



AL-QUDWAH

ISSN(P): 2959-2062 / ISSN(E): 2959-2054

<https://al-qudwah.com>



The Impact of Digital Literacy Skills on Functional Skills in Secondary Islamic School Teachers: A Case Study of District Kot Addu, South Pakistan

ABSTRACT

This qualitative assessment explores the effects of adopting digital literacy on the functional ability amongst Islamic secondary school teachers in the District of Kot Addu, South of Pakistan. Realizing the growing role of technology as a part of teaching and learning process the purpose of the research will be to determine the state of digital readiness of these educators and identify possible challenges in using technology in teaching practice and preparing preservice teachers. Through semi structured interviews and focus group discussions data were obtained from a purposive sample of first year teachers across different contexts to understand their experiences and issues encountered. Research outcomes show that there is a moderate digital competence across all participants with evident intention of professional growth hindered by shortage of resources, lack of training opportunities, and organizational culture that is not inclined toward the use of technology. The implications of this study for professional practicum are that professional development should focus on these challenges to support the development of teachers' competencies related to the use of digital technologies. In conclusion, it is important to state that the studies reiterate the importance of using the Digital Literacy for supporting inclination to relevant and effective teaching learning environment in Islamic education.

Keywords: *Digital Literacy, Functional Skills, Islamic School Teachers, Secondary Education, Educational Technology, Teacher Professional Development, Digital Era.*

***Correspondence Author:**

Muhammad Kashif Majeed* *International Islamic University, Malaysia.*

AUTHORS

Muhammad Kashif Majeed*
International Islamic University, Malaysia:
kashifmajeed.edu.my@gmail.com

Prof. Dr. Tunku Badariah Binti Tunku Ahmad**
International Islamic University, Malaysia:
tbadariah@iiu.edu.my

Date of Submission: 11-11-2024

Acceptance: 03-12-2024

Publishing: 10-12-2024

Web: <https://al-qudwah.com/>
OJS: <https://al-qudwah.com/index.php/aqrj/user/register>
e-mail: editor@al-qudwah.com

The Impact of Digital Literacy Skills on Functional Skills in Secondary Islamic School Teachers...

Introduction:

Education has been experiencing massive changes over the decades especially in this digital age, thus to teach in such a century and environment teachers require strong technological competencies. Digital literacy comprises different skills like finding, judging and generating information by employing digital technologies¹. To teachers, these skills are crucial to promote engagement and create interactive learning environments and necessary for other stakeholder audiences as well. Literature shows that a digitally literate teacher can improve on the instructional practices, foster inquiry, and enable students to prepare for a knowledge based society that is dominated by technology².

More specifically in relation to Islamic education especially in secondary schools, the use of digital literacy is both a strength and weakness. Conventional Islamic schooling standard procedure takes time to augment the pedagogy of diverse and modern learning techniques and investigation of advanced technology in educational practices; it basically involves cramming and memorization³. However, the use of such technology tools may help improve teaching approaches by increasing the interest and relevance of the lessons to learners. Research has shown that if a teacher knows how to apply technology in his/her lessons, he/she will be in a position to make lessons more students' friendly for all categories of learners⁴.

However, it is self-evident that there are various barriers which many secondary Islamic school teachers in South Pakistan experience when it comes to implementation of digital tools in their classroom teaching practice. Some of the challenges include, lack of access to technology, lack of adequate professional development and reluctance to change due to culturally ingrained beliefs all limit the use of digital literacy in learning environments⁵. According to⁶, teachers who teach in rural areas are faced with challenges of infrastructure that hinders them from using technology tools hence limiting their strategies of teaching and learning affecting the learners' performance.

The research objectives of this study are as follows: To identify the existing level of ICT skills among the teachers of secondary Islamic school Kot Addu, South Pakistan and to analyze the reported difficulties and constraints of the teachers and trainers in incorporating Information Communication Technologies their teaching faculty and training classes. The study will therefore use a qualitative research method, supplemented with the use of focus group discussions and semi-structured interviews from a pool of teachers. With such an approach, their destiny will be explored in sufficient detail, and their experience, and perception of the world, and the concrete challenges they face in professional spaces will be revealed.

¹ Hague & Payton, Digital literacy across the curriculum. *Future lab*

² Chai, et al., 2016, Exploring the relationship between teacher digital literacy and student learning outcomes. *Computers & Education*

³ Nashat & Badran, 2019, Rethinking pedagogical approaches in Islamic education

⁴ Lai & Hwang, 2016, Seamless flipped learning: A mobile technology-enhanced flipped classroom for engaging students in learning. *Computers & Education*.

