

## ADOLESCENT STUDENTS' EXPERIENCE AND PERCEIVED PARENTAL SUPPORT IN INFORMAL DIGITAL ENGLISH LEARNING

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### Abstract

The study has contributed to filling the gap in the literature by exploring the perceived parental support in informal digital English learning. Few earlier studies have addressed the parental support issue within informal digital English learning contexts. This study thus aimed to find out students' lived experiences and their perceived parental support towards their informal digital English learning activities. To this end, a narrative inquiry study design was employed. Two adolescent students who had been engaging in informal digital English learning from an early age were recruited for this study. The findings of this study reveal that the students perceived informal digital English learning as a great tool to self-develop their English language. In addition, learning enjoyment contributed to their digital English learning practices. Four types of parental support were identified. Information, material, autonomy, and emotional support from their parents shape their informal digital English learning activities. This study thus suggests that there needs to be a collaboration between parents and teachers to promote informal digital English learning. Proper policies and guidelines are still required to help parents effectively support their children in informal digital English learning activities.

**Keywords:** informal digital English learning, parental support, students' experience

### Introduction

Nowadays, adolescents are born and raised in the digital era (Asni & Tsuraya, 2023; Maqbool et al., 2020). They have been engaging with technology for various purposes, such as playing, communicating, studying, shopping, and accessing entertainment (Rose et al., 2022). The omnipresent use of technology devices and the internet has contributed to adolescents' heavy use of technology. Due to the use of technology from an early age, adolescents are exposed to numerous internet contents (Rose et al., 2022). The English language is used in various internet content, including videos, articles, memes, games, and social media. As a result, this has become a novel venue for English language acquisition among adolescents and young learners (De Wilde et al., 2020). Various studies have illustrated the substantial influence that the internet currently has on English language learners for

English language learning development (Haryanto et al., 2019; Lee & Sylvén, 2021; Yadav, 2021). Present-day learners have been harnessing the Internet to learn the English language (Lee, 2019; Lee & Sylvén, 2021). Researchers have called this phenomenon “informal digital learning of English” (IDLE). This term was popularized by Lee & Dressman (2018) to refer to self-directed learners’ behaviour in using digital devices for English language learning beyond their formal settings.

The prolific use of the English language on internet content has led to more accessible English language input (Muñoz & Cadierno, 2021), which used to be scarcely available and limited to English language learners in English foreign language (EFL) environments (Mohammed & Ali, 2021). Consequently, EFL learners can access more authentic and abundant English language input through the Internet, subsequently leading to their English language improvement (Yadav, 2021). This aligns with the comprehensible input hypothesis by Stephen Krashen (Wang, 2024). The hypothesis suggests that sufficient exposure to the target language is crucial for language acquisition. Without adequate comprehensible language input (i.e., the content learners hear and read), it is highly unlikely for learners to develop their target language proficiency. The ubiquitous existence of English language content on the internet allows learners to access multimodal content (i.e., involving multiple modes of communication) that could be more comprehensible, interesting, and relevant to the learners (Liang & Yao, 2023), thereby indirectly assisting learners in EFL contexts to develop their English language proficiency.

The role of IDLE in contributing to learners’ English language development has been widely acknowledged in extensive studies. IDLE has been depicted in various studies in the literature to have contributed to English communication ability (Lutfiana et al., 2021; Nugroho et al., 2022), vocabulary acquisition (Lee, 2019; Lee & Dressman, 2018), improved affective aspects of learning (Lai et al., 2015; Lee & Drajati, 2019), increased English scores (Dressman et al., 2016; Lai et al., 2015), better English receptive skills (Maulida et al., 2022) and enhanced two aspects of English as an international language, i.e., communication strategies and English varieties (Lee & Drajati, 2019). Based on the aforementioned studies, this can be concluded that IDLE is undeniably helpful for English learners.

In light of the promising benefits of IDLE, studies have recently been extended to examine larger ecological contexts of learners (Guo & Lee, 2023). Informed by Bronfenbrenner’s ecological system theory, it is thought that learners’ development is largely ascribed to their environments (i.e., family, peers, school, larger social and cultural settings). Consequently, learners’ behavior in using IDLE might be attributed to their environments. Guo and Lee (2023) highlighted that learners’ environments concerning their IDLE are still understudied; thus they (Guo & Lee, 2023) suggested a research plan to investigate the influence of learners’ broader environments, such as parents, schools, and cultural norms, on learners’ use of IDLE.

