



Southeast Asian
Ministers of Education
Organization

POLICY BRIEF

**Insights into Children's
Digital Lives in
Indonesia**
Digital Kids Asia-Pacific

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Introduction

Nearly half of the global population access the Internet daily. We can say that the flow of information and even the economy depend on digital technology. Education amidst the ensuing COVID-19 pandemic would also not be possible without access to the Internet and computer or, at the very least, smartphone usage.

Now, more than ever, the youth spend more time online—studying, connecting with friends and family, and engaging in leisure activities. But while information and communication technology (ICT) has made life easier in that students no longer need to visit a library to do research or the store to buy school supplies, they also get exposed to cyberthreats and other risks, such as getting bullied online. They are, after all, not the only ICT beneficiaries. Some also seemingly lose their sense of responsibility and, worse, stray from traditional values and culture. Too much freedom and lack of censorship can expose them to adult content and violence. If not monitored closely, they may also get tempted to resort to plagiarism to finish schoolwork fast so they can spend more time playing games, streaming music and videos, or interacting on social media.

As the world has seen and experienced, connectivity is a double-edged sword. While ICT has made life more convenient, the ease and accessibility of the Internet and practically everything online has lessened privacy and left us exposed to cyberthreats and other risks.

We were thus left with one question: Are the Indonesian students of today competent enough to live the so-called “digital life”?

Research Objectives

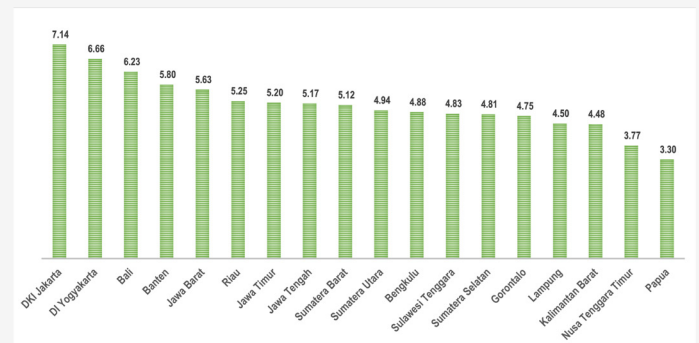
To answer the question posed earlier, we conducted a survey of 15-year-old students across 72 schools in Indonesia to meet the following goals:

- Establish a statistically validated and reliable framework and tool to measure their competence to become digital citizens
- Obtain comprehensive baseline data through a validation study to determine how they use ICT in education
- Identify factors that affect their digital citizenship competence

Survey Respondents and Research Methodology

Based on the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) guidelines, this quantitative study used an online survey questionnaire to collect data from 15-year-old students from 72 schools scattered throughout Indonesia.

To identify the survey respondents, we first selected 18 out of the 34 provinces that had low, medium, and high 2018 Technology, Information, and Communication Development Index (IP-TIK) rankings.



We then selected the districts and cities from each province using the 2019 Human Development Index (HDI) as basis. One district and one city was chosen from each province.

Next, we selected one public senior high school and one public vocational high school using the 2019 Computer-Based National Examination results as basis from every district and city.

Finally, 30 15-year-old students from each school were randomly chosen to answer the questionnaire. A total of 3,600 questionnaires were filled in and later analysed.

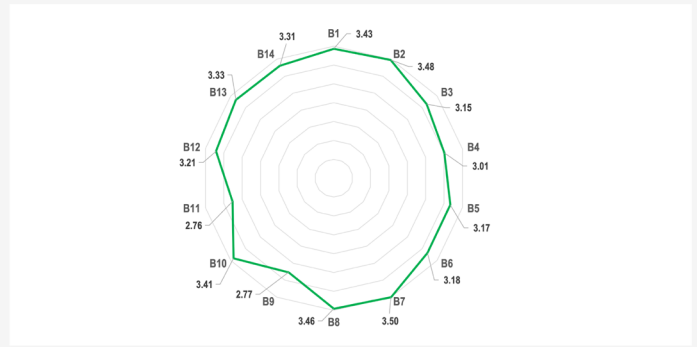
The following four-point scoring system was used:

- Strongly disagree = 1 point
- Disagree = 2 points
- Agree = 3 points
- Strongly agree = 4 points

The mean scores were then computed and interpreted in the following manner:

Interval Mean Score	Interpretation
1.00–1.60	Very poor

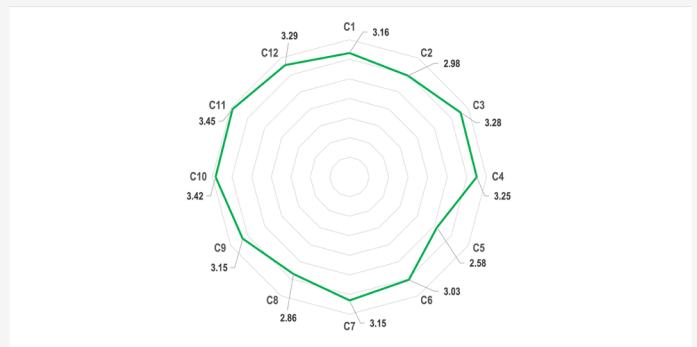
Interval Mean Score	Interpretation
1.61–2.20	Poor
2.21–2.80	Satisfactory
2.81–3.40	Good
3.41–4.00	Very good



The learners got an overall mean score of 3.23. They need to lessen the amount of time they spent online, however, and strive to not get anxious when they cannot check for messages as much as they want to.