⁵ Alshahrani, 2020; UNESCO, 2019 The challenges of integrating digital technology in Islamic education. *Journal, of Educational Technology & Society*

⁶ Qureshi and Akram 2021, Barriers to the integration of digital technology in rural schools of Pakistan. *Educational Technology Research and Development*, 69(3), 829-844.

The objectives of this study are three fold: first, to evaluate the level of digital readiness of secondary school teachers; second, to determine The purpose of this study is three-fold: first, to identify the types of barriers and challenges that teachers encounter in facilitating the use of digital tools; second, to learn more about how they can effectively develop their digital competencies through focused professional development. In achieving these objectives, the study intends to support the creation of specific training programs that will enable the training of teachers who are equipped with skills in utilization of technology to improve on their performance and thus the overall output of the Islamic schools.

This research will not only try to search the focus area of Kot Addu, but will also try to involve in the discussion about the applying of Educational Technology in Islamic Education. Determined by the diffusion of concern shown by teachers admitting to facing challenges when teaching and doing research when they had to adopt digital tools, this study re-emphasizes the need for preparing educators for effective practice in the digital age to make a positive difference in education and increase its efficiency for their students.

Objectives of the study:

- To assess the current level of digital literacy among secondary school's teachers in Kot addu south Pakistan.
- To evaluate the barriers and challenges that teachers face in integrating digital tools in to their teaching practices and teacher's training.

Statement of the problem:

For the teachers from the secondary Islamic school located in the District of Kot Addu, South Pakistan the effective method on incorporation of the technology into the teaching and learning process is a challenge due to the different level of technology literacy. Despite the acknowledged significance of digital competencies in raising educational effectiveness, most teachers confront a severe lack of resources, insufficient preparation, and skepticism towards the innovation of learning processes. This situation limits their capacity to successfully motivate and facilitate students as well as to foster stimulating learning processes. Therefore, it is high time to evaluate what current levels of technological proficiency these teachers possess and what challenges they face. An appreciation of these issues is crucial when designing context-specific professional learning interventions for educators in the IS context, with a view of enhancing the learning outcomes of students in these institutions.

Literature Review:

To this regard, the promotion of digital literacy into the learning practices goes on playing a more crucial role with INTENSE in the current classroom particularly focusing on Islamic learning. They are the use of tools, information evaluation as well as learning in group⁷. This article covers the purpose of digital literacy in education and some of the challenges teachers face when designing learning with use of technology and assessing potential of professional learning in Islamic secondary schools.

Professional digital competence is crucial for teachers as it improves their teaching practices and leads to greater learner interactions and learning⁸ suggests in their study that teachers are capable to produce engaging teaching and learning processes if they possess digital

⁷ Hague & Payton, 2010, Digital literacy across the curriculum. *Futurelab*

⁸ Wong & Kueu, 2015, UNESCO, 2019 The challenges of integrating digital technology in Islamic education. *Journal, of Educational Technology & Society*

The Impact of Digital Literacy Skills on Functional Skills in Secondary Islamic School Teachers...

competencies. For instance,⁹ pointed out that the use of mobile technologies in classroom enhances students' learning interest and enhances collaborative learning. In addition, digital literacy permits teacher transformation of various learning action strategies to accommodate all the students¹⁰.

As for the case of Islamic education where more conventional forms of education and teaching are pervasive, incorporating digital literacy would be effective and less effective depending on the following.¹¹ Have pointed out that general Islamic education is more often far from teaching students critical thinking and creativity: usually, it uses rote memorization techniques, however, new technologies often bring changes into the process of education and make them more effective. It is for this reason that improving the digital literacy of teachers involved in the delivery of Islamic education is important to making the enterprise meaningful to learners in the current era.

For example,¹² state that the use of mobile technologies in classroom allows creation of working and unique learning environments that entail active participation of students. This is especially the case in Islamic education since most of the conventional teaching practices include rote learning. Hence, incorporating the use of the digital tools, educational professors can enhance critical thinking, creative, and problem-solving skills in academic learners¹³. Additionally, Rana & Rana holding Abduh et al., has revealed that digital literacy can act as a connector between the conventional Islamic teaching and a modern standard learning determined today.

