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Exploring the relationship between digital literacy skills and Technological Pedagogical and Content Knowledge (TPACK) among secondary school teachers

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**Abstract:** There is an increasing demand for teachers to present technological pedagogical and content knowledge (TPACK) in their classrooms with the help of their digital literacy skills (DLS). Though the teachers at the secondary school level are provided with digital gadgets, however, the teachers are still struggling with the use of digital tools during the teaching-learning process. Lack of digital literacy might be the cause of this reluctance, so the current study aims to explore the relationship between the digital literacy skills of teachers with respect to Technological, Pedagogical and Content Knowledge (TPACK). Data was collected from four hundred school teachers through Digital Literacy Scale (DSL) and TPACK inventory. The results indicate a low level of digital literacy and knowledge of TPACK, identified through descriptive statistics. However, a significantly positive relationship was identified through a significant correlation relationship ((r = .587, p = < .001)) between both variables. On the basis of results, more trainings are recommended for teachers on both digital literacy and content pedagogy.

**Key Words:** Technological, Pedagogical and Content Knowledge TPACK, digital pedagogy, Digital Literacy (DL)

#### Introduction

The rapid advancement in technology has changed lives dramatically, and the transformation from physical to virtual world due to the pandemic served as the cherry on top. Graham (2011 endorsed the opinion of Mishra & Koehler (2006) that the person, as well as the professional lives of individuals in all walks of life, was highly influenced by a digital-driven environment. The incorporation of

technology in the learning process is thus gaining attention around the globe, giving birth to many policy reforms in Japan (Nurutdinova & Dmitrieva, 2017) USA (Office of Educational Technology, 2017) and Canada (Alberta Education, 2013) and Turkey (FATIH project, 2010). A similar project was also initiated in the local context, where schools were provided with computer labs and internet resources. All aforementioned projects focused on providing physical infrastructure and resources to

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the students in order to develop their digital mastery, thus ultimately improving learning. Though these projects were aimed to provide physical resources, however, the internal factors, including teachers' motivation and competencies, were ignored. The teachers' competencies to assimilate technology in order to improve learning are one of the most influential factors in assimilating digital tools during teaching (Anderson & Maninger, 2007; Baek, Jong & Kim, 2008; Teo & Noves, 2011; Tondeur et al., 2013). Calvani et al. (2012) have defined a digitally literate person as the individual who can use and analyze information collected through digital tools for solving problems creatively, adhering to ethical values of using technology. The research indicates that though teachers are provided with digital resources, however, there is still a lack of integration technology in the teaching-learning process (Fahser-Herro & Steinkuehler, 2009; Henderson, 2011). Contrarily, the students at the secondary school level are prepared for future studies and the job market, so it is necessary to learn a certain level of digital skills. However, the research indicates otherwise (Ertmer & Ottenbreit-Leftwich, 2010; Lee & Tsai, 2010), thus making it necessary to examine the digital literacies of secondary school teachers, that is, in turn, influencing the digital competencies of secondary school students. This research is an effort to survey the perceived level of digital literacy among secondary school teachers.

The research designates that skill of integrating technology in teaching is not taught sufficiently in teacher training programs (Kabakci-Yurdakul & Coklar, 2014), same results were presented by <u>Voogt & McKenney in 2017</u>. The framework presented by Mishra and Koehler in 2006 explains and addresses the complexities of relations between Technological Pedagogical and Knowledge (TPACK), thus helping to examine the relationship between teachers' content knowledge and their pedagogical knowledge with their ability to integrate technology. The study aims to explore the knowledge of TPACK among secondary school teachers.

The use of technology during teaching learning process turned into an essential element

during the time of crisis. It can be stated that today zoom is the most significant tool to carry out the learning process. However, the reluctance and anxiety to use this tool were paramount initially, the main cause of which was a low level of digital literacy among teachers. The teachers from higher education institutions were using the technology somehow throughout their teaching ventures. However, the secondary school teachers were less aware of the concept. The temporary shift of teaching from a physical to a virtual environment created many difficulties, including the difficulties in using technology during the teaching process. All these circumstances lead towards the assumption that the teachers who were digitally literate were able to integrate technology into pedagogy, leading towards another assumption that all the teachers with better digital literacy would have a better score on TPACK. The current study is an effort to establish both assumptions based on empirical evidences.

On the contrary, there are many research studies that have already focused on the of Technological Pedagogical Content knowledge using multiple instruments, for example, the research carried out by Ioo, Park, & Lim in 2018 and another research carried out by Dong, et al. earlier in 2015. The result of these studies presents that a lack of digital skills serves as a barrier to integrating technology into pedagogy (Jang, 2010; Liang et al., 2013). Digital literacy skills are important factors that are an influence on the gathering of knowledge through internet and also the integration of technology into pedagogy (Leu et al., 2017; Ustundag et al., 2017). There seems to be a gap in investigating the relationship between digital literacy and knowledge of TPACK, so the present research is an effort to bridge this breach by exploring the relationship between digital literacy and TPACK knowledge.