In addition to the theory, parents indisputably contribute to children’s development, including in children’s education. Various studies have illustrated the instrumental role of parental support in learners’ academic success (Chen, 2005; Chohan & Khan, 2010; Eereka et al., 2014; Pajariato et al., 2020; Shahzad et al., 2020). Studies have demonstrated that parental support is closely linked to a few factors, i.e., socioeconomic status (Chohan & Khan, 2010), parents’ educational

background (Idris et al., 2020), ethnicity and cultural background (Chen et al., 2019). Parental support is also found to be influential in learners' English language development (Chavez et al., 2023; Lai et al., 2015; Wulandari et al., 2022).

However, scarce studies have been done to probe into parental support in adolescents' informal digital English learning practices (Guo & Lee, 2023). Adolescence refers to a development phase between childhood and adulthood (Rose et al., 2022), identified as an improved self-autonomy from their parents (Chentsova Dutton et al., 2020). Yet, parental support is still highly needed for adolescents to develop their well-being and self-autonomy (Kocayörük et al., 2015; Rose et al., 2022). Due to the closely related parental support and adolescents' education, it is thus worth investigating how adolescent learners' perception of their parental support influences their informal digital English learning practices and what parental support they receive in terms of their informal digital English learning practices. This study employs narrative inquiry to explore learners' personal experiences in engaging in informal digital English learning activities and their perceived parental support in their informal digital English learning practices. The findings of this study hopefully can be enlightening enough to capture students' experiences in using informal digital English learning and their perceived parental support for their informal digital English learning practices.

Two research questions are proposed for this present study to address the issue. The research questions of this study are:

1. What are the adolescent learners' personal experiences of using informal digital English learning?
2. What are the adolescent learners' perceptions of parental support in using informal digital English learning?

## **Literature Review**

### ***Informal digital learning of English***

Informal digital learning of English (IDLE) is an emerging phenomenon in which students learn English through digital devices and resources outside their classroom without teachers' instructions (Lee, 2019). This issue has gained more attention since the rapid enhancement in information and communication and technology (ICT). In addition, an extensive number of studies in the existing literature have demonstrated the benefits of IDLE to English language learning (e.g., Lee, 2019; Lee & Drajati, 2019; Lee & Dressman, 2018; Lee & Sylvén, 2021; Lutfiana et al., 2021; Maulida et al., 2022; Mohammed & Ali, 2021; Nugroho et al., 2022).

This activity is a self-directed digital learning activity. According to Lee and Drajati (2019), IDLE is a self-directed digital learning activity through digital devices (e.g., laptops, smartphones, Internet TV, tablet computers) and resources (e.g., social media, games, web apps) beyond formal contexts. This IDLE concept was developed based on Benson's classification of the digital learning environment (Benson, 2011). The digital learning environment is categorized into four learning contexts. Each learning setting has its distinct features characterized into four features, i.e., formality, location, pedagogy, and locus of control.

Table 1. Classification of digital learning of English environment

	Formal Digital Learning of English	Non-formal Digital Learning of English	IDLE	
			Extracurricular	Extramural
Formality	Structured; Certification	Structured; No-certification	Semi-structured; certification	Unstructured; No Certification
Location	In-class	Out-of-class	Out-of-class	Out-of-class
Pedagogy	Instructed	Instructed	Self-instructed	Naturalistic
Locus of control	Other-directed	Other-directed	Self-directed	Self-directed

Based on the table above, IDLE encompasses two learning settings, including extracurricular and extramural. These two learning settings differ in terms of formality and pedagogy. IDLE in extracurriculars is characterized by semi-structured, certification, out-of-class, self-instructed, and self-directed. It means that the IDLE activity is still related to formal school. For instance, students who access digital resources such as YouTube or Google to help them complete their homework. Meanwhile, IDLE in extramural is characterized by unstructured, no certification, out-of-class, naturalistic, and self-directed. This IDLE activity does not relate to formal school programs. Students engage in these activities based on their willingness to learn. For instance, students who access YouTube to watch English learning content independently.

Informed by these two distinctions of IDLE contexts i.e., extracurricular and extramural, this study focused more on studying students' experiences and parental support in engaging in IDLE activities in extramural contexts. It suggests that this study only examines IDLE activities that do not link to formal school activities, and on their initiative, to learn the English language through digital devices and resources.

### ***Parental support***

The role of parental support is widely acknowledged in determining children's education in the existing literature. Various studies have shown that parental support greatly contributes to students' academic outcomes (Eereka et al., 2014; Wulandari et al., 2022; Yieng et al., 2019). Academic achievement is substantially affected by parental involvement in students' education starting from an early age to adolescence and adulthood (Eereka et al., 2014). Particularly, adolescent students who are in a period of transition from children to adults still learn to develop their self-regulated skills (Kocayörük et al., 2015). Parental support is believed to be able to facilitate self-regulated learning among adolescent students. Parents who provide a supportive environment are more likely to bring up children with good autonomous development and well-being (Kocayörük et al., 2015). Parental support is also found to contribute positively to students' academic success (Wong Siew Yieng et al., 2020). In addition, parental support strongly links to children's second language development (Wulandari et al., 2022).

