



Investigating Teachers' Role in Enhancing EFL Classroom in the Digital Era: Indonesian High School Students' Voices

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ABSTRACT

The objective of this study is to explore the role of English teachers in the digital age with a qualitative case study by interviewing six Indonesian high school students. They were selected because they frequently use social media for enhancing their English. Individual interviews were conducted to gain an in-depth understanding of their perspectives. The findings indicate that the accessibility of social media significantly helps students in learning English. However, the teacher maintains to be the primary source of knowledge in EFL classes. In case students do not comprehend the topic being taught, they search for further explanations on social media. Students also use social media to improve their English language skills. Meanwhile, students are more comfortable when learning through social media because they can use search engine tools to look up any topic without feeling embarrassed about asking questions. The conclusion reached by the research is that the role of teachers is limitless in the classroom based on the findings. The study recommends that English teachers integrate social media into EFL classrooms and create an enjoyable environment so that students can participate thoroughly.

Keywords: Digital Era; EFL Classroom; Students' Voices; Teachers' Role

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INTRODUCTION

The rapid distribution of information through technology indicates that life in a particular place has entered the digital era. The digital era allows humans to communicate with others even when they are countless miles apart using the medium of ICT (Information and Communications Technology) (Lee, 2021). ICT has a significant impact on many aspects of life. One area of life that has benefited significantly from this is education. Education plays a crucial part in maintaining the framework of society (Hayes & Mcallister, 2009). Therefore, it matters to be able to increase educational quality. As we get to the digital era with increasingly advanced ICT, education must be dynamic in order to stay forward (Vandeyar, 2021). One advantage of using ICT in education is that it makes it easier for teachers and students to discover materials to study as well as learn English.

English is an international language that is spoken around the world (Tajeddin et al., 2021). It is clear that English is important in conveying information in this digital age. Consequently, proficiency in English is essential for everyone in order to establish many aspects of life, especially for the growth economy (Chen et al., 2020). Learning English is not difficult in this digital era, especially with the rapid development of ICT. This is beneficial to both teachers and students. However, it is also a challenge for teachers. In schools, teachers played an important role (Gilpin & Bekkerman, 2012). However, the role of the teacher may now be replaced by the development of ICT, particularly the development of social media. Many factors contribute to this, including students who feel they cannot understand the teacher's explanation and thus decide to use alternative social media platforms such as YouTube to learn. Therefore, it is necessary for teachers to be able to develop their teaching skills while also mastering ICT to support the learning process (Starkey, 2019).

Many previous studies investigated how learners use social media to learn English. Wang & Chen (2019) discovered that students use YouTube in order to find English study resources. Gulzar et al., (2021) discovered that social media experienced a good impact on student creativity. Other research has found that using mobile apps makes students happy and makes them enjoy learning English (Sadiq et al., 2019). One of the perspectives of Arab students choose to use Twitter as an application in language learning (Aloraini & Cardoso, 2020). A review of the literature research shows that the scientific community is becoming increasingly interested in the use of social media as a tool for language learning and instruction (Barrot, 2021).

Based on the findings of the previous studies above, social media has a positive impact on the process of learning languages in the digital era. Therefore, it is essential to apply ICT more efficiently. However, the realities in Indonesia show that ICT is still not proportionally used in EFL classes. In this study, the researcher intended to analyse the role of teachers in the EFL classroom from the perspective of students. This is based on the phenomenon that, in today's digital era, students can quickly access the material they seek to learn using social media. Therefore, the research question for this study is "How do students view teachers' roles in teaching English as a foreign language in the digital era?". With this research, it is expected that it can become new knowledge that is useful for everyone who learns English, especially EFL teachers, in order to find out students' views on the role of teachers in teaching so that it can become a reflection for EFL teachers in order to improve teaching skills in line with the current times.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Teachers' role in enhancing EFL Classroom

