IJLHE: International Journal of Language, Humanities, and Education
ISSN: 2986-0369 (e) I 2963-4520 (p)
2025, Vol. 8, No. 2, page 743-756
https://jurnal.stkippgribl.ac.id/index.php/ijlhe/index

English Teachers' Acceptance of Artificial Intelligence in SMP Negeri 4 Singaraja: A Phenomenological Study

Andi Lusiani[1], I Putu Indra Kusuma[1], Luh Indrayani[1]

[1]Universitas Pendidikan Ganesha, Bali, Indonesia
*andi.lusiani@undiksha.ac.id

ABSTRACT

The implementation of AI in schools remains inconsistent, with many teachers showing awareness but limited classroom application. This study aims to explore English teachers' acceptance of AI at SMP Negeri 4 Singaraja by applying the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), focusing on the constructs of perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use. Using a qualitative phenomenological approach, data were collected through semi-structured interviews, observations, and researcher field notes involving four English teachers representing both Digital Native and Digital Transmigrant generations. Thematic analysis revealed that teachers perceive AI as beneficial for lesson preparation, assessment design, and instructional efficiency, with Digital Natives demonstrating greater fluency and confidence compared to Digital Transmigrants, who required more training and institutional support. Despite infrastructural limitations, teachers exhibited positive attitudes and strong intentions to integrate AI, viewing it as a pedagogical partner rather than a replacement for educators. In this study, teachers' acceptance of AI is primarily shaped by its perceived usefulness, ease of use, and institutional support, suggesting that ongoing professional training and adequate facilities are vital to sustain effective AI integration in future English education.

ARTICLE INFO

Keywords:
Artificial Intelligence;
Digital Native Teachers;
Digital Transmigrant Teachers;
Technology Acceptance Model

How to Cite in APA Style:
English Teachers' Acceptance of Artificial Intelligence in SMP Negeri 4 Singaraja: A Phenomenological Study. (2025). *IJLHE: International Journal of Language, Humanities, and Education, 8*(2), 743-756.
https://doi.org/10.52217/4b19ec50

INTRODUCTION

The rapid advancement of Artificial Intelligence (AI) has reshaped numerous sectors of life, including education, where it increasingly influences teaching and learning

practices (Mulianingsih et al., 2020). In language education, AI systems are capable of delivering personalized instruction, adaptive feedback, and real-time language assessment, transforming traditional English language teaching (ELT) into a more interactive, student-centered, and efficient process (Crompton & Burke, 2023; Rusmiyanto et al., 2023). According to Yusuf (2024), the integration of AI in education allows for individualized learning experiences, enabling teachers to tailor instruction according to students' needs and performance. These developments position AI not merely as a technological tool but as a pedagogical partner in promoting inclusive and sustainable education.

However, the adoption of AI in educational settings remains uneven. While many teachers acknowledge its potential, others exhibit hesitation due to ethical, technical, and pedagogical concerns (Suharyat & Lusiana, 2023). Teachers' responses vary widely — some embrace AI for its ability to enhance engagement and efficiency, while others fear it may reduce human interaction or create inequities in assessment (Rukiqi, 2024). According to Bezjak (2024), global studies such as those in Slovenia demonstrate predominantly positive attitudes toward AI, the actual use of AI in classroom instruction remains limited. This indicates a gap between the ideal condition and the actual condition where AI is fully integrated into teaching and its use is still confined to administrative or preparatory functions.

This disparity is particularly visible in Indonesia's educational landscape, where many English teachers are aware of AI tools but do not utilize them effectively in their teaching practices (Purnama et al., 2025). Teachers at SMP Negeri 4 Singaraja, one of Bali's leading secondary schools, exemplify this phenomenon. Despite access to technological infrastructure and supportive leadership, AI use is often restricted to lesson preparation, not classroom engagement. The gap between potential and practice suggests underlying issues of readiness, digital literacy, and pedagogical confidence. The contrast between digital native and digital transmigrant teachers further amplifies this complexity. While younger educators (digital natives) adapt quickly to emerging technologies, their senior counterparts (digital transmigrants) may struggle with integration due to limited exposure or training (Mahmoudi-Dehaki et al., 2024).

