

ASSESSING ENGLISH STUDENTS' DIGITAL LITERACY IN THESIS WRITING

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Abstrak: Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menentukan kompetensi literasi digital mahasiswa dalam menggunakan alat digital yang berfokus pada ChatGPT dan Mendeley dalam penulisan skripsi di Universitas PGRI Sumatera Barat yang dilihat dari tiga komponen: literasi informasi, literasi media, dan literasi TIK. Jenis penelitian ini adalah metode campuran dengan analisis deskriptif. Penelitian ini berfokus pada pengumpulan data dari 7 mahasiswa Bahasa Inggris yang terdaftar pada tahun 2020. Dalam pengumpulan data, wawancara dan rubrik digunakan untuk memperoleh data tentang literasi digital mahasiswa. Data yang dikumpulkan dianalisis secara kualitatif (wawancara) dan kuantitatif (rubrik) menggunakan perhitungan Excel. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa literasi digital mahasiswa terhadap ChatGPT dan Mendeley dikategorikan baik namun dalam category baik yang masih di level rendah berdasarkan tiga komponen literasi digital. Berdasarkan hasil tersebut, meskipun dikategorikan baik, terdapat waktu dimana mahasiswa dapat meningkatkan literasi digital mereka hingga menjadi kategori sangat baik. Berdasarkan kondisi ini, lembaga pendidikan sebaiknya mengintegrasikan literasi digital sebagai komponen inti dalam program pelatihan mereka, dengan memasukkan kursus khusus tentang literasi informasi, media, dan TIK.

Kata Kunci : *ChatGPT, Literasi Digital, Alat Digital, Mendeley, Writing Thesis*

Introduction

In today's globalized world where writing is one of the most demanding tasks students face, and writing a thesis is an integral part of this process, requiring advanced writing skills and proficiency (Murray & Sarah, 2006). Writing a thesis is part of academic writing. Academic writing is a type of writing used in academic contexts such as schools, universities, and research institutions. At the university level, especially universities in Indonesia have a requirement that students who want to complete their studies must do scientific research (Turmudi, 2020). This includes various forms of writing such as essays, research papers, journal articles, scientific reports, and theses. Basic academic writing skills such as organization of ideas, use of evidence, critical analysis, and formal writing style are essential in thesis writing. A thesis is academic writing and is very different from other types of writing. As such, writing thesis is a specialized

form of academic writing that demands more in-depth research and analysis as well as a highly structured and formal presentation (Lestari, 2020).

This study used (Trilling & Fadel, 2009) theory to assess English students' digital literacy through the use of ChatGPT and Mendeley in this study. Information literacy was evaluated by students' ability to frame questions and assess AI responses on ChatGPT, as well as in academic reference management on Mendeley. Media literacy was demonstrated through an understanding of content bias in ChatGPT and academic media analysis in Mendeley, while ICT literacy was reflected by students' skills in using these two tools to support their academic work. This approach provides deep insights into students' digital literacy skills and helps educators develop instructional strategies to prepare students for the demands of the digital age.

The primary focus of this study is on students' digital literacy in writing a thesis, especially in the use of digital tools such as ChatGPT, Mendeley, and Grammarly. This research will be conducted by involving English students at Universitas PGRI Sumatera Barat, registered in 2020, To find out students' digital literacy in writing their thesis.

In the 21st century, the digital landscape has dramatically transformed the way we interact with information. Digital literacy, a critical competency, extends beyond the basic ability to read and write; it encompasses the skillful use of digital tools to create, communicate, and collaborate in the digital environment. For students, particularly those studying English, digital literacy is pivotal in their academic journey, especially when it comes to writing theses. Within this scope, answer of the following questions has been sought, the research questions are:

1. How is students' digital literacy in using ChatGPT in writing a thesis?
2. How is students' digital literacy in using Mendeley in writing a thesis?

Digital Literacy

Digital literacy is an individual's ability to operate digital tools and use them in a safe, wise, and productive way (Pegrum et al., 2022). Then, (Gilster, 2007) expands the concept of digital literacy as the ability to understand and use information from various digital sources. In other words, the ability to read, write, and relate to information using technology and formats that existed then. One theory that can explain the formation of digital literacy is the conception from (Trilling & Fadel, 2009) that connects digital literacy with computer literacy and information literacy. When described more closely, the concept of digital literacy according to Trilling and

Fadel's theory is composed of 3 components: information literacy, media literacy, and ICT literacy. The three digital literacies competency intended are detailed in Table 1.

