ABSTRACT

Oktafiyani, Fazriah Dwi (2025): The Correlation Between Digital Literacy and Critical Reading Skills among EFL University Students with *Pesantren* Background

The growth of digital technology has significantly changed how people access, process, and evaluate information, creating a need for new skills in education. In English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learning, particularly for students from Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren*), integrating digital literacy with critical reading skills is becoming increasingly essential. However, the relationship between these two skills is still rarely studied. This research aims to examine the correlation between digital literacy and critical reading skills among EFL students with a *pesantren* background.

This study employed a quantitative method with a correlational design. The participants consisted of 40 fourth-semester students from the English Education Department at UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung, all of whom had a *pesantren* educational background. Digital literacy skills were measured using a Likert-scale questionnaire, while critical reading skills were assessed through an essay test focusing on the evaluation aspect. The collected data were analyzed using Pearson correlation with the help of SPSS version 29.

The results indicate that students' digital literacy skills fall within the fair-to-good range, with an average score of 68.28. They can use digital devices, search for, and manage online information, but their skills are more focused on technical use than critically evaluating information. Their critical reading skills are also in the fair-to-good category, with an average score of 72.05, indicating their ability to assess the clarity, accuracy, completeness, and consistency of texts. The correlation test reveals a significant relationship between the two skills (r-calculated = -0.410; p = 0.009), characterised by a negative correlation direction. This means that higher digital literacy skills are associated with lower critical reading skills, and vice versa. This finding avoids the assumption of the proficiency in technology automatically translates into stronger evaluation in reading skills.

This study concludes that balanced development of both skills is needed. It is recommended that educators create learning activities that combine technical digital skills with analytical and reflective reading practices, enabling students to use technology effectively and evaluate information critically in the digital era.

Keywords: digital literacy, critical reading, EFL students, pesantren background, correlation