Barriers to Integration of Digital Tools

As it has been said, the importance of digital literacy has been researched and discussed in numerous studies, however, the authors have found that many teachers, especially those from South Pakistan, face a number of challenges when it comes to adopting technology-enhanced learning experiences. Lack of resources, lack of adequate training, and cultural barriers are distinct forms that many of the barriers take. In his 2020 study,¹⁴ explains that many teachers in Islamic educational environments and contexts are not very well equipped or provided for to be able to make good use of these digital technologies.

Qureshi and¹⁵ also found that teachers in rural contexts are confronted with a lack of technology or Internet access or lack adequate training in how to go about using digital learning solutions. However, cultural beliefs about the use of technologies in teaching and learning systems may hinder the process from the side of the teachers and the learners themselves besides the effects referred above¹⁶. These barriers play a role in creating a huge difference in the digital

⁹ Lai and Hwang 2016, Seamless flipped learning: A mobile technology-enhanced flipped classroom for engaging students in learning. *Computers & Education*.

¹⁰ Hague & Payton, 2010, Digital literacy across the curriculum. *Futurelab*.

¹¹ Nashat and Badran 2019 Rethinking pedagogical approaches in Islamic education.

¹² Lai and Hwang, 2016, Seamless flipped learning: A mobile technology-enhanced flipped classroom.

¹³ Nashat & Badran, 2019, rethinking pedagogical approaches in Islamic education.

¹⁴ Alshahrani, UNESCO, 2019 the challenges of integrating digital technology in Islamic education. *Journal, of Educational Technology & Society*

¹⁵ Akram 2021, UNESCO. (2019). *Education and technology in South Asia: A regional overview*.

¹⁶ UNESCO, 2019, *Education and technology in South Asia: A regional overview*.

competence of educators which in one way or another influences the quality of education being churned out by Islamic schools.

Professional Development Needs

In response to these challenges, what opportunities exist for the purposefully targeted professional development as a way of increasing the digital literacy of teachers in Islamic education? Some studies suggest that IT training can enable a teacher to implement information technology into practice 'appropriately and effectively'. For instance,¹⁷ showed that technology professional development enhanced teachers' techno pedagogical self-efficacy and their practices, thereby enhancing learners' outcome.

Moreover, it is important to continue constructing professional development focused to the needs of Islamic school teachers. This includes paying attention to the cultural and educational environment which these schools serve¹⁸. Through passing important information and materials to educational authorities, it will be easier to encourage the teachers in Islamic schools to embrace the use of new technologies towards enhancing the quality of education offered to the student.

Implications for Educational Outcomes

The benefits of bulking up the teachers on digital literacy go beyond their own classrooms. According to¹⁹ study, drawing knowledge from the context derived from Saudi Arabia, it was found that when teachers possess digital competencies it results in enhancement of the students' engagement, involvement and consequently boosted academic performance. Moreover, Adam developed strategies for integrating technology into classroom learning and showed how they can enhance the development of lifelong learning skills in students.

That is why digital literacy will remain one of the vital aspects of education as institutions keep developing. When the shortages of developmental digital skills in the educators are a priority the schools are able to cultivate culture of innovation, creativity, and critical thinking, especially in the aspects of Islamic education.

Professional Development Needs

To overcome such barriers, it is argued that, specific professional development interventions should be offered to improving teacher's ICT competencies. As we have also discussed, done training activities when implemented well can help furnish educators with knowledge and skills in applying technology in the classroom effectively. According to²⁰, the effectiveness of teachers' professional development for blended technologies is notably found relevant and positively boosts the digital literacy competencies of teachers.

¹⁷ Punyatoya et al. 2021, Empowering teachers through digital literacy training: An action research study. *Educational Technology Research and Development*.

¹⁸ Khan et al., 2020, Professional development for digital literacy: A study of teachers' perceptions in Islamic schools. *International Journal of Educational Research*.

¹⁹ Zubair et al. 2020, Impact of digital literacy on educational outcomes: Evidence from Pakistani schools. *Journal of Educational Studies*.

²⁰ Punyatoya et al., 2021, Empowering teachers through digital literacy training: An action research study. *Educational Technology Research and Development*.

The Impact of Digital Literacy Skills on Functional Skills in Secondary Islamic School Teachers...