No	Digital Literacy aspect	Indicator
1	Information literacy	Ability to obtain information from reliable sources quickly and effectively; ability to assess the information carefully and intelligently; and ability to use and manage information correctly to address learning objectives.
2	Media literacy	Ability to compare information from various sources and check and evaluate the source's credibility.
3	ICT literacy	Ability to compile digital content or Fitur. This skill is a key competency in digital literacy and involves assembling information or knowledge.

Adopted: (Trilling & Fadel, 2009)

Table 1 Digital literacy components

Furthermore, (Trilling & Fadel, 2009) Digital literacy is defined by three main components: Information literacy, Media literacy, and ICT literacy. For English language students, information literacy includes locating, evaluating, and using digital information effectively. Media literacy involves understanding and critically analyzing different forms of media, including digital texts and social media content. Meanwhile, ICT literacy includes skills in using digital tools for learning and communication, from basics such as word processing to advanced capabilities such as learning management systems.

Digital Tools

Digital tools are devices or applications used to perform various tasks or activities digitally. They can be software, web applications, or even hardware designed to assist users in activities ranging from productivity and creativity to communication and collaboration (Andina et al., 2019). Digital tools and artificial intelligence (AI) are both technologies that are often used to improve efficiency and effectiveness in various tasks, including in writing a thesis (Fitria, 2023).

Artificial intelligence (AI) refers to the field of computer science that focuses on creating intelligent systems capable of performing tasks that typically require human intelligence, such as language processing and error detection (Cummings et al., 2024). Several digital tools can aid students in the thesis writing process, such as ChatGPT, QuillBot, Resoomer, Turnitin, Grammarly, Mendeley, and DeepL (Chen, 2023). However, in this research, the researcher only

focuses on ChatGPT and Mendeley because these two tools are among the most widely used by students.

ChatGPT

Digital tools or what is called the ChatGPT AI System (<https://chat.openai.com/>) (Generative Pre-trained Transformer) ChatGPT is a digital tool that collects various information from journals, articles, newspapers that have been published on the internet and then Chat GPT will summarize it. Students only need to find the related information needed by writing it or asking in the search field in chat GPT and easily chat GPT will provide the solutions and information we want. With the existence of chat GPT, students do not need to search separately for the desired information when we ask the appropriate questions chat GPT will display the results of the questions we ask in detail (Eke, 2023).

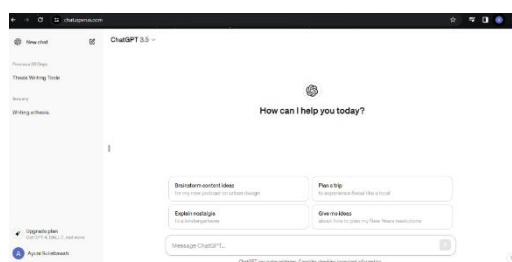


Fig 1. ChatGPT

Mendeley

Mendeley (<https://www.mendeley.com/>) is a tool that helps in generating citations. Mendeley can collect, organize, and share references more efficiently, and reduce citing citations, Mendeley's integration with Microsoft Word helps in writing citations and bibliographies, ensuring that all sources cited in a thesis are accurately reflected in the bibliography (Kusumaningsih, 2018). Mendeley will help students save books or journals to use as sources for their writing, make citing sources in writing texts easy, and help students save time because there is no need to cite and create a bibliography manually.

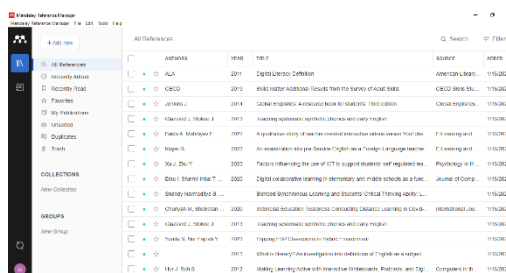


Fig.2 Mendeley

Eventually, this research specifically focuses on ChatGPT and Mendeley for several reasons. ChatGPT is an advanced AI tool that significantly improves the quality and efficiency of writing by providing suggestions, generating content, and refining language usage. By concentrating on these two tools, this research aims to provide a detailed analysis of how AI-powered digital tools can specifically help students in thesis writing, such as generating high-quality content and managing references effectively. This focus enables an in-depth understanding of students' digital literacy in thesis writing.