## TPACK Knowledge Framework

The concept of TPACK was initially presented by Shulman (1986), which was later modified by many scholars in which the most recent and popular work came from Mishra and Koehler (2006). They have broadened the concept by providing the theoretical

groundings to the framework but also presented competencies that might be a prerequisite by teachers for the incorporation of technology in the teaching-learning process. The model presented by the aforementioned two scholars was composed of knowledge of content, pedagogy and content. It also presented the interaction between the abovesaid triad results into four fragments of knowledge, including technological pedagogical knowledge, technological pedagogical content knowledge, and pedagogical content knowledge (Koehler et al., 2014; Graham, 2011; Mishra & Koehler, 2006, 2009). The following study targets to explore the knowledge of TPACK among secondary school teachers.

## Digital literacy

The individuals who are encircled by technology and can use it for multipurpose from daily life to the learning process were termed digital natives by <u>Prensky (2001)</u>. However, the research has provided evidence that the availability of resources, compulsion to use technology and training in this perspective also influence the level of digital literacy of these digital inhabitants (Altun & Tantekin-Erden, 2018; Ng, 2012a; Helsper & Eynon, 2010). The prevalent framework of digital literacy was present by Ng (2012a) that was comprised of three components including technical (daily usage of digital gadgets, for example, sending an email), cognitive (mental skills to process information gathered through digital resources) and socioeconomic (ethical, legal and moral aspects of using technology) dimensions. The research studies have provided evidences that competence in these three dimensions proves an individual a competent technology user who can use technology in their carrier (Gunes & Bahcivan, 2018; Ustundag et al., 2017; Ng. 2012a). This is why the digital competency can be considered a likely conjecturer of TPACK competencies. The current study focuses on exploring the relationship between digital literacy and perceived knowledge of TPACK.

# Objectives of the study

The objectives of the current study are as follows;

- 1. To identify the perceived level of digital literacy among secondary school instructors.
- 2. To identify the knowledge of TPACK among secondary school teachers.
- **3.** To examine the relationship between digital literacy and TPACK.

## Research Questions

The research questions based on the objectives of the study are as follows;

- 1. What is the perceived level of digital literacy among secondary school teachers?
- What is the score of teachers on the knowledge level of TPACk among secondary school teachers?
- 3. Is there any significant relationship between digital literacy and knowledge of TPACK?

## Methodology

This section of the research paper deals with the research design, population, sampling process and instrument of the study. The study was correlational in nature and a survey research design was used to achieve the objectives of the study. The study tried to identify the relationship between digital literacy skills and Technological, Pedagogical and Content Knowledge( TPACK). This target pertains to extensive data collection thus making the survey as an instrument for collecting responses from a large number of samples.

## Population, sample and sampling technique

The data was collected from four hundred secondary school teachers working in Lahore. The populace of

the study included secondary school teachers of the province of Punjab. There were 205 approximately female secondary schools in Lahore and 195 approximately male secondary schools and the numbers of teachers were 5600 approximately female teachers and 4000 approximately male teachers in the public sector. The targeted population was teachers working at the secondary school level in district Lahore (chosen due to time

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and resource constraints). The sample was narrowed down to 400 respondents from previously selected schools.

factors and 19 statements, while the third part of the instrument was the TPACK survey with six factors and 42 statements.

#### Questionnaire as an Instrument

The data was collected through two survey instruments; the first part of the instrument was composed of demographic information including gender, type of school, qualification, experience and statements related to any kind of digital or pedagogical training. The second part of the instrument was the digital literacy scale with three

## Pilot Testing of the Instrument

Though both instruments were adopted, however, owing to changes in context and sample of the study, the reliability value was calculated through the Cronbach alpha value. Below is the detailed table on the reliability value of both instruments and their factors;

Table 1. Reliability value of each factor of the digital literacy questionnaire and TPACK questionnaire

| Variables        | Factors  | Cronbach's Alpha | N of Items |
|------------------|----------|------------------|------------|
| Digital literacy | СТОТ     | .725             | 4          |
|                  | DLSTOT   | .835             | 8          |
|                  | FTOT     | .750             | 7          |
| TPACK            | CKTOT    | .834             | 12         |
|                  | PKTOT    | .814             | 7          |
|                  | TKTOT    | .704             | 5          |
|                  | PCKTOT   | .814             | 4          |
|                  | TCKTOT   | .699             | 4          |
|                  | TPKTOT   | .798             | 6          |
|                  | TPACKTOT | .729             | 4          |

## Results and Findings

The data was collected from four hundred respondents. The following table presents the

spread of respondents based on demographic variables;