Earlier studies have illustrated how parental support could contribute to a student's academic success (i.e., Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Vygotsky, 1978). Vygotsky proposed a model called "ZPD". The term stands for zone proximal development. It is a social theory of learning that believes that students need to learn from more

capable individuals, such as teachers, parents, or more capable peers through scaffolding. The scaffolding is a structured support provided by more knowledgeable individuals to help students accomplish learning tasks. This theory acknowledges the significant role of parents in learning.

In addition, the important role of parents in students' learning development is also described in the theory of the ecological system. The theory explains that human development occurs in a multifaceted web of interconnected contexts. These contexts start from the microsystem, which is the closest to the individual, such as family members, teachers, and peers at school. Next is the mesosystem, which connects and interacts with the microsystem. The mesosystem refers to how microsystem contexts (i.e., parents, teachers, or peers) can influence one another. For instance, students who have academic-supportive parents will positively affect the students' learning outcomes at school. Lastly, the macrosystems refer to a broader context, such as culture and society. This is a very comprehensive model that explains how an individual's development is affected by various contexts. However, this theory highlights the role of parents and teachers who tend to have a stronger influence on an individual.

Furthermore, Cutrona and Russel (1990 as cited in Chentsova Dutton et al., 2020) identified a few types of parental support i.e., emotional, informational, and tangible. Emotional support refers to support related to care, encouragement, empathy, concern, and reassurance that parents provide to their children. Informational support refers to the advice, guidance, and information that parents provide to help their children in learning. Finally, tangible support refers to financial support, facilities, and resources that parents provide to help their children develop their learning process. In addition to the types of parental support, Kocayörük et al. (2015) added that parents are responsible for providing parental autonomy support for their children, too. It refers to parents' efforts to maintain a balance between monitoring children's activities and developing their independence. Notably, these parental supports are closely bound to the parents' culture, beliefs, educational background, and socioeconomic (Chen et al., 2019; Chohan & Khan, 2010; Idris et al., 2020).

### ***Recent studies on informal digital learning of English***

Researchers seem to have arrived at a consensus that IDLE contributes positively to students' English learning development. In the past few years, various studies have illustrated the advantages of IDLE to English language learning. IDLE was found to contribute to English-speaking proficiency and vocabulary achievement positively (Lee, 2019; Lee & Dressman, 2018), overall English proficiency, and better English scores (Dressman et al., 2016; Lai et al., 2015), students' emotional aspect of learning (Lai et al., 2015; Lee & Drajiati, 2019).

More recent studies highlight similar findings that IDLE promotes English learning improvement. Students experienced an improvement in receptive English skills by engaging in social media and English learning applications (Maulida et al., 2022), better results in English communication skills through online informal English learning (Lutfiana et al., 2021), improved communicative competence (Nugroho et al., 2022), and improved understanding of different cultures and perceptions of English as an international language (Malyndra et al., 2020).

The current question is not whether or not IDLE contributes to students' English learning development, as the literature has highlighted the significant role of IDLE in students' English learning development, but how larger ecological contexts (e.g., parental supports, cultural norms, religious beliefs, schools) influence students' IDLE behavior. Guo and Lee (2023) conducted a review study on 103 papers. They found that most of the papers examined individual characteristics of IDLE. Guided by Bronfenbrenner's ecological system theory, the study revealed that there is still a need to understand broader environmental contexts that affect individuals' IDLE practices. Driven by this gap, this study attempts to contribute to how a broader environmental setting (i.e., parental support) contributes to students' IDLE behavior.

Studies on how parental support affects students' IDLE behavior are still scarce. More studies conducted in more diverse contexts are required to examine how parental support influences students' IDLE practices (Guo & Lee, 2023). Tao and Xu (2022) examined how parents support their young children in accessing online English learning amidst the COVID-19 pandemic. The result of the study shows that the parents help their children in various ways, i.e., supervision of learning, emotional and technological support. Additionally, the study reveals the impact of parents' financial and social situation and children's grade level on parental support strategies.