Writing Thesis

Activities in writing the thesis

A thesis is a research project carried out by a graduate student, either at the undergraduate or graduate level, using an advisor dosage as one of the final steps before presenting the results of study (Turmudi, 2020). Writing a thesis in English is not an easy task; understand that English requires a large vocabulary and the ability to use language correctly and concisely. This thesis has to be completed and show the results of the existing problem. To facilitate thesis writing activities, students at this time do not need to worry, because in modern times like today, there are so many digital tools that students can use to facilitate their activities (Abrar et al., 2023). modern digital tools such as ChatGPT and Mendeley greatly simplify this process. ChatGPT helps with support for brainstorming, drafting, and refining the text, while Mendeley makes it easy to systematically manage and organize references.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research employs a mixed-methods approach, combining qualitative and quantitative research methods to find the research question how students' digital literacy in using ChatGPT and Mendeley in writing thesis. The population of this research is the English students at Universitas PGRI Sumatera Barat. The sample used in this research is a group of 7 students from department English language registered in 2020 who are currently in the process of writing a thesis. This study used two instruments, namely semi-structured interviews and an Assessment rubric for Digital Literacy Competency. The Participants will be invited to participate in a semi-structured interview. The interviews will be conducted face-to-face. After that, participants will be asked to demonstrate their use of various digital tools (such as ChatGPT and Mendeley) in their thesis writing process. The researcher observes and assess their performance using the rubric. The scores from the rubric will be categorized based on this table 2.

<p>Penilaian:</p> <p>Skor Total: 24</p> <p>Nilai: $\frac{\text{Score yang diperoleh}}{\text{score total}} \times 100$</p>	<p>Score category:</p> <p>81 – 100: Excellent</p> <p>66 – 79: Good</p> <p>56 – 65: Fair</p> <p>40 – 55: Less</p> <p>0 – 39: Bad</p> <p>Adopted :(Suharsimi, 2020)</p>
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Table 2. score category table

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This research begins with conducting short interview to conducted to find whether students use digital tools such as ChatGPT and Mendeley in writing their thesis. After that, researcher took several samples of students who used these digital tools and conducted interview again by asking several questions related to the use of digital tools (ChatGPT and Mendeley) in their writing process. After conducting interviews, participants were asked to show how they used ChatGPT and Mendeley and researcher assessed using a rubric for how they operated these digital tools. The result of the study are follows:

1. Students' digital literacy in using ChatGPT

The students demonstrate a comprehensive approach to digital literacy using ChatGPT in writing thesis. They integrate information literacy, media literacy, and ICT literacy by critically evaluating and cross-referencing information from ChatGPT with credible sources in Mendeley. Additionally, they effectively navigate technical challenges and utilize ChatGPT's features, indicating they are well-equipped to use digital tools in their academic research.

No	Component	Score
Information literacy		
1.	Kemampuan Pencarian dan Pengumpulan Informasi	75
2.	Kemampuan Evaluasi dan Pemilihan Informasi	63
Average		69
Media literacy		
3.	Kemampuan Pemahaman tentang Sumber Media	67
4.	Kemampuan Kritis terhadap Konten Media	67
Average		67
ICT literacy		
5.	Kemampuan Mengoperasikan Alat Digital	67
6.	Kemampuan menjaga Keamanan dan Etika Digital	66
Average		67
Final Average		68

Table 3. students' digital literacy in using ChatGPT

Overall, based on the transcript and can be seen from the rubric above the student's digital literacy in using ChatGPT for writing their thesis by effectively integrating information literacy, media literacy, and ICT literacy. They critically evaluate the accuracy, relevance, and objectivity of information generated by ChatGPT by cross-referencing it with credible academic sources in Mendeley. Additionally, they are adept at navigating technical challenges and utilizing ChatGPT features to enhance their writing process is categorized as “good” with an average score (68).

