

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of the Study

A number of studies have been conducted in the realm of digital identity. The use of technology, specifically ICT in education, was discussed in small details at several American universities: American Open University, GLOSAS/Global University, the National Learning Infrastructure Initiative of EDUCOM (an American organisation for technology in Higher Education) (Gouveia, 1997). In Portugal, the National Initiative was sponsored by the Portuguese Information Society Mission (Verde, 1997; Gouveia, 1999). It can be seen how the technology was perceived as a great potential at that time, but digital identity was not the main topic.

The rise of digital literacy has been perceived as an important skill for teachers these days (Littlejohn, Beetham, & McGill, 2012). These days, some teachers possess digital competence already of how to present themselves online or it is commonly called digital identity. However, some of them are still not conscious of their identity as professional teachers (Barnable, Cunning, and Parcon, 2018; Carpenter and Harvey, 2019). Griffin and Zinskie (2020) found that some pre-service teachers were still unaware of their e-professionalism on the social media. Consequently, a teacher who posted an inappropriate post in California expressing her desire to stab some students (Oakley, 2014). Another case occurred in which a teacher was fired because simply she described her students and even their parents negatively on her blog (Balasubramani, 2014).

Ramarajan and Reid (2013) stated that the internet has blurred the boundaries between [teachers'] professional and social lives (p. 624). For professionals who want to protect their credibility as individuals deserving of their professional identity, online disclosure may be beneficial or harmful, depending on how online contact is performed or how their digital footprint is consistent with the professional identity they wish to retain (Kirwan and Guckin, 2014). Additionally, a recent study found that teachers also use social media like Facebook to build their e-professionalism (Poth, McCallum, and Tang, 2016). Undoubtedly, there is a strong consensus that digitalisation can promote the quality of education in which it can enhance professionalism (Henderson, 2019; Engeness, 2020).

Thus, this case study investigated deeply how teachers have managed their digital identity in Indonesian English as Foreign Language (EFL) context. As educators, teachers are also required to enhance their teaching professionalism digitally. Finally, this study was expected to contribute to build EFL teachers' awareness towards this issue and can be a reference for them to conduct a further study in this area of research.

1.2. Formulation of the Problem

The formulation of the problem in this case study is “how do teachers describe their digital identity management towards their current e-professionalism in Indonesian English as Foreign Language (EFL) context?”

1.3. Operational Definitions

To avoid misunderstanding about the terms set out in this study, the researcher provides three definitions related to this study as follows;

- 1. Digital Identity** : The representation that an individual constructs in order to determine who she/he is as a person on the Internet.
- 2. Digital Identity Management :** The process of how individuals represent and identify themselves in a digital setting.
- 3. Teacher's e-Professionalism :** The teacher's attitudes and behaviors that are manifested through digital media from traditional paradigms.

1.4. Aim of the Research

The aim of the research is to investigate how teachers describe their digital identity management towards their current e-professionalism in Indonesian English as Foreign Language (EFL) context.

1.5. Significances of the Research

1.5.1. Theoretical Uses

Theoretically, this research will expand on teachers' digital identity and their e-professionalism in digital media.

1.5.2. Practical Uses

The results of this research will provide empirical insights into the contribution of establishing teachers' digital identity to enhance their teaching professionalism in an online setting.

1.5.3. Empirical Uses

This study will inform EFL teachers about the descriptive explanation of how they can construct their e-professionalism to shape their digital identity and this study can contribute to the educational field as a referential source among other existing studies.