In the beginning, books are one of the resources used by teachers while teaching EFL. The way textbook content is delivered is influenced by teachers' beliefs. Therefore, it is important to shape teachers' views so that the lessons can be effectively taught to the students (X. Zhang, 2020). For students in the classroom, the teacher's excitement and enjoyment are crucial. This is due to the fact students perceive learning as enjoyable, which builds connection and attracts academic attention (Liu et al., 2021). Currently, we all enter

the digital era where the development of the internet and technological advancements have transformed language pedagogy, particularly in EFL classrooms. EFL teachers are compelled to include technology in the teaching of languages in order to teach students who become digital natives. Teachers should be skilled about how to incorporate technology into the teaching and learning process since it can encourage students to be creative and interested (Haswani, 2014). Furthermore, it is crucial for teachers to provide students with the skills necessary for language mastery since EFL teaching has shifted from stressing the product of teaching to the process of learning and following students in the classroom. In order to help students improve their skills in speaking, listening, reading, writing, vocabulary, and grammar, teachers should always explore for new ways and techniques (Benzerroug, 2021).

Learning English in the Digital Era

Humans are approaching the digital era in the 21st century, where technology will make life easier for everybody. In this era, students are encouraged to bring their digital lives into the classroom so that teacher can work toward these goals in ways that matter to them and support them (Ohler, 2012). R. Zhang & Zou (2020) stated in their research that four primary goals and benefits of advanced technologies: encouraging practice, disseminating knowledge, fostering interaction, and changing instructional strategies. Additionally, these advanced tools have been integrated into a number of language teaching and learning contexts, which has a positive general effect. In addition, students enjoy using technology, such as applications. This demonstrates that mobile apps can successfully teach English (Sadiq et al., 2019). Furthermore, the widespread use of technology ensures that education is maintained throughout the pandemic (Wahyuningsih & Afandi, 2023; Wahyuningsih & Kusumaningrum, 2022). Students and teachers now have experience using technology in the classroom due to the post-pandemic situation. The future of teaching English as a foreign language could be significantly impacted by the usage of apps as an alternative to traditional classroom-based teaching (Chik, 2014)

METHOD

This qualitative case study was conducted in a senior high school on the most populous island of Indonesia (Java). We selected a school based on information obtained from the College Entrance (Test Institute Lembaga Tes Masuk Perguruan Tinggi) (LTMPPT) 2022, where the school is one of the top-ranked schools in Central Java. We chose a public school where electronic media is more widely used in learning. Furthermore, the school is authorized "A" by the Indonesian National Accreditation Body (INAB) and offers classrooms for an overachiever program as well as a boarding school dormitory to support students in improving their English language skills. We went to the school and talked with the principals about getting permission and recruiting students from the overachiever program who frequently use social media for enhancing their English so that we could debrief potential participants. then we were introduced to six students who were willing to take part in this study (3 from grade 10 and 3 from grade 11).

Six students from the overachiever program, a boy and two girls from both grades 10 and 11 were chosen as participants in this study. In terms of research ethics, they were asked to read, complete, and sign an informed consent form, which stated that their involvement in this study was completely voluntary. They also have the opportunity to withdraw from any stage of this study if they have to.

In this study, structured interviews were employed to collect empirical data over two months (May to June 2023). This study employs interview guidelines that include questions relating to the study's objective, that is the opinions of students on the role of the English teacher in EFL class in the digital era. The questions in this interview are separated into several categories, including students' perspectives on the digital era in English learning, teachers' roles in the digital era, and how they use technology in English learning.

To ensure that participants are willing to provide honest information and feel comfortable throughout the interview, we anonymize the informant's data. This is because sharing participant information is an unethical practice (Kumar, 2011). The participants were coded as Student 1, Student 2, and so forth to keep participant anonymity. Furthermore, we employed Bahasa Indonesia during the interviews to obtain richer and deeper information about the participants' perspectives and views on the role of English teacher in the digital era. Each interview lasted about 35 minutes. All interview sessions were audio recorded so that all of the information may be replayed as many times as needed.

Based on the research objectives, we developed the questions to ask before the interview. The data reduction analysis technique is used in this study. data reduction means summarizing, grabbing essential points, focusing on important findings, and trying to identify themes and patterns to gain a clear understanding (Leavy, 2014). In data reduction, we focus on important data and reduce irrelevant data related to research questions. A number of issues related to the role of English teachers in the digital era occurred from the interviews, including learning English in the digital era, the role of English teachers in the digital era, and how students use technology to study English.

After that, we displayed the interview data to uncover sub-themes and themes by outlining and harmonizing all of the results. Two topics emerged from the analysis: the roles of teachers in enhancing EFL classroom and the role of technology in facilitating English language learning. In data conclusion and verification, the emerging themes and sub-themes were verified by confirming other evidence to ensure that the conclusions obtained were consistent. Finally, two developing themes were confirmed and verified.