Theoretically, this study draws on the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) by Davis (1989), which explains technology adoption through two principal constructs: perceived usefulness (PU) and perceived ease of use (PEOU). Numerous studies affirm TAM's predictive strength in education, where teachers' acceptance of AI depends largely on whether they find it useful for teaching and easy to operate (Granić & Marangunić, 2019). Complementary frameworks such as the Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT) expand this understanding by adding social and facilitating factors that influence behavioral intention (Venkatesh et al., 2003).

Empirical findings reinforce the importance of individual, institutional, and environmental factors in shaping teachers' attitudes toward AI (Yu et al., 2022). Teachers tend to accept AI when they experience clear performance gains, social support, and user-friendly systems (Wu & Chen, 2017). However, barriers such as limited training,

infrastructure gaps, and concerns about the accuracy and ethics of AI responses persist (Adiguzel et al., 2023). These concerns highlight the urgent need for context-specific investigations that capture teachers' lived experiences rather than relying solely on survey-based quantitative data. Furthermore, there is still a gap in instructors' general acceptance of AI in the learning process, particularly in English language acquisition, despite the promise of individualized learning, immediate feedback, and enhanced efficiency. Also, new settings and environment on middle school English teachers were the novelty of this research.

Within this context, the present study explores English teachers' acceptance of AI at SMP Negeri 4 Singaraja, focusing on how they perceive, experience, and respond to AI integration in language teaching. Unlike previous research that centers on university or cross-country comparisons, this study provides novel insights into AI adoption at the secondary school level in Indonesia. It adopts a phenomenological approach to uncover the nuanced realities behind teachers' attitudes, exploring how generational differences, school culture, and perceived competence shape technology acceptance. Thus, this research contributes to filling the knowledge gap between theoretical ideals and practical realities in AI integration within English language education. By identifying the underlying factors influencing acceptance and reluctance, it offers an innovative, empirically grounded understanding of how teachers interpret their roles in the digital era. The findings are expected to guide educational institutions, policymakers, and teacher-training programs in designing strategies that enhance AI literacy, promote equitable technology use, and strengthen pedagogical innovation. Thus, how do English teachers at SMP Negeri 4 Singaraja experience and perceive the use of Artificial Intelligence in their teaching practice was the research question of this study.

METHOD

This study employed a qualitative research design with a phenomenological approach to explore the lived experiences and perceptions of English teachers regarding the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in language learning. The research was conducted at SMP Negeri 4 Singaraja, Bali and the subjects were four English teachers from SMP Negeri 4 Singaraja because they are parallel-grade teachers. Then, selected using purposive sampling based on specific criteria. Meanwhile, the object of the research was the underutilization of Artificial Intelligence in teaching English and the underlying factors influencing teachers' acceptance or reluctance to use it in their instructional practices.

Data collection was conducted through semi-structured interviews and observations. The semi-structured phenomenological interviews served as the primary data source, as they allowed the researcher to gain a deep understanding of participants' personal experiences, beliefs, and motivations. The interview process was guided by an instrument developed using the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) by Davis (1989). On the other hand, observations were conducted to validate and complement the

interview data. Also, the study utilized several instruments, including the interview guide and researcher's field notes.

Several validation techniques were applied to maintain trustworthiness and rigor, such as Member Checking and Data Triangulation. Then, the data analysis using thematic analysis as proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006). This process consisted of six systematic steps: familiarization with the data by reading and rereading transcripts, generating initial codes to capture meaningful features of the data, searching for themes by clustering related codes, reviewing themes to ensure internal coherence and external distinction, defining and naming themes to clarify their essence and relevance, and producing the analytical report by integrating findings with theoretical perspectives and previous studies. As an ethical consideration, participants were recruited by requesting permission from the relevant school principal to interview potential participants. Once approval was obtained, potential participants were contacted to inquire about their willingness to participate. Interviews were conducted if they agreed, so participation is completely voluntary. Participants can withdraw from this study at any time without any consequences. Furthermore, all responses will be anonymized, and pseudonyms will be used in any reports or publications.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