Two other studies (i.e., Mahmud et al., 2022; Palma et al., 2021) examined parental support for stay-at-home online learning during the COVID-19 pandemic. Mahmud et al. (2022) investigated the perception of 40 parents on online English language teaching during the pandemic. They found that most of the parents support their children in accessing online English learning. Similarly, Palma et al. (2021) conducted a study of parental support in online learning during the pandemic. They found that the parents in the study mainly encouraged their children to learn online.

Furthermore, Wulandari et al. (2022) examined parental support of a nine-year-old Indonesian English learner. They interviewed her parents about how their support and involvement contributed to her English-speaking skills. The study reveals that parental involvement, exposure to the English language through media from an early age, supervising media access, and self-regulated learning have contributed to the child's English language acquisition. Additionally, socioeconomic status, academic experiences, and technology literacy skills were found to have influenced the child's parental involvement in English learning.

In addition, Chen et al. (2019) administered an ethnographic case study design to investigate parental views on mobile-assisted language learning experiences of young English learners. The study involves six immigrants in the United States. The study reveals that parents have a constructive perception of the use of mobile-assisted language learning and support their children to learn language through mobile devices. In addition, four types of parental involvement in children's use of mobile language learning such as supporting, interacting, supervising, and interfering. However, parental involvement varies according to socioeconomic and cultural background. Specifically, children who come from higher socioeconomic status tend to receive more parental support in mobile language learning technology.

Finally, another notable study is Lai et al. (2015). They carried out a survey study involving eight EFL learners. They found that informal English learning

coupled with formal English learning contributed to greater English scores, enhanced learning self-efficacy, and improved learning enjoyment. The study also put a greater emphasis on the significance of maintaining a balance of meaning- and form-focused informal English learning activities, which refers to the diversity of activities. Notably, the study revealed that parents and teachers had a decisive influence on learners' informal digital English learning activities. This finding suggested that parents serve as an essential factor in learners' IDLE behavior.

## **Method**

### ***Research design***

This study employed a narrative inquiry design. The term narrative comes from the verb “narrate”, suggesting that this research design focuses on narrating stories of people's lives and drawing meaning based on the stories (Creswell, 2015). Research and storytelling are combined in narrative inquiry (Barkhuizen et al., 2013). It implies that researchers may utilize stories as research data or storytelling as an instrument for data analysis and result presentation. Narrative inquiry generally requires researchers to study a single case or multiple cases, collect data from the stories of participants, retell stories, and write narratives of the participants. Finally, Researchers need to discuss the meaning of the participants' experiences with the existing literature.

This research design initially appeared in the education field in 1990 by Connelly and Clandinin, who then presented a summary of narrative inquiry to the education field (Creswell, 2015). They emphasized the importance of individuals' narratives in the education field as a research methodology. There has been an increasing number of studies beyond the educational field that have utilized narrative inquiry as their research method, such as psychology and sociology (Creswell, 2015). It suggests that this research design is a well-established approach that allows researchers to study an issue and interpret it.

### ***Setting and participant***

This research was conducted at a public junior high school in Bengkulu Province. Two participants were recruited for this study. The two participants were selected based on purposive sampling. The students who possess good English subject achievements, have been engaging in informal digital learning of English for more than 3 years, and show much interest in learning English through digital platforms were selected. Besides that, they need to come from families with middle- or high-socioeconomic status, as parental support in children's technology use is greatly influenced by parents' socioeconomic status (Chen et al., 2019). It is important since this study aims to explore parental support in informal digital learning of English. This purposive sampling can be justified as the representativeness of the population in qualitative research is not the primary focus, but rather the richness of the participants' understanding of the issue (Creswell, 2015). Furthermore, the selection of this study is also based on the participants' willingness to participate. The participants were fully informed about the purpose of this study and the data collection procedure before the study. To protect the participants' privacy, pseudonyms were given to both participants. Table 1 is the participants' biographic information.

Table 2. Biographical information of the participants

Name	Gender	Age	Length of IDLE Experience (approx.)	Parents' Socio-economic status	Parents' Educational Background
P1	Male	14	12 years	High socio-economic status	Doctoral Degree
P2	Female	14	11 years	Middle socio-economic status	Master Degree

### ***Data collection techniques***

This study used a comprehensive approach involving two data collection techniques, i.e., participants' writing journals and semi-structured interviews. It is expected that the data generated from both data collection techniques can be comprehensive enough to give insight into the participants' experience and parental support in informal digital learning of English.

#### ***Participants' writing journal***

Participants writing journals were one of the data sources for this study. The participants were required to write a personal diary documenting their lived experience and perceived parental support that they had received when they used informal digital learning of English. The journals aimed to collect information about how the participants usually engaged in informal digital learning of English, and how their parents supported them in using informal digital learning of English. Brief instructions and reflection prompts were provided to help guide them in recording and describing their experience with informal digital learning of English. The journal would be given before the semi-structured interview. Each participant completed a journal writing by the end of this study. The participants were allowed to complete the journal either in the Indonesian language or in the English language.