In order to verify trustworthiness, member screening was completed. Each participant was given special access to their interview transcripts and invited to thoroughly read them for data visibility and accuracy, as well as to provide additional insight into their lived experience.

FINDING

This study obtained to investigate the role of teachers in the English foreign language classroom in the digital era, viewed from the perspectives of Indonesian high school students. Two emerging themes are provided, together with supporting evidence,

based on structured interview data: (1) teachers' roles in enhancing English foreign language classrooms in the digital era, and (2) the role of technology in facilitating English language learning. These two Findings points answer the research questions by explaining the role of teachers in improving English foreign language classes in the digital era based on the perspectives of Indonesian high school students.

Teachers' Roles in Enhancing English Foreign Language Classrooms in the Digital Era

The first theme that emerged from the interview data is the role of teachers in enhancing English foreign language classrooms in the digital era. The main role of a teacher is to transmit knowledge. When it comes to studying English in class, we discovered the most students agree that the primary source is the teacher. The following vignette demonstrates how students responded based on their perception of their teacher's capacity to teach English.

Student 1. "Yes, the English teacher at my school, particularly the one who teaches me, is fluent in the language and uses learning media that is easy to understand."

Student 2. "My English teacher has done what a teacher must do and in line with existing rules."

Student 3. "My teacher employs a variety of fun methods for learning. singing together before lessons, and so on. They have obviously mastered the material in terms of comprehension."

Student 4. "Our English teacher is capable to convey the material in a simple, concise, and interesting way. My teacher clarified out numerous misconceptions that we thought were correct but turned out to be incorrect."

Student 6. "The teacher is very good at explaining, and the teacher occasionally uses educational games from the internet to make teaching and learning more enjoyable"

It is demonstrated by the opinions of the student 1, 2, 3, 4, and 6 above that the teacher is an expert at teaching English classes and is capable of explaining topics to students using appropriate and various methods, such as games. Additionally, English teachers engage students in learning by using entertaining teaching tools like songs. Furthermore, the teacher as the main source when learning in the classroom is supported by student responses that the use of smartphone is limited. The following are the responses suggested by the students during the interview.

Student 1. "My teacher forbids us from using gadgets in English lessons unless it's utilized for educational reasons."

Student 2. "Depending to my English teacher, students aren't allowed to use smartphones in class unless the teacher allows it."

Student 3. "Only when the teacher instructs students to access exercises or other resources is it permissible to use a smartphone to facilitate learning."

Student 4. "Our teachers sometimes give YouTube URLs for us to listen to and do the phrases. In order facilitate in the learning process, we are also permitted to open Google Translate or similar applications."

Students 5." Students are occasionally still permitted to use their smartphones during English class, but only to access resources that the teacher has provided, such as YouTube or Google Classroom."

Student 6. "It depends on the teacher, as sometimes allow students to use smartphones, for example, to practice exercise or learn more than they could from textbooks."

It is evident from the views of the students expressed above that teachers are the primary source of learning in the classroom. In addition, teachers can use technology to facilitate learning by using the YouTube platform and other resources. The following are the students' impressions on the subject material the teacher taught directly in the classroom.

Student 1. "If I cannot understand a topic when I'm in class studying, I can ask the teacher immediately."

Student 2. "Because of the crowded classroom environment, I occasionally find it challenging to comprehend what I am learning in class."

Student 3. "With the teacher, I actually comprehend the content better because I can ask questions immediately if I cannot understand a subject."

Student 4. "I can ask the teacher directly about any material that I cannot comprehend."

Student 5. "Of course, it works more effectively if the teacher is present in class because the students can ask questions directly if they still do not understand."

Student 6. "When the teacher explains something and I don't understand it, I may ask questions and get clear replies."

It is clear from the students' explanations above that the teacher has a crucial role in providing instruction in the classroom. This is because of the reason that teachers and students interact closely, allowing for direct student supervision. Additionally, students who do not comprehend the lessons being taught are able to discuss with the teacher immediately.

In addition to the benefits described above, a teacher also has weaknesses in their ability to teach. Although many students maintained that the teacher could successfully deliver the lesson, some students also said that the teacher was not really clear when conveying the material because of several factors.