1. Analysis the Experiences and Perceptions of Digital Native English Teachers About Artificial Intelligence

The findings indicate that digital native English teachers have diverse teaching experiences that shape their understanding of technology use in education. One teacher began teaching immediately after completing her undergraduate studies, while another had experience teaching at various educational levels before joining SMP Negeri 4 Singaraja. These diverse experiences have given teachers a broad perspective on instructional design and adaptability. Both teachers demonstrated high familiarity with technology, utilizing various platforms such as Google Meet, Zoom, Moodle, Schoology, Kahoot, Quizzes, Educaplay, and Bamboozle. Additionally, they reported using applications like Canva, Microsoft Word, and even AI-based tools such as ChatGPT, Dreamania, and Perplexity to enhance lesson preparation and create innovative teaching materials.

Regarding the perceived ease of use, the teachers reported that adapting to technology was effortless due to their long-standing exposure to digital tools throughout their education. Having grown up in a digital environment, they felt confident and comfortable using AI in their professional tasks. One teacher explained that since she had been accustomed to using technology during her studies, transitioning to technological integration in teaching was natural. Another teacher affirmed that she had no major difficulties using AI because she had been familiar with technology since school and university. Both participants emphasized

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that AI tools are easy to operate and helpful in teaching-related activities. These experiences suggest that digital native teachers' prior technological literacy has significantly contributed to their readiness and adaptability in utilizing AI in education.

In relation to perceived usefulness, both teachers viewed AI as a valuable tool that enhances their teaching preparation, efficiency, and effectiveness. They found that AI could assist in developing lesson plans, preparing administrative documents, generating ideas for instructional materials, and organizing classroom content. One participant explained that AI helped her compile modules and find teaching resources such as videos and dialogues for language learning. Another participant highlighted that AI provided inspiration for selecting teaching methods and models, allowing her to modify instructional strategies based on student needs. Moreover, teachers perceived AI as a time-saving innovation that reduces preparation workload, allowing them to focus more on classroom delivery. The teachers also recognized the positive impact of AI on students, particularly in improving learning motivation and engagement. They observed that the use of AI-based materials created a more dynamic and enjoyable classroom atmosphere, encouraging students to participate more actively. Consequently, AI was perceived as beneficial not only for teachers' efficiency but also for enriching students' learning experiences.

The support available to teachers played a crucial role in influencing their ability to integrate AI effectively. Although teachers possessed basic facilities such as laptops and smartphones, institutional support for technology-based teaching was still limited. One participant mentioned that she often had to bring her own devices to class due to the lack of adequate school-provided equipment. Nevertheless, both teachers acknowledged that they received moral and administrative support from the school leadership. The principal and academic staff were reported to encourage teachers to use technology in instruction. Social support, particularly through professional collaboration and sharing among colleagues, was also identified as an important factor that fostered motivation and confidence. In addition, training emerged as an urgent need. Teachers recognized that while they were technologically capable, formal training on AI usage was essential for updating their skills and adapting to rapid technological developments. Regular workshops and guided practice sessions were considered necessary to ensure continuous professional growth in AI integration.

Concerning their perspectives toward AI, both digital native teachers expressed predominantly positive attitudes. They emphasized that the advantages of AI outweighed potential disadvantages. One teacher noted that she had not encountered any significant negative effects from AI usage, while another observed that its benefits were far greater than any risks. The participants generally perceived

AI as an innovative and supportive tool that could enhance teaching effectiveness and student engagement. Their openness and willingness to explore new technology indicate a forward-thinking mindset and readiness for educational innovation.

The findings also revealed the teachers' behavioral intentions to integrate AI into their instructional practices. They demonstrated a strong desire to adopt AI-based learning, driven by both personal and institutional motivations. Teachers believed that combining AI with traditional pedagogical principles would create a balanced learning environment that meets modern students' needs without neglecting core educational values. Social influence from peers also contributed to their enthusiasm, as seeing colleagues successfully use AI inspired them to do the same. Institutional encouragement, particularly through structured training programs, was found to significantly strengthen teachers' intentions to integrate AI into teaching. Additionally, internal motivation played a key role. Teachers stated that self-initiative and curiosity were crucial factors that pushed them to learn and experiment with AI tools. They emphasized that although challenges exist, personal commitment and willingness to learn could overcome obstacles. Their motivation to stay updated with technological developments reflects a sense of professional responsibility and continuous improvement.