#### ***Semi-structured interview***

Upon completing the participants' writing journals, a semi-structured interview would be administered to both participants. The semi-structured interview served two purposes. First, the interview would focus on gathering more in-depth information about the participants' experience with informal digital learning of English. Second, the interview was a great opportunity to clarify and verify the journal data. The researcher first needed to review the journal before the interview and note every aspect/point that needed further elaboration and clarification from the participants. It is justifiable as the interview can become a great opportunity for both parties (i.e., interviewers and interviewee) to ask questions and clarify prior data (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2011). To ensure the participants' comfort in recounting their stories, they were allowed to speak either Indonesian or English during the interview process. The semi-structured interview questions were developed under several types of parental support from (Chen et al., 2019; Chentsova Dutton et al., 2020; Kocayörük et al., 2015; Lai et al., 2015).

### ***Data analysis***

Once all the data were collected, the narrative thematic analysis would be done. Initially, the interview recording would be transcribed into interview



transcripts. Subsequently, thematic analysis was then conducted to analyze all the written journals and semi-structured interview transcripts. Thematic analysis of multiple case studies was used to analyze multiple case studies since it allowed researchers to contrast multiple narratives in a data set, construct shared themes, and outline individual differences (Barkhuizen et al., 2013). The thematic analysis process employed in this study followed the narrative thematic analysis (Barkhuizen et al., 2013). which included several stages, i.e., reading the data multiple times, coding or labeling the data, grouping the data, and identifying the thematic heading. In other words, all the data (i.e., the journals, and interview transcripts) would be read repeatedly to fully understand the narratives at the early stage of data analysis. After that, the data were labeled under two main themes following the research questions (i.e., students' experiences and perceived parental support). Then, the data were grouped under the same themes in the form of a table. Subsequently, sub-themes would then be developed based on the two main themes. The existing literature was also consulted to relate the findings. Lastly, the thematic heading was identified.

To increase the accuracy of the narratives, the participants were asked to read the narrative reports. It was done to ensure that the reports portray their actual narratives and minimize the discrepancy between the narrative told and the narrative reported (Creswell, 2015). In addition, it also aimed to negotiate the relationships between the researchers and participants, foster open dialogue and trust-building, and address ethical issues. This process refers to collaboration between researchers and participants in narrative research (Creswell, 2015).

## Findings and Discussion

This section is dedicated to recounting the lived stories of the participants about their informal digital learning of English experiences since early childhood. Each participant's narratives were presented separately, including two major themes based on the research questions: (1) personal experiences using IDLE, and (2) perceived parental support.

### **Research question one: Personal experiences using IDLE**

#### ***P1's story: Indulging myself in IDLE activities***

P1 has been exposed to IDLE activities for about 11 to 12 years. He has been introduced to IDLE content since his early childhood. His parents would let him and his brother consume English content on TV or the internet. He enjoyed consuming the English content, which subsequently led him to develop his English proficiency. During the interview, he managed to explain his stories in English. His childhood IDLE activities persist to this day. He usually engaged in several IDLE activities, including playing games in the English language, watching English movies, reading English comics, and voice-calling his online friends in English. He found IDLE activities both entertaining and educational. He thought that through IDLE, he could learn and play concurrently. Below are the excerpts obtained from the interview and journaling.

*Today, I improved my English by playing and voice-calling with my online friends. The game that we played had words that even I didn't know. So I would google the meanings of the words to understand. My friends would*

*communicate to each other with English. When I speak, sometimes my friends correct me with my grammar. At some times, I didn't understand what my friend said so I would ask them to repeat slower or just type it out in the chat. I learned a lot of words and how to use them from my friends. They also helped me build my confidence in speaking since we would voice call for hours. It felt like I was learning but not in a boring way, but instead a really fun way. (P1, writing journal)*

*I usually play games that has a lot of English in them. Sometimes movies I watch with my cousin and brother. So, my family, I usually talk to my family in English. Usually, my brother and my cousin too. There are also some comics that I read is in English. (P1, interview)*

As described in the excerpts above, P1 engaged in various IDLE activities. He played games and communicated with his online friends while playing the games. His friends assisted him in developing his spoken English. His family members fully supported him in English learning. He further elaborated on how much he enjoyed using IDLE to improve his English and how IDLE has contributed to his English improvement. Below is the excerpt.