However, professional development schools must be designed specifically for teachers in Islamic schools. The authors²¹ rightly stress on the role of context in training with consideration for cultural and teaching learning difficulties, inherent to Islamic education. When the educational authorities provide teaching with academic knowledge and skill that is useful for instruction that is useful in classroom, the teachers themselves can be helped to embrace technology as a tool in modifying their instructional practices. Implications for Educational Outcomes

Education for digital literacy among teachers has tremendous potential for transforming students' learning and the educational process. According to the studies, students' level, motivation, and outcome raised when educations are promoting themselves as digitally literate teachers. For example,²² in their study, revealed that the students being taught by teachers with the digital literacy had higher level of critical thinking and complex problem solving.

In addition, incorporation of information technology facilitates collaborative learning and possibly provides a platform for the students to interact with geopolitical perspectives²³. When education institutions end devours to equip the learners for the society of the 21 st century, the aspect of Information Technology skill is very vital. As you can see by promoting the proper culture that focuses on creativity and free thinking, the educators play an essential role of preparing learners for a world that is powered by technology.

Methodology:

Research Design

In this research, qualitative research method was adopted to find out the impact of, digital literacy on functional skills of secondary Islamic school teachers in Kot Addu, south of Pakistan. A qualitative approach was considered suitable because it enabled the exploration of the teachers' experience, attitude and concern on digital literacy and their teaching practices.

Participants

The targeted participants of the study were the second teachers from different Islamic schools in Kot Addu district. In this study, purposive sampling was employed to ensure that participants had low to high digital literacy and had used technology in their teaching to different extents. Fifteen teachers participated in the study including male and female teachers. The participants were chosen purposively by their willingness to contribute to the study and their engagement in the teaching practices that needed digital competencies.

Data Collection

Semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions were used to capture participants' perception and experience because of the flexibility of the interview method. The teachers were interviewed in their schools and the interviews lasted 30 – 45 minutes each, consistent with the guidelines for semi-structured interviews that were developed for this study and comprised of the following open-ended questions: The group discussions where there were 5-6 teachers per group, promoted interaction and enabled participants share on similar issues and experience.

²¹ Khan et al., 2020, Professional development for digital literacy: A study of teachers' perceptions in Islamic schools. *International Journal of Educational Research*.

²² Al-Azawei et al.2020, The impact of digital literacy on student learning: A systematic review. *Computers & Education*.

²³ Abdulah et al., 2022, Digital literacy in Islamic education: Bridging traditional teachings and contemporary practices. *International Journal of Educational Research*.

In this study, participants' informed consent was sought before and during the interviews and discussions respecting confidentiality and ethics. The interviews were conducted with the respondent's permission, and the interviews were recorded audibly and later transcribed.

Data Analysis

Semantically, thematic analysis was used to review qualitative data that was gathered in the interviews and focus groups. This process involved several steps:

1. Familiarization: The researcher went through the transcripts several times before familiarizing with the data.
2. Coding: To extract data, codes were first developed from the data, qualitatively helping to define prominent patterns and themes in connection with digital literacy affecting teaching practices.
3. Theme Development the codes were grouped into higher order categories that best summarized the experiences of the participants. These themes were constantly reviewed with other workers and supervisors in order to maintain the specific and topical.
4. Interpretation: The final themes were analyzed with an understanding of the prior research conducted on aspects of digital literacy, education and teaching practices in Islam.

Trustworthiness

To address the issue of credibility of the findings the following steps were taken. Member checking was accomplished by presenting the results of the study back to the participants in order to validate the interpretations made. Data triangulation was done through the use of interviews and focus group discussions where different methods provided complementary information on the issues under study. Also, the researcher kept a reflexive journal while conducting the research to record biases and reflections to increase credibility of the study.

Limitations

However, this type of research is limited and the following recommendations should be made in order to enhance the study the current qualitative study offered insights into the experiences of teachers concerning digital literacy. The study has some major drawbacks associated with a small sample size and geographical scope of the identified problem. The research might be continued by including a bigger number of schools and increasing the amount and diversity of the data collected to get a clearer picture of the current state with digital literacy in Islamic education.

The Impact of Digital Literacy Skills on Functional Skills in Secondary Islamic School Teachers...