DIGITAL PARTICIPATION AND AGENCY

Digital participation and agency refers to people's ability to interact well with others in the virtual realm. The survey results showed that Indonesian 15-year-olds participate well in online relationships with an overall mean score of 3.13.



Despite their high score, though, the learners need to share more relevant content online, such as news, especially on social media.

DIGITAL EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

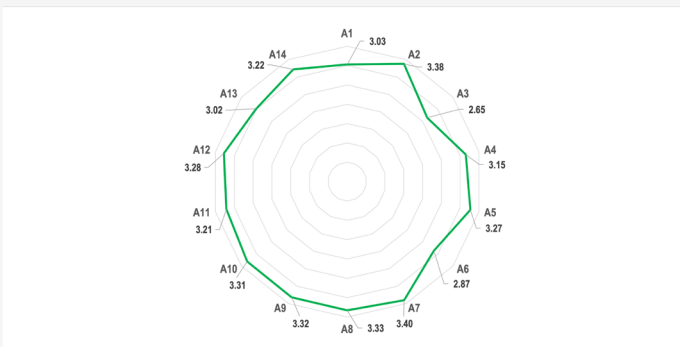
Emotional intelligence is not only a must in real-world relationships but also in online interactions. The survey revealed that Indonesian 15-year-olds can control their emotions well while on the Web, as evidenced by an overall mean score of 3.06.

Results and Findings

This research determined how digitally competent Indonesian students are by gauging their digital literacy, digital safety and resilience, digital participation and agency, digital emotional intelligence, and digital creativity and innovation mean scores, given their level of access to the Internet and necessary devices.

DIGITAL LITERACY

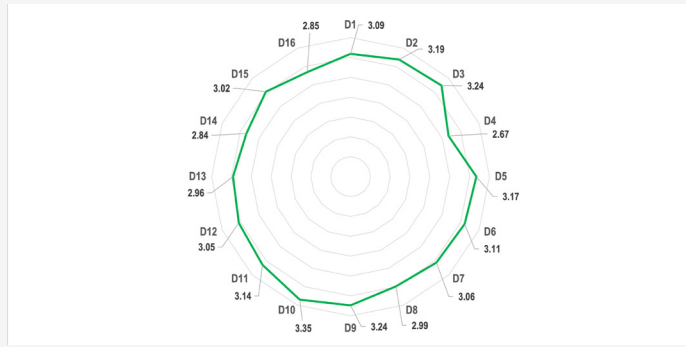
Digital literacy means that students can socialise with the digital world safely and comfortably. The survey revealed that Indonesian 15-year-olds are digitally literate, as evidenced by their overall mean score of 3.17 across 14 indicators.



The students scored high across 13 of 14 indicators but need training in setting up a safe computing environment. That requires removing malware and installing cybersecurity solutions.

DIGITAL SAFETY AND RESILIENCE

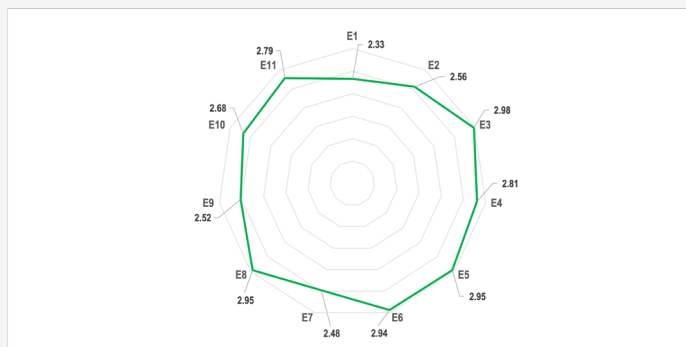
Students who are knowledgeable about digital safety and resilience know how to behave online. The Indonesian 15-year-olds got a good rating.



While the students' overall mean score is high, they need to express themselves better when interacting with people online.

DIGITAL CREATIVITY AND INNOVATION

Digital creativity and innovation refers to making content that others can consume, such as blog posts, artwork, music, and the like. The survey results showed that Indonesian 15-year-olds need some improvement in this realm, as evidenced by their low overall mean score of 2.73.



The learners particularly need to improve on creating digital content for others to enjoy, show off their personalities online, showcase their talents, express themselves better, and generally be their true selves.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The survey results showed that while Indonesian students are adept at using ICT tools, they do need training to be more creative and innovative online. The government can harness the power of mass media for teaching. But the mediums it should choose must be free of adult content, fake news, and other destructive influences. And since social media is so popular among the youth, it can use Facebook and similar platforms to promote digital creativity and innovation. Encouraging entrepreneurship is one way to go about this.

Since most of the students use their smartphones to access the Internet even for school, the government can help by improving the country's wireless infrastructure. But parents need to censor some of the content their children get exposed to. They also need to establish rules about too much gadget use, maybe even solicit the help of educators.

Teachers, for their part, need to participate more in educating the youth. The students should be taught about the dangers lurking on the Web. Lectures on proper digital citizenship need to be made part of school activities, especially since the Internet and ICT, for that matter, are not going away. Young Indonesians need to know how to behave, act, and present themselves online, while staying safe from threats and bad influences.

Only with cooperation among the government, educators, parents, and students can the youth of Indonesia become good digital natives.

Based on the insights in this brief, it is also clear that the DKAP approach is effective in gauging the digital citizenship competence of children in Southeast Asia. With its help, governments and other stakeholders can improve students' current quality of digital life and prepare them for using even more advanced technologies and living in an increasingly connected future.

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