it comes to writing, myriad digital support is available and has been proven to facilitate students' learning [12]–[22].

4   Conclusions and Recommendations

The finding that EFL university students are highly addicted to the Internet is unsurprising since they were born in a digital age and named digital natives. Unfortunately, their privilege as digital natives does not guarantee that they can use digital support for learning, as proven by their moderate use of digital support. These findings suggest that students must explore their Internet use to get pleasure and simultaneously elevate their learning. Teachers' role, especially writing teachers, is undoubtedly critical to promote students' digital literacy by introducing and engaging their students with various digital support when performing writing tasks. Teachers are demanded to provide ICT-based instruction in the writing classroom. To this end, future research is suggested to examine the effect of ICT-based intervention in a writing class. It is also necessary to involve writing achievement in the analysis using ex-post facto andcorrelational research.

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