Result:

Table 1: Current Level of Digital Literacy

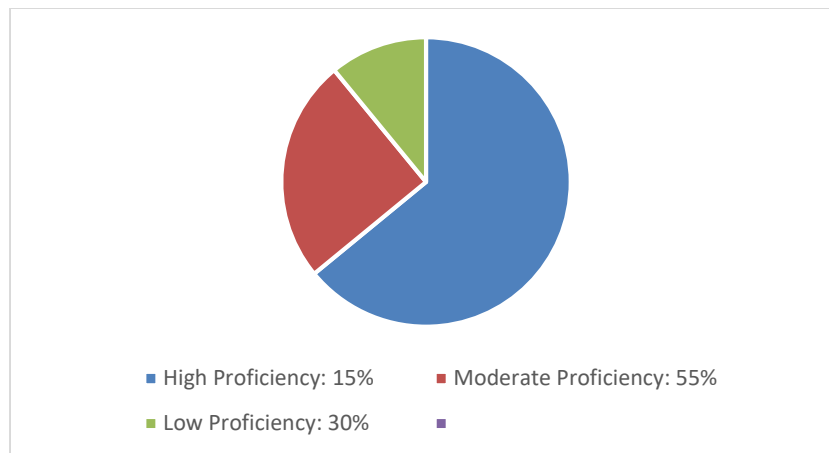
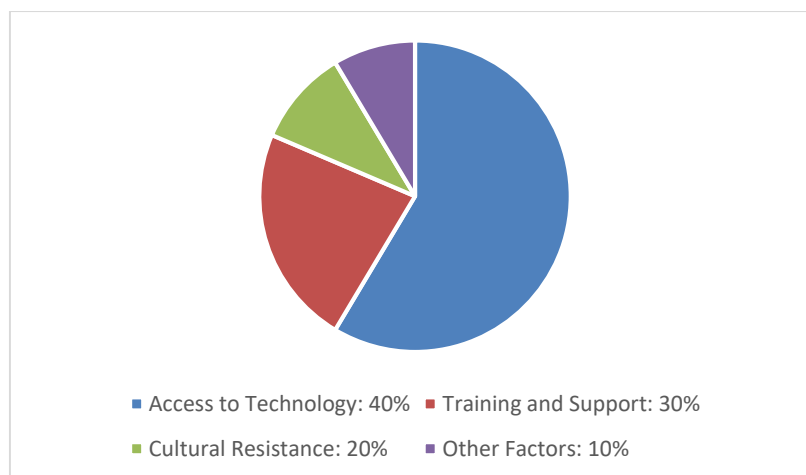


Table 2: Barriers to Digital Literacy Integration



Findings:

The study established that there was a range of severity in digital literacy among the teachers of secondary Islamic schools in Kot Addu and that affected their teaching behavior. While using the questionnaire some of the teachers displayed high level of computer literacy and put into practice advanced technological competency which allowed them to embrace use of technology in their teaching while others displayed a low level of technological competency which restricted them from employing use of technology in their teaching. This had become a major challenge to the integration of technology in schools since the educators' digital literacy was not uniform. Several causes were noted as having contributed to this problem which include the following challenges. Among them, the most significant problem was the lack of the necessary technologies to address the issue. Some of the most important basic teaching learning resources for instance computers, Internet connections, and the use of multimedia aids that are common in schools in today's teaching learning practices were seriously lacking in

many of schools particularly those in the rural and other less developed areas of Kot Addu. Absence of technology was also a hindrance to teachers in an effort to apply the tools in class in order to attract students' attention and also in enhancing learning.

Furthermore, first, the lack of amount and variety of the training programs became as one of the major barriers in building the digital competencies of the teachers. While some educators were interested in enhancing their digital literacy, only a limited number of the participants provided an opportunity for academic faculty staff to obtain formal or systematic professional development to achieve the mastery of applying technologies to education. In most cases, the teachers have been on their own in the digital environment, and instead of following an organized process, they relied on the processes of trial and error. Such foregone conclusion is emblematic of the lack of continuing professional development in general, which was compounded by low levels of digital literacy and that many teachers sought further professional development but had nobody to guide them or the resources to do it properly.

Another problem clearly evident from the research was that of culture, and more specifically culture as it applied to the mass integration of technology into the classroom. Some of the teachers stated that among the reasons they did not adopt new styles of teaching, was mainly because they were used to the conventional approach involving tutor driven didactic instructions. New was also the belief that new technologies are hazardous to the values and principles of Islamic education, which resulted in a certain reserve when it came to technique anyway. While not universal, this type of cultural resistance was part of the picture; where it existed, it affected the readiness of teachers to integrate tools into their lesson plans. Some of the basic infrastructures like; availability of computers, internet connection, use of multimedia aids which due to their importance have become almost a common feature in most schools for teaching-learning practices today were somewhat lacking in many schools especially those schools located in rural and other less privileged regions of Kot Addu. Absence of technology also restricted the teachers in their endeavor to apply the gadgets in classroom to enable the capture the attention of the learners and at the same time enhance the learning process.