*I do enjoy it because it's a part of my entertainment so I usually just lay down on my bed put on something on YouTube or like on TV and I just watch it and I like learn from it. I like my house better the informal way of learning. It massively improves my English. (P1, interview)*

As illustrated in the excerpt, P1 enjoyed engaging in IDLE since it was part of his entertainment. He also admitted that it significantly enhanced his English language proficiency.

### ***P2's story: Immersing myself in IDLE content***

P2 has been engaged in IDLE activities since she was two years old. Her mom used to show her movies and cartoons in the English language. Since then, she has been learning English through IDLE. Her IDLE activities include watching English videos, listening to English songs, practicing her English, using an English learning application, and watching English learning content. She found that IDLE helped her improve her English a lot. She also enjoyed using IDLE as it was fun, easy, and entertaining. Below are the excerpts taken from the journal and interview.

*Today, I practiced English by watching a YouTube video about someone's life story in a channel named MSA (My Story Animated) and I also scrolling TikTok and hear my favorite song by Billie Eilish called "Birds of A Feather" and "Wild Flower". By scrolling TikTok, I could learn a lot of new words in English and I could practice many kinds of grammar and accents. By hearing my favorite song, I could search the meaning of many words that I don't know or understand. This activity helped me a lot, and this activity is the fun and easy way to learn about English. (P2, Writing Journal)*

*Usually, I like to watch movies in English or listen to songs in English. Usually, I look for cartoons that use English on YouTube or Netflix on my smart TV. Then, I used the Duolingo application. Usually, I practice for 10 minutes every*

*day. I also like to watch English movies, sometimes with subtitles, sometimes not. Cartoons usually don't use subtitles either. (P2, Interview)*

As described in the excerpts, P2 immersed herself in various English learning activities outside her formal classrooms. She acquired a lot of English vocabulary through songs and movies. She practices English grammar through the Duolingo application regularly. Finally, she sometimes does not use English subtitles to watch movies, which helps her to improve her listening skills. She further elaborated on how IDLE activities assisted her in acquiring the English language. The following is the excerpt.

*If I watch a movie, I can learn while watching it. I feel like I enjoy it. It's more fun. That helps me, sir. For example, watching a movie doesn't require subtitles or talking to parents in English. It also helps in making sentences. I used to be confused about how to make sentences, but using the application taught me a lot about how to construct sentences. Western movies help me learn everyday conversation. (P2, Interview)*

As portrayed in the excerpt, P2 enjoyed using IDLE activities. She thought IDLE activities had contributed to her English improvement. She managed to understand English movies without English subtitles. She also learned day-to-day conversations in English.

#### **Research question two: Perceived parental support**

##### ***P1's story: My parents bought me digital devices for my IDLE activities***

P1 admitted that his parents fully supported his IDLE activities. His parents were aware of the benefits of using digital devices for English learning. Therefore, his parents provided him with digital devices and internet access. Below is the excerpt.

*My parents support my informal English by buying me like phone and laptop. I have a laptop. I have a phone, a smart TV, and Internet WIFI. They have bought me a desk and a chair. I usually use it for reading and drawing or studying or such. My room is comfortable for online English learning. (P1, Interview)*

As shown in the excerpt, P1's parents were very supportive of his digital English learning activities. They provided him with resources such as digital devices, internet access, and a conducive learning environment.

##### ***P1's story: My parents showed me a movie and taught me to use a computer***

P1's parents introduced him to English movies when he was in his early childhood, which then led him to explore more English language content on the internet. Following is the excerpt.

*I believe once they showed me a movie. it was Iron man. I believe. I just like the movie. Me and my brother and we watched it like a lot and then we found other movies. And then we eventually found out about YouTube watched a couple of videos with Western content creators and then we learned from that. (P1, Interview)*

As in the excerpt, his parents used to show him and his brother a movie. From that movie, he and his brother continued consuming more English content on the internet. He then learned from the English content he found on the internet. His parents also developed his digital competence from an early age.

*They know how to use the internet. They have teach me how to use computer since I was a young age. (P1, Interview)*

From the excerpt, his parents had developed his digital competence from a young age. He further added that his parents did not provide him with a lot of guidance about English learning anymore since he had developed his fundamental English language skills. Presented below is the excerpt.

*I think it was because at the age of six, I was already good at English, already an expert because me and my brother always speak English. My parents just let me do English with my brother because they know that's good for us so it'll open up some colleges. Like if we want to go outside of Indonesia. (P1, Interview)*

His parents allowed him to explore English learning content on the internet because they thought his English was already good. They believed that letting their sons learn English via the Internet, would be useful for their sons' future academics.