Student 2. "I sometimes have trouble understanding the materials offered because of how much school, boarding, or organizational work I have to do."

Student 4. "I had a good basis in advance, so I was able to understand it clearly. Many of my friends, nevertheless, struggle to comprehend English classes."

Student 5. "In my opinion, the teacher is still a little unclear in giving explanations in some lessons, not because the explanation itself is unclear, but because the teacher sometimes thinks that the students have mastered the material so the teacher does not explain it in detail."

Student 6. "Not really, as some of the material is still not clear to my comprehension."

The responses from the student 2, 4, 5, and 6 above, it can be concluded that even though the teacher is able to explain the lesson to the class clearly, there are still additional reasons why some students may not be able to understand the material. These factors

include the number of extracurricular activities that students have planned outside of class, the lack of a solid basis in English lessons, and teachers who assume that students already understand the topic and simply provide a brief explanation. Furthermore, students who find it difficult to understand the materials delivered by their teachers will search online for explanations. The following are statements given by students about finding up explanations online.

Student 2. "I'll try to learn it in as many ways as possible, such through watching lessons on YouTube."

Student 3. "I usually look up further information immediately on Google or YouTube and search for sample questions."

Student 4. "Usually, I read over previous lesson or seek online for more details."

Student 6. "If a teacher explains a topic in a way that I don't understand, I will probably search up an explanation online or ask a friend to explain it to me."

According to the opinions of students 2, 3, 4, and 6 above, when they do not comprehend the content being taught by the teacher, they look for explanations from other sources on the internet using search engines and watch explanations on YouTube. This shows how students are trying to use technology that is rapidly developing in the digital era in order to keep up with lessons.

The role of technology in facilitating English language learning

The development of technology offers a number of advantages that can be obtained. The field of education is one of them. In this study, students are permitted to bring smartphones to school. The following are opinions of students about carrying smartphones in school.

Student 1. "Allowing the use of gadgets facilitates learning and makes it more enjoyable because technology may be a joyful learning tool."

Student 2. "This is beneficial for all students because they all need smartphones or laptops in the current digital era."

Student 3. "This policy, in my opinion, has helped me learn a lot. Some types of assignments, even the daily assessments that teachers provide, sometimes require for smartphones, especially in today's world."

Student 4. "Having a smartphone at school makes it easier to complete schoolwork. For instance, by using YouTube or online tutoring, students can independently study during free time. They could reread the material or practice the questions."

Student 5. "I think allowing students to bring their smartphones to school is a good idea because it allows them to access lessons and search for new resources."

Student 6. "This is beneficial because students are able to access a wider range of resources than simply textbooks and course materials."

According to the students' views above, the policy allowing students to bring smartphones to school is advantageous. This is because smartphones are now required for some lessons. Smartphone also make it simpler for students to complete homework, find resources, and have enjoyment while learning. Smartphones are very useful for learning English because it enables a number of social media platforms with a variety of learning

resources. The following are the opinions of students on social media as a tool for learning English.

Student 1. "There are many accounts dedicated to teaching English on social media."

Student 2. "In order to become familiar to English vocabulary, I even set my smartphone to utilize only English."

Student 3. "Currently, there are a lot of Instagram accounts maintained by creators that offer English language speaking tips. On the internet, I also read about common slang phrases used by young people."

Student 4. "I frequently learn from English language series and movies that commonly have their subtitles available as well. This not only helps me practice listening, but it also helps me get better at reading."

Student 5. "It is really beneficial because it is easy to access and has numerous creative methods to deliver information, which stimulates my interest in learning more about a subject."

Student 6. "The internet has a hugely broad audience, and many content creators particularly native English speakers, offer explanations of information or advice in English that weren't shared by teachers in schools."

The existence of social media is hugely beneficial, even though the fact that students have various perspectives about how they use it to enhance their English language skills. Furthermore, students use several different kinds of social media. According to interviews, Instagram is used the most frequently by students to develop their English language skills, followed by YouTube, movie and others. In addition, there are several advantages to using social media for learning English. the following are the opinions of students:

Student 1. "Accessible and freely available learning media are offered."

Student 2. "I think it is simple to learn English because I frequently use it on my phone."