In addition, first, due to the receive amount and train kinds of the totally training programs have become as one of the major constraints of establishing the digital competencies of the teachers. While some educators were learning to improve their knowledge in technology integration, there were only a few of the participants that offered formal or systematic professional development to academic faculty staff striving to fully Master new technologies for education. In many of these cases, the teachers have been left to their own devices in this digital space, and rather than with a procedural process they are forced to go through a process of trial and error. Any such self-fulfilling prophecy is typical of CPD in general, which also had low levels of digital literacy and that many teachers wanted more professional development but no one to direct them or they lacked the resources to do it properly.

The second issue which seemed sufficiently evident from the research was that of culture, or culture in regards to the massive infusion of technology in the classroom. Few of them said they had not adopted other styles of teaching mainly because the conventional style involved tutor driven didactic methods they had embraced. New was also the belief, that new technologies are inimical to the values and principles of Islamic education, which led to a certain hesitancy where technique was concerned anyway. However, this type of cultural resistance was present in some instances of the culture; where it was present, it influenced the willingness of teachers to infuse the tools into their lessons.

By addressing the specific challenges teachers face in integrating technology into their classrooms, professional development programs can empower educators to confidently incorporate digital tools in a way that enhances both **teaching and learning**. With the right support and resources, teachers in Kot Addu could leverage technology to transform their

The Impact of Digital Literacy Skills on Functional Skills in Secondary Islamic School Teachers...

classrooms, improve educational outcomes, and better prepare their students for the demands of a digital world.

Conclusion:

In light of this, the study portrays the importance of improving the ESL/PD digital literacy of realistic secondary Islamic school teachers in Kot Addu. As we see in the current progressive world of learning it has become mandatory to enhance the practical use of ICT in education to boost its quality and enhance its impact on the learners. In view of such limitations as the poor availability of technologies, the outdated infrastructure of schools, and the lack of opportunities for improving qualifications, the results obtained indicate a definite desire of the educational administrators in Islamic schools along with their teachers to develop digital competence and integrate information technologies into the learning process. This willingness speaks to a shift in thinking and the readiness of practitioners for continued learning—all elements that are critical to effectively addressing digital inequalities as present in many learning environments. But such factors cannot be disregarded. This is one of the main challenges of current technology adoption in schools; the absence of reliable internet connection is a significant barrier to achieve meaningful implementation of current technological solutions; in many cases, schools in rural areas such as Kot Addu do not have access to adequate infrastructure. Also adding to this is the lack of specific training aimed directly at teacher preparation for Islamic education teachers as well. Although, technology can be of great help in teaching, teachers sometimes find it challenging to incorporate this technology in teaching because of a lack of expertise on how to go about it. This lack of understanding of digital technologies is a disservice not only to penetrate new ideas on engaging students but also to effectively mold and develop the full potential of educational technology.

In order to overcome these challenges, therefore, there is therefore need to design and provide appropriate professional development activities that are feasible and meaningful to teach in Islamic education. These should include developing of Digital Competency and at the same time the strategies on how educators can apply technologies in their pedagogical subject areas' modes. Such professional development activities might include: Practical workshops, ICT online classes, and teacher training to familiarize them with the environment, and gain relevant skills. Furthermore, schools and policymakers have to pay more attention to the acquisition of better technology for implementation of the recommendations; this may be obtained through government grants, collaboration with technology companies and endowment by prosperous community members. By cost effectively, arming teachers with the requisite digital literacy skills, schools stand a better chance of increase student 'yz' and participation levels that could lead to higher student learning outcomes. As for the integration of technology in the context of Islamic education, the idea can also help students achieve a greater exposure to the current teaching methods as opposed to traditional pedagogy, and thus, would also enable students, to gain more versatility to their learning process. In the end, it will not only assist the improvement of the quality of teaching and learning practices but will also help in the improvement of the education paradigm to conform to the aims of the twentieth first century.

Therefore, despite some of the challenges highlighted in an attempt to enhance digital literacy among secondary Islamic school teachers in Kot Addu, the findings suggest profound possibilities of enhancing the digital literacy of these teachers. Greater efforts to eliminate the divide and tailored school based professional development could go a long way in improving the learning environment that appropriately equips teachers for the present day digitally connected learners.