**Table 2.** Spread of sample based on demographic variables

|                                      | Frequency | Percent |
|--------------------------------------|-----------|---------|
| Gender                               |           |         |
| Male                                 | 174       | 43.5    |
| Female                               | 226       | 56.5    |
| Qualification                        |           |         |
| B.A/B.ed/B.sc                        | 93        | 23.3    |
| M.A/M.ed/M.sc                        | 136       | 34.0    |
| M.Phil.                              | 103       | 25.8    |
| PHD                                  | 68        | 17.0    |
| Type of institution                  |           |         |
| Public                               | 194       | 48.5    |
| Private                              | 206       | 51.5    |
| Training about the use of technology |           |         |
| Yes                                  | 185       | 46.3    |
| No                                   | 215       | 53.8    |

As the first objective of the study was to identify the perceived level of digital literacy among secondary

school teachers, so descriptive statistics were used. The following table presents the results;

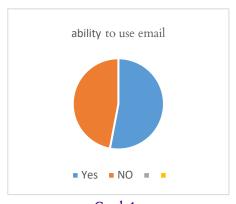
Table 3. Perceived level of digital literacy among secondary school teachers

| Factors | Mean   | SD     | MPI  |
|---------|--------|--------|------|
| CTOT    | 1.7605 | .44888 | .440 |
| DLSTOT  | 3.3450 | .87790 | .418 |
| FTOT    | 3.2202 | .77497 | .460 |

The results indicate that the mean per item of each factor was below one, indicating the low skills of teachers, as most of the teachers responded to disagreement.

In addition to this, the two statements were

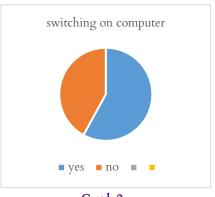
asked in the demographic section to check the basic usage skill of computers, including the ability to switch on/off computers and the ability to send and receive email through internet. The following graphs present the results;



Graph 1

The number of respondents who could use email was 212, while other 188 were unable to use this service. On the contrary, the 232 respondents were

able to switch on the computer as shown by the following graph;



Graph 2

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The second objective of the study was to identify the knowledge of TPACK through TPACK survey, the following table present the results;

Table 4. Descriptive statistics on knowledge of TPACK

|          | Mean   | SD     |
|----------|--------|--------|
| TKTOT    | 3.2097 | .80525 |
| CKTOT    | 3.4516 | .73048 |
| PKTOT    | 3.4846 | .84987 |
| PCKTOT   | 3.2781 | .91834 |
| TCKTOT   | 2.6138 | .83917 |
| TPKTOT   | 3.4704 | .87257 |
| TPACKTOT | 3.2781 | .91834 |

The result here again shows that the responses of teachers were prone to disagreement with respect to technological pedagogical content knowledge.

The third objective of the study was to identify the relationship between digital literacy and knowledge of TPACK. The following table presents the results;

Table 5. Correlation between digital literacy and knowledge of TPACK

| Variables | Mean   | SD     | R        | Sig. |
|-----------|--------|--------|----------|------|
| DLS       | 3.3450 | .87790 | E 0.77** | .000 |
| TPACK     | 3.2781 | .91834 | .587**   | .000 |

The results indicate a positively strong relationship between TPACK and digital literacy (r =.587, p=<.001).

#### Discussions

This research study aimed to explore the digital skills of secondary school teachers and their knowledge about TPACK. The major findings of this research study highlight the significant relationship between DLS and TPACK. The teachers who have DLS can easily integrate technology into the curriculum. TPACK highlights the knowledge that teachers require for the effective assimilation of technology in the educational classrooms. The advantage of using TPACK knowledge in the classrooms will help teachers in planning effective teaching strategies that will help teachers in enhancing their skills regarding the use of technologies in the schoolrooms. The finding of this study shows that the DLS of the secondary school teachers helps teachers in enhancing their knowledge about TPACK. There is a very small ratio of the teachers who are using TPACK in their teaching, while there is a number of researchers who are using TPACK framework in their research.

TPACK in most of schools is used for the teacher's professional learning needs. TPACK needs to be built and collaboratively distributed among the teachers. We cannot observe teachers' abilities may be one teacher has more content knowledge and the other teacher have pedagogical knowledge. It's also possible that another teacher has technological knowledge. Maybe another teacher has abilities in all three knowledge areas. TPACK is addressing more important issues of teaching and learning. TPACK framework covers a lot of things TPACK is not making any claims on the goals of learning. If a teacher wants to use a card, he can use it to make the teaching and learning effective. It depends on the educators to use TPACK correctly but they can't use it for non-pedagogical goals. Teachers have not designed a system in which they can engage the learners in the teaching and learning process. That's the reason students get bored in classrooms. Teachers are responsible for not engaging the students in the classrooms because

they have not attracted their attention by using digital gadgets.

### Recommendations and Future Research

The results of the study lead towards a recommendation to officials to arrange professional

development courses both on digital pedagogy and literacy. Keeping in view the limitations of study, future research with a better sample size, mix method approach and the addition of respondents from other cities may be conducted for deeper understanding.

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