Student 3. "There are numerous channels and materials available on social media. That includes simple lessons to more challenging discussions. So that I may comprehend an explanation properly."

Student 4. "Social media offers me the flexibility of time and low cost of learning English."

Student 5. "Because it is simple to obtain and not needed to bother meeting in person."

Student 6. "I can access a variety of educational media platforms to help improve my English skills."

According to the students who mentioned above, using social media platforms to learn English has several benefits, including a variety of channels that offer learning media, easy access to lessons wherever and whenever, and also cheap cost or even free. Furthermore, because of its convenience, some students feel more comfortable searching for materials on social media. The opinions of the students about how comfortable are as follows:

Student 1. "I feel comfortable asking the teacher as well as using search engine to find materials."

Student 2. I feel more comfortable using search engines because it doesn't require in-person interaction, but if the search engine's answer isn't clear, I'll ask the teacher so that I can comprehend the meaning of the search engine's answer.

Student 3. Because search engines are more flexible, I actually feel more comfortable using it first than asking the teacher.

Student 5. Sometimes, when I'm too ashamed to ask my teacher, I'll try to figure out the solution on my own by searching for discussion or tutorials on social media.

Student 6. I prefer search engines more because the explanation I obtained was more detailed.

According to the students' responses above, they feel more comfortable searching for lessons online because it is flexible to access, explanations are more detailed, and students do not need to meet with the teacher in person. In addition, students do not feel embarrassed because they are not noticed by other students when they ask questions in class.

In addition to the benefits of technology for English language learning that have already been stated above, there are negative aspects as well. The opinions of students on the negative aspects of the use of technology are listed below.

Student 1. One negative impact is that during breaks, other students prefer to play smartphones than interact with other students. If their use is not limited, smartphones might distract students.

Student 3. More than 3/4 of the students in the class are always playing on their phones. either in class or on your own time. No matter the hour, boys play smartphone games. Even when they are in class, they are never missing their smartphones. When playing a mobile game, they constantly curse. Other friends' ability to focus while learning is seriously disrupted by this.

Student 6. Additionally, it also has negative impact because the use of smartphone may cause distractions that make it difficult for learning activities to go properly.

It may be concluded from the views of students 1, 3, and 6 above that smartphones also have a detrimental effect. Some of them use it uncontrollably. Students ignore the length of time by using their smartphones wherever and at any time. the practice of using smartphones for less beneficial activities like playing games that can disturb other students. Moreover, this reduces interaction with other students. Additionally, excessive smartphone usage is implicated in poor learning outcomes.

DISCUSSION

Teachers' Roles in Enhancing English Foreign Language Classrooms in the Digital Era

According to data gathered from interviews, the majority of students believe that teachers are proficient in the subjects of English and have the ability to explain it well. The results of the interview can be interpreted to extrapolate a number of aspects, such as the teacher's mastery of the topic being taught. It's crucial to understand the topic being taught by the teacher. this is due to the fact that student learning success is influenced by the teacher's expertise. The teaching and learning processes will be negatively impacted as a

result of the teacher's inability to master the material (Lambani & Niekerk, 2017). Additionally, an aspect of professionalism that is important for successful teaching is the teacher's mastery of the subject content (Korkmazgil & Seferoğlu, 2021).

Another one is, as said by student that the content was presented by the teacher in an understandable way. One factor that influences successful English language learning is a teacher's style of teaching. Learning will be effectively transmitted if learning media appropriate for students is used. Students have noted that one of the teaching tools teachers employ is song. Music has a powerful ability to engage kids, increase understanding, and allow for word memorizing (Ludke, 2016). Besides that, the teacher employs games in the classroom. The game gives students advantages including increased interest in lessons, making lessons enjoyable, and making it easier for them to comprehend the subject matter (Aynsley et al., 2018; Hartt et al., 2020). In addition, teachers are also able to employ technology to teach English.

Technology integration into instruction is crucial. As Steel & Hudson (2010) stated, using technology in the classroom gives teachers valuable experience. Furthermore, Ding et al., (2019) demonstrate that teachers' thoughts about language teaching and learning generally correlate to their usage of technology. This is in line with recommendations from research conducted by Raygan & Moradkhani (2020), EFL instructors must be open-minded about technological advancements in order to integrate technology effectively. For teachers to encourage this attitude, they must become aware about technology advancements and gain experience in this area. In additions, Teachers and students use technology in the classroom right away. This is evident from the student's perspective, who states that one advantage is that students can speak with the teacher directly if they are struggling with understanding the material they are learning in class.