Despite these positive experiences, the study also identified several obstacles faced by digital native teachers. The most frequently mentioned challenge was the limited availability of training. Another constraint was the issue of premium access to AI platforms. Moreover, the lack of facilities and student access remained a concern. Another noteworthy challenge involved the ability to formulate effective prompts when interacting with AI systems. Teachers observed that AI output quality largely depended on the precision of the input prompts, making prompt engineering an important yet underdeveloped skill that requires targeted training.

2. Analysis of the Experience and Perception of Artificial Intelligence by Digital Transmigrant English Teachers

The analysis revealed that Digital Transmigrant teachers possess longer teaching experience compared to their Digital Native teachers. One teacher reported teaching for over twelve years, indicating extensive professional experience and familiarity with pedagogical practices. Most participants had taught English exclusively at the junior high school level, covering grades 7 through 9. Such lengthy experience contributed to their critical and reflective perspective on educational technologies. Teachers shared that their exposure to technology significantly increased during the COVID-19 pandemic, which forced educators to integrate digital platforms into teaching. Their experience with AI-based tools, however, is relatively recent and primarily the result of school-provided training programs. According to the teachers, institutional support through training played a key role in helping them recognize the potential of AI tools such as ChatGPT and Perplexity,

which they had started using after professional development sessions organized by the principal.

In terms of perceived ease of use, Digital Transmigrant teachers described their journey as gradual. Initially, they found technology use difficult, but with continuous exposure, they became increasingly comfortable. Teachers found AI particularly useful in simplifying lesson preparation and assessments. They reported that generating materials or questions became much faster and more convenient with AI assistance. The teachers also perceived that AI supports not only their professional duties but also students' learning experience. They emphasized that the ease of use of technology makes lessons more interactive and accessible, benefiting both educators and learners.

In the perceived usefulness of AI, teachers emphasized that AI significantly assists in lesson preparation, classroom management, and assessment design. Participants expressed that AI has made it easier to create learning media, prepare tests, and develop teaching aids. They acknowledged that AI saves considerable time and effort, enabling them to complete professional tasks more efficiently. Teachers also observed improvements in student engagement and comprehension. Moreover, the use of AI was found to reduce teachers' workload by improving time efficiency. Tasks that once required long preparation hours could now be completed quickly. This shows that AI not only enhances the quality of instructional materials but also contributes to better work-life balance for teachers.

In relation to support systems, both institutional and social support emerged as critical factors enabling Digital Transmigrant teachers to embrace AI. School leadership, particularly the principal, played a central role in promoting AI use through policies, training programs, and encouragement. Teachers also benefited from collegial collaboration, where they shared ideas and experiences about using AI tools. Beyond moral support, teachers emphasized the importance of technical training to enhance their skills. They considered such training essential for adapting to continuous technological change. Observations also indicated that after receiving training, teachers who were initially less active in technology use became more engaged, showing a clear link between training and increased AI adoption.

The teachers' perspectives toward AI were overwhelmingly positive. They recognized its potential to simplify their professional duties and improve teaching outcomes. This demonstrates that even though Digital Transmigrant teachers may have been slower to adopt technology, their attitudes toward AI have evolved into open-minded acceptance. They viewed AI as an opportunity rather than a threat, believing it could complement rather than replace their roles as educators. This optimistic perception creates a strong foundation for deeper integration of AI tools into classroom practices in the future.

In exploring behavioral intentions, the findings revealed that Digital

Transmigrant teachers displayed strong motivation to continue adopting and integrating AI into their teaching. They recognized the need to keep up with technological progress to remain relevant and effective. Their motivation was driven by both internal and external factors. Internally, teachers expressed a desire to improve and a willingness to adapt to technological changes. Externally, collaboration with colleagues and institutional support strengthened this intention. Teachers described working together to share ideas, discuss teaching innovations, and collectively overcome challenges. Institutional encouragement also influenced their motivation, such as the provision of internet facilities and technological infrastructure. The availability of such support, including stable networks, was seen as essential for sustaining AI integration in teaching. Therefore, behavioral intention among Digital Transmigrant teachers is not solely based on individual determination but also reinforced by the school's collective and organizational culture.