2. Students' digital literacy in using Mendeley

The students demonstrate a comprehensive approach to digital literacy using Mendeley in writing thesis. They integrate information literacy, media literacy, and ICT literacy by critically cross-referencing source article or journal that used. Additionally, they effectively navigate technical challenges and utilize mendeley features, indicating they are well-equipped to use digital tools in their academic research.

No	Component	Score
Information literacy		
1.	Kemampuan Pencarian dan Pengumpulan Informasi	71
2.	Kemampuan Evaluasi dan Pemilihan Informasi	63
Average		67
Media literacy		
3.	Kemampuan Pemahaman tentang Sumber Media	67
4.	Kemampuan Kritis terhadap Konten Media	67
Average		67
ICT literacy		
5.	Kemampuan Mengoperasikan Alat Digital	58
6.	Kemampuan menjaga Keamanan dan Etika Digital	67
Average		63
Final Average		66

Table 4. students' digital literacy in using Mendeley

Overall, based on the transcript and can be seen from the rubric above the student's digital literacy in using Mendeley for writing their thesis by effectively integrating information literacy, media literacy, and ICT literacy. Additionally, they are adept at navigating technical challenges and utilizing Mendeley features to enhance their writing process is categorized as "good" with an average score (66).

Students' digital literacy competence in using digital tools (ChatGPT and Mendeley) is included in the "good" criteria in 2020 English students at PGRI University of West Sumatra. This can be shown in the data that has been processed and calculated based on predetermined criteria in Table 2.

Competence type	Components	ChatGPT	Mendeley
Digital literacy	Information literacy	69	67
	Media literacy	67	67
	ICT literacy	67	68
Final Average		68	66
Criteria		Good	Good

Table 5. students' digital literacy

Finally, the results of the interviews and rubric show that the English students registered in 2020 at Universitas PGRI Sumatera Barat have fairly "good" digital literacy based on the three main components: information literacy, media literacy, and ICT literacy. This research supports those findings by showing that students at Universitas PGRI Sumatera Barat

have good digital literacy but good in the low level, in the use of tools such as Mendeley and ChatGPT to improve thesis writing. The critical awareness and effective utilization of these tools reflect the benefits that have been outlined in previous research. However, this study also provided new insights, particularly in identifying the need for further development in validating and comparing information from multiple sources. This nuance adds to existing research by highlighting specific areas that need to be improved so that students' digital literacy can be upgraded from good to excellent, which in turn enables them to produce higher-quality academic work.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION 1. CONCLUSION

- Digital Literacy Skills

English students registered in 2020 at Universitas PGRI Sumatera Barat showed good but in the low-level digital literacy, particularly in information, media, and ICT literacy. They effectively verified the credibility and accuracy of information from tools like ChatGPT and Mendeley.

- Comparison with Previous Studies

Unlike past research that highlighted gaps in digital literacy, this study found that students today have a more advanced understanding and application of these skills, especially in critical evaluation and use of digital tools.

- Focus on Practical Application:

This study emphasizes practical use of digital literacy, contrasting with previous research that focused more on theoretical knowledge. The students demonstrated the ability to apply digital tools effectively in academic work when provided with the right resources and guidance.

- Importance of Ongoing Development:

This study highlights the need for continuous development in digital literacy, particularly in practical aspects, through targeted training programs to help students succeed in digital academic environments.

- Future Research

Future studies should explore ways to further enhance students' digital literacy skills to ensure they are well-equipped for the demands of the digital academic world.

2. SUGGESTIONS

Based on the research findings, several recommendations can be made to enhance digital literacy among students. Educational institutions should integrate digital literacy as a core component in their training programs, incorporating specific courses on information, media, and ICT literacy. Training programs should also offer experiential learning opportunities, such as internships, exchange programs, and fieldwork in academic settings that heavily utilize digital tools, allowing students to apply theoretical knowledge in real-world contexts. Additionally, continuous resources and support, including advanced digital literacy training and practical exercises, should be provided to better prepare students for academic challenges in the digital era. For future research should explore further ways to strengthen this ability, ensuring that students can effectively use technology in their academic activities.

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