***P1's story: My parents usually have limiters on my digital activities***

Despite allowing him to explore English learning material on the Internet on his own, P1's parents still have a few rules that he has to follow to safely engage in digital activities. The following is the excerpt.

*They usually have limiters on them like how many times I can use them, how long I can use them. But it's usually using movies or games that I play. They have expressed their concerns and I understand their concerns so I usually limit myself from 6 to 8 hours of digital. Also, I cannot access contents that are like 17 above. I say they usually use a filter that filters out like adult content and stuff so when I was little, I couldn't see those contents. (P1, Interview)*

Based on the excerpt above, P1's parents still regulated his digital learning activities. His parents regulated how many hours he could access the Internet. His parents also have rules regarding digital content he may not access.

***P1's story: My parents showed enthusiasm***

P1 felt that his parents fully supported his English digital learning activities. His parents showed enthusiasm whenever he learned English from digital devices. Below is the excerpt.

*They express enthusiasm about me learning informal English. Sometimes, they are involved in my digital learning activities (P1, Interview)*

As indicated in the excerpt, his parents were actively involved in his digital English learning activities.

***P2's story: My parents provided me with digital resources***

P2's parents bought her digital devices, internet access, and a comfortable learning environment. She used those resources to immerse herself in digital English learning activities. The following is the excerpt:

*They bought me a laptop, smartphones, smart TV, internet data. Usually using a smartphone and TV. There is a special room like in my bedroom for studying. Usually at the study table. (P2, Interview)*

As in the excerpt, her parents provided her with adequate resources and a conducive environment to learn English through informal digital learning.

***P2's story: My mom gave me feedback***

P2 said that her mom supports her progress in learning English. She likes to give P2 feedback and recommends English learning material online. Listed below is the excerpt:

*Mom once gave me feedback, for example, when speaking English, don't rush. Don't beat around the bush and be confident. Usually, Mom sends English learning videos via YouTube like a video link about grammar on YouTube with English content. (P2, Interview)*

As presented in the excerpt, her mom provided her with feedback about her English and actively recommended her with English learning material on the internet. She further elaborated that her parents also regularly encourage her to keep learning English on the Internet. Following is the excerpt.

*My parents continue to support me to study more and watch English movies often. Before going to bed, my parents also remind me to make time to complete the exercises on Duolingo. (P2, Interview)*

As in the excerpt, her parents constantly encourage her to keep learning English informally on the Internet. Besides that, her parents remind her to keep on practicing on an English learning application.

***P2's story: My mom still supervised my digital activities***

P2's parents allow her to explore English learning content on the internet. However, their parents still supervised her digital activities. They also have rules for her to be able to safely navigate the Internet. The following is the excerpt:

*I am allowed to access digital devices from after school until Maghrib [around dusk time]. Usually after Maghrib, my parents ask me to study. As for the content, it might be supervised by mom because there is an application for that. Adult and violent content is also supervised. (P2, Interview)*

As given in the excerpt, P2's parents have rules for how long she may use digital devices and what content she may access. In addition, her mom actively supervised her digital activities. She further added that her parents expressed concerns about the likelihood that she would misuse the digital devices.

*There are concerns, for example, my parents are afraid that I will access adult content, engage in hate comments, or overuse the Internet. (P2, Interview)*

As shown in the excerpt, her parents were worried that she might overuse and misuse digital devices. For this second type, the focus of the study is the literary works that have been translated into the English language.

### **Discussion**

The findings of research question one show that both students engaged in various informal digital English learning activities. Most activities were receptive English skills. However, P1 engaged in the productive skills of English, too. He liked to communicate with his friends on the internet in English. His friends helped him correct his English whenever he made mistakes. The fact that the students are involved more often in digital English learning activities of receptive skills aligns with earlier studies (Maulida et al., 2022; Mohammed & Ali, 2021). These studies found that students tended to favor more receptive English learning activities such as watching movies, reading online content, and listening to English songs.

In addition, the participants found informal digital English learning significantly improved their English language. Both of the participants in this study largely attribute their English language proficiency to digital English learning activities. This finding corroborates previous studies (Lutfiana et al., 2021; Nugroho & Triana, 2021). Earlier studies reveal that students who engage more in digital English learning activities tend to experience an improvement in their English language proficiency. Besides that, the participants in this study enjoyed using digital devices to learn the English language. P1 thought that using digital devices to English became a part of his entertainment, meaning that he could study and feel entertained concurrently. This finding lends to support prior studies that informal digital English learning activities possibly lead to learning enjoyment (Lai et al., 2015; Riayuningsih et al., 2022). This learning enjoyment may stem from the fact that informal digital English learning is flexible, practical, and tailored to one's preference (Kearney et al., 2012; Riayuningsih et al., 2022).