Despite this positive outlook, teachers still encountered obstacles that hindered optimal AI integration. Limited facilities were the most frequently mentioned barrier. Essential tools such as LCD projectors and stable internet connections were not consistently available, forcing teachers to use personal resources. These limitations affected the ability to conduct interactive and technology-based learning effectively. In addition, teachers identified technical challenges such as difficulties in formulating effective prompts when using AI tools. Therefore, the need for targeted technical training remains crucial to ensure that teachers can utilize AI efficiently and confidently in classroom contexts.

Finally, the analysis also revealed perceived risks associated with AI use. Although teachers viewed AI positively, they were aware of the potential for over-reliance and dependency. Some participants expressed concern that AI could make users complacent or overly dependent on instant solutions, diminishing creativity and critical thinking. This awareness indicates that teachers understand the importance of maintaining balance in technology use, emphasizing that AI should support human decision-making and pedagogical creativity. They acknowledged that responsible and controlled use of AI is necessary to preserve teachers' autonomy and promote students' critical engagement.

Discussion

The results of this study confirm that both Digital Native and Digital Transmigrant English teachers perceive AI as highly useful in supporting teaching tasks. AI was found to assist teachers in preparing materials, organizing administrative documents, designing assessments, and improving instructional efficiency. These findings reinforce Davis (1989) assertion that Perceived Usefulness is the strongest determinant of technology adoption. Empirical evidence from recent studies supports this interpretation. Xu et al. (2024) and Rahman et al. (2023) found that teachers are more

likely to adopt AI when it demonstrably enhances productivity and teaching quality. Similarly, Yu et al. (2022) concluded that AI adoption in schools is shaped by individual and organizational perceptions of utility. In this study, teachers' frequent references to AI helping them work faster and save time reflect similar findings. Moreover, the perception that AI improves student engagement echoes findings by Bezjak (2024) and Xuan and Yunus (2023), who reported that teachers view AI as beneficial in creating more dynamic, student-centered learning environments.

The evidence also shows that Digital Native teachers experience stronger perceived usefulness due to their prior exposure to technology during their studies. Conversely, Digital Transmigrant teachers demonstrated growing confidence after receiving targeted training. This distinction supports the findings of Howlett and Waemusa (2018) and Xu et al. (2024), who emphasized that teachers' technological backgrounds and generational experiences significantly influence their confidence and willingness to adapt to AI integration. Another crucial point is the link between usefulness and pedagogical motivation. Teachers who experience tangible benefits from AI show higher levels of engagement and openness to technology, such as reduced workload and creative inspiration. This aligns with Momani (2020) conclusion that perceived usefulness, ease of use, and intention form the triad that drives sustained technology adoption. In this regard, the present study affirms that perceived usefulness not only predicts adoption but also strengthens teachers' sense of professional efficacy, particularly in adapting teaching to the needs of modern learners.

The second TAM construct, Perceived Ease of Use, was equally evident in teachers' experiences. Both Digital Native and Digital Transmigrant teachers agreed that AI is easy to operate once familiar. For Digital Native teachers, who have long been exposed to digital tools, AI usage felt intuitive. For Digital Transmigrant teachers, initial difficulties were overcome through repeated practice and institutional training, confirming Davis (1989) proposition that ease of use improves with user experience and support. This gradual improvement resonates with findings by Adiguzel et al. (2023) that observed that repeated AI exposure builds user confidence, even among educators who initially feel technologically disadvantaged. In the present study, both groups demonstrated this process, Digital Natives through habitual use and Digital Transmigrants through institutional support and persistence.

Perceived ease of use also contributes to teachers' emotional readiness to adopt AI. When teachers find AI simple and accessible, their anxiety toward technology decreases, encouraging experimentation and innovation in classroom practice. This pattern supports the argument of Yu et al. (2022) that user-friendly technological environments enhance educators' motivation to integrate digital tools. At SMP Negeri 4 Singaraja, this was particularly visible after AI training programs were introduced by the principal, transforming teachers' initial reluctance into proactive engagement. Beyond internal perceptions of usefulness and ease of use, the study identified several external

factors that align with the extended TAM and UTAUT (Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology) frameworks proposed by Venkatesh et al. (2003). These include facilities, institutional leadership, social support, and professional training, all of which significantly influence AI acceptance.