It is clear from the students' explanations above that the teacher has a crucial role in providing instruction in the classroom. It is further reinforced by Ferguson & Tryjankowski (2009) study, which indicates that students who learn face-to-face receive greater test scores than those who learn online. Also, research conducted by Jaggars (2014), when learning about topics they felt were particularly challenging, students preferred what they considered the richer experience of the face-to-face classroom and did not want to take the risk of taking challenging courses online as well as in investigations by Ganesh et al., (2015) and Xu & Jaggars (2016).

Despite having the advantages mentioned above, teachers also have weaknesses and are powerless in particular scenarios. Both internal and external factors influence how well students comprehend English lessons in the classroom. Some students find it challenging to comprehend the lesson because of their busy schedules, there are students that lack a basis in English, Teachers frequently overlook providing in-depth explanations because they believe that students already comprehend the material. This may be occurs in top schools because admissions are based on excellent academic rank (Eggers & Groothuis, 2022). In addition, there is an environment that is not favorable. As Lieblein et al., (2018) findings, students clearly emphasize the importance of their educational environment, both socially and physically.

The role of technology in facilitating English language learning

In the digital era, technology is one of the most important components, including education. Smartphones are frequently used by students to enhance their education. According to the study's findings, using technology for studying English is highly beneficial to students. This can be proven by research from Annamalai & Kumar (2020), stated that students can learn both inside and outside of the classroom seamlessly. smartphones have a significant impact on distance education and have changed how students engage in learning activities. In addition, smartphones offer a variety of features, including social media, that can support students in learning English.

Social media significantly influence learning English. this is because of the beneficial relationship between student use of social media and students own intrinsic motivation, which leads students connected to engagement and creativity in the classroom (Gulzar et al., 2021). Students can improve their English language abilities by watching movies or videos on social media. Fitriah & Wahyuningsih (2023) stated that watching English-subtitled movies gave students several advantages, including entertainment during free periods, boosting exciting English learning material, and expanding their vocabulary. Additionally, social media can help students expand their vocabulary. The overall positive impact of mobile learning on students leads to the conclusion that mobile technologies could be used as pedagogical tools to help students learn vocabulary (Lin & Lin, 2019).

Using social media to study English offers some conveniences. Based on the findings, students argue that that using social media is simple because it can be done at any time and from anywhere. this is in line with study conducted by Huang et al., (2020), one of the most substantial factors influencing user adoption of technology is perceived ease of use. Additionally, students use technology for learning English because it is relatively cheap. this is because numerous content creators offer free English language lessons. Meanwhile, because of the ease of use, students feel more comfortable using search engines than asking teachers directly. Cordes (2014) stated that, compared to databases or library catalogs, search engines need less work.

In addition to the mentioned advantages of using smartphone to learn English, there are disadvantages as well. According to student statements, permitting students to bring smartphones to school may cause students to use them carelessly even when lessons are in session. meanwhile, students also play mobile games, which could create an environment that distract other students. Furthermore, students less interacting with their classmates instead pay attention to their phones (Darcin et al., 2016).

CONCLUSION

Students' perspective formed the conclusion that the most significant factor in enhancing EFL classes is the teachers. Teachers are skilled in the subject matter and have the ability to present it in a variety of ways, including through the use of technology. Even though teachers are competent there are cases in which students struggle to understand the lesson. This leads students to use technology (smartphones) to find other

sources like social media. Students feel that having access to technology is helpful. They use social media for improving their English skills. In addition, due to the ease and flexibility of search engines, students feel more comfortable using it than asking the teacher. Although the fact that cell smartphones have numerous advantages for students, it can also have disadvantages, such as decreasing social interaction in the classroom when used too much. The study offers an implication that the need for English teachers to incorporate social media into EFL classes and create a fun environment so that students will not feel embarrassed asking the teacher questions. The limitation of this study is that we used qualitative methods at only one school and had a small sample size, thus it cannot be generalized to other schools. Therefore, next researcher suggested to implement a quantitative technique, more than one school, and more samples size in order to generalize the findings.

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