The findings of research question two reveal some types of parental support, including material, information, emotional, and autonomy support. These types of support were in line with the types of parental support that students normally receive within academic and general settings (Chen et al., 2019; Dutton et al., 2020; Kocayörük et al., 2015). These four types of parental support that the participants gained from studying informally through digital devices are closely interconnected with various determinants, namely parents' educational levels, socio-economic status, cultures, and beliefs (Chen et al., 2019; Chohan & Khan, 2010; Idris et al., 2020). The participants in this study may have received full support from their parents could be ascribed to the fact that they come from higher socio-economic families that fully value education. Their parents also attained higher education levels. It is therefore that they are aware of the promising benefits of informal digital English learning for their children.

The first parental support found was material. Material support refers to tangible resources or financial assistance provided by parents for students to succeed in academic life (Dutton et al., 2020; Yieng et al., 2019). The participants of this study received material support from their parents to engage in informal

digital English learning activities. Their parents provided them with digital devices, internet access, and a conducive learning environment. These material resources are crucial for students to learn English informally from digital platforms. This finding substantiated an earlier study (Chen et al., 2019) that found that parents were more motivated to support their children through digital learning due to the cost-effectiveness, practicality, interactivity, and connectivity of digital devices.

Aside from material support, the participants in this study also received information support. Information support refers to the guidance, advice, or information parents present to their children to help them with decision-making (Dutton et al., 2020). In this study, the participants obtain information support in the form of guidance, advice, and feedback from their parents. P2's parents, for instance, were actively involved in her digital English learning activities. Her parents sometimes gave feedback about her English, recommended online English learning materials for her, and sat with her during the learning process. Similarly, P1's parents assisted him in learning English through digital devices. However, once he developed digital competence and adequate English proficiency, his parents started to allow him to develop his autonomy. His parents' assistance started to fade as soon as he was already capable of navigating safely through digital platforms.

In addition to the autonomy support, the participants stated that their parents allowed them to develop their self-autonomy and provided them with autonomy support. Their parents allow them to make their own choices about digital learning activities and explore potential options based on their preferences. Despite the autonomy provided by their parents, some rules were still applied to them. Autonomy support was deemed essential for adolescents. This support is useful in promoting their psychological well-being, self-determination, self-initiatives, and overall mental health (Kocayörük et al., 2015). This finding was similar to a prior study (Wulandari et al., 2022). Aligned with that, the uniqueness of digital English learning is customization and self-directedness (Benson, 2011; Kearney et al., 2012). Through digital learning, students were motivated to develop their self-autonomy and select learning material aligned with their own learning needs.

Finally, emotional support was also found in this study. The participants were emotionally encouraged by their parents to keep learning English through digital platforms. Emotional support refers to any support related to parents' expressions of love, empathy, warmth, and concern (Dutton et al., 2020). This emotional support contributes to students' well-being and constructive self-beliefs (Yieng et al., 2019). For example, P2 was constantly encouraged to study English through digital platforms. Her parents always reminded her to practice her English through English learning applications.

## Conclusion

This present study concludes that students engaged in a wide variety of digital English learning activities. They enjoyed engaging in informal digital English learning and found it beneficial to their English proficiency. Additionally, four types of parental support were identified in this study, i.e., emotional, information, material, and autonomy support. These are types of support that participants in this study obtained from their parents. However, parental support is highly influenced by various factors such as parents' socio-economic status, educational backgrounds, cultures, and beliefs.

This study has addressed a substantial gap in the literature in comprehending adolescent students' experiences and perceived parental support toward informal digital English learning. The findings suggest implications for teachers and parents to consider informal digital English learning as a venue for students and children to learn English from an early age. However, proper support must be provided to students so that they can self-develop their English language competence. Teachers may collaborate with parents to promote the potential merits of engaging children in informal digital English learning. Teachers may need to recommend and provide parents with informal digital English learning that can be safely given to their children. Lastly, the findings of this study could inform policymakers about involving parents in children's digital learning activities and initiate schools to create workshops that can develop parents' competence in supporting their children's digital learning activities at home.

Despite providing valuable insights, this study surely has several limitations. Firstly, this is a small-scale study, meaning the findings of this study may not be able to be generalized to larger populations. This study only involved two participants; thus, it may not be representative enough. Secondly, this study solely uses students' perceptions of their experiences in using informal digital English learning. Therefore, subjectivity may have influenced this study. Further studies involving more comprehensive data collection and a larger number of participants are still needed to deeply explore students' parental support in informal digital English learning and comparisons of the findings of this study.

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