Teachers emphasized that adequate facilities such as stable internet connections, projectors, and digital devices are prerequisites for successful AI integration. This finding corroborates Sitompul (2024) assertion that environmental readiness is a critical determinant of technology use, both physical and organizational. Furthermore, social encouragement from colleagues and leadership support from the principal were identified as strong motivators for continued engagement. The principal's active involvement in promoting AI training programs echoes Yu et al.'s (2022) finding that institutional leadership can accelerate teachers' technological adaptation by creating supportive environments for experimentation and peer learning.

Training emerged as a particularly crucial factor. Both Digital Native and Digital Transmigrant teachers viewed ongoing training as necessary for staying current with rapid technological developments. This confirms Richter et al. (2019), who emphasized that insufficient training is one of the leading barriers to sustainable technology adoption in education. In this study, teachers explicitly linked their growing confidence to recent AI workshops organized by the school. However, this study also uncovered teachers' ethical awareness regarding the potential risks of dependency on AI. Participants expressed concern that over-reliance might lead to decreased creativity and critical thinking. This echoes the caution raised by Nykonenko (2023) and Adiguzel et al. (2023), who warned that uncritical AI dependence could erode teachers' problem-solving autonomy. The acknowledgment of this risk demonstrates reflective professionalism among teachers, emphasizing their commitment to maintaining balance between technological efficiency and pedagogical integrity.

Despite the overall positive findings, barriers such as limited facilities, premium access restrictions, and varied digital literacy levels continue to challenge full-scale AI integration. These constraints are consistent with international findings by Richter et al. (2019) and Adiguzel et al. (2023), which report that inadequate infrastructure and uneven training remain persistent obstacles in developing countries. Nevertheless, this study makes a novel contribution by showing that even in contexts of limited infrastructure and minimal formal AI education, teachers' acceptance remains high when practical benefits are personally experienced. Unlike earlier studies emphasizing material readiness, this research highlights experiential motivation as a powerful catalyst for adoption. This finding extends TAM theory by illustrating that perceived usefulness can outweigh contextual limitations when users experience direct pedagogical value.

CONCLUSIONS

The study concludes that the acceptance of AI among English teachers at SMP

Negeri 4 Singaraja is primarily driven by the dual factors of perceived ease of use and perceived usefulness, reinforced by leadership support and professional collaboration. The qualitative analysis through in-depth interviews, observations, and researcher notes revealed that both Digital Native and Digital Transmigrant teachers demonstrate generally positive attitudes toward AI integration in English language teaching. These findings affirm the validity of the Technology Acceptance Model in explaining teachers' readiness to adopt educational innovations. However, the study also highlights that the continuity of AI integration depends on consistent training, improved digital literacy, and the development of supportive infrastructure. Also, the findings carry important implications for schools and teacher education institutions. Continuous and structured professional training emerged as a key factor enabling both Digital Native and Digital Transmigrant teachers to confidently integrate AI into teaching practices. Therefore, schools should design ongoing, needs-based training programs rather than one-time workshops. Collaborative learning communities among teachers can further enhance confidence, peer support, and knowledge sharing.

Looking ahead, the findings suggest promising prospects for educational development through AI. If effectively supported, AI can evolve into a collaborative pedagogical tool that enriches English teaching with personalized learning experiences, interactive materials, and efficient assessment systems. Future initiatives should focus on integrating AI literacy into teacher education curricula, ensuring that both pre-service and in-service teachers acquire the necessary skills to utilize AI ethically and creatively. Furthermore, longitudinal research could examine how sustained AI exposure transforms pedagogical practices and learning outcomes over time.

In essence, this research illustrates that embracing AI in education is not merely a matter of adopting new technology but represents a transformational process in which teachers evolve as adaptive, reflective, and innovative professionals. With proper institutional support, continuous capacity building, and ethical awareness, AI can serve as a catalyst for enhancing teaching quality and realizing the vision of future-ready English education in Indonesia.

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