

The Influence of Literacy on Students' Ability to Complete Their Studies in the Department of Islamic Guidance and Counseling

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KEYWORDS	ABSTRACT
Keywords: Literacy, Students, Study Completion, Islamic Guidance and Counseling. Conflict of Interest Statement: The author(s) declares that the research was conducted in the absence of any commercial or financial relationships that could be construed as a potential conflict of interest. Copyright © 2026 EDU. All rights reserved.	Literacy is the ability to locate, evaluate, and effectively utilize information, which is essential for students in completing academic tasks and graduating on time. This study aims to identify students' literacy levels and examine their impact on the timely completion of academic studies in the Islamic Guidance and Counseling Study Program, Faculty of Da'wah and Communication, State Islamic University of North Sumatra, Medan. This research employed a quantitative approach with a correlational design using a Likert-scale questionnaire. The study population consisted of 507 active final-year students and alumni from the Islamic Guidance and Counseling Study Program. A sample of 44 students from the 2021 cohort was selected using the simple random sampling technique. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistical analysis and simple linear regression to examine the effect of literacy (X) on students' ability to complete their studies (Y). The results of the Pearson correlation analysis revealed a very strong relationship between literacy and students' ability to complete their studies ($r = 0.984$, $p < 0.001$), with a coefficient of determination (R^2) of 0.968, indicating that literacy accounted for 96.8% of the variance in students' study completion. The t-test demonstrated a positive and statistically significant effect ($t = 35.597$, $p < 0.05$), with the regression equation $Y = 1.427 + 1.182X$. These findings indicate that students with higher literacy levels tend to be more independent, focused, and effective in overcoming research-related challenges, thereby enabling them to complete their studies more efficiently. Conversely, low literacy levels constitute a significant barrier to understanding academic materials and completing final research projects. These findings are consistent with those of Zega and Batubara (2024) and Rohman (2022), who reported that digital literacy and information literacy positively contribute to students' timely graduation. Therefore, this study recommends strengthening information literacy programs at the faculty level to enhance students' on-time graduation rates.

Introduction

Higher education today requires students to develop independence in managing information, particularly those enrolled in the Islamic Guidance and Counseling Study Program, Faculty of Da'wah and Communication, State Islamic University of North Sumatra, Medan. Literacy extends beyond the ability to read and write; it also encompasses the capacity to comprehend, process, and critically evaluate information within educational contexts. In higher education, particularly among students of the Islamic Guidance and Counseling Study Program, strong literacy skills are essential for supporting

the learning process, completing academic assignments, and graduating within the expected timeframe. Therefore, this study is expected to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the extent to which literacy influences students' ability to complete their academic studies.

Literacy is no longer confined to reading proficiency alone but has become a fundamental competency that enables students to internalize counseling values (Sari et al., 2020). In the digital era, literacy serves as an essential tool for students of the Faculty of Da'wah and Communication to identify and evaluate credible sources of information (Hanum, 2021). The development of a strong literacy culture is crucial for enhancing Islamic scholarship through scientific inquiry (Hidayat, 2023). Without adequate literacy skills, students encounter difficulties in integrating knowledge of da'wah communication with practical competencies (Sinaga & Azhar, 2024). Consequently, literacy proficiency is now regarded as a core competency for students enrolled in Islamic higher education institutions (Hasnah et al., 2023).

A low level of reading interest frequently constitutes a major obstacle for students in the Islamic Guidance and Counseling Study Program in completing academic assignments on time (Sari, 2021). Limited understanding of primary literature often hinders students from constructing logical arguments in academic coursework (Astuti, 2022). As a result, students' academic performance may decline because they are unable to fully comprehend the essence of scholarly knowledge (Yusnan, 2022). The low frequency of reading academic textbooks contrasts sharply with the ease of accessing digital content, which is not always reliable or accurate (Pahlevy & Thamrin, 2021). Nevertheless, information literacy significantly supports students in producing high-quality scholarly publications (Rohman, 2022).

Students' digital literacy levels substantially influence their ability to complete their studies within the expected timeframe (Zega & Batubara, 2024). Students of the Islamic Guidance and Counseling Study Program at the State Islamic University of North Sumatra are expected to utilize information technology as a research support tool to facilitate the timely completion of academic assignments (Perez-Mercado et al., 2023). Conversely, inadequate literacy skills may contribute to internal challenges, such as poor learning discipline (Umriana, 2020). Adequate literacy also enables students to avoid plagiarism while preparing their undergraduate theses (Lubis, 2024). Furthermore, improved information literacy plays a vital role in enabling students to verify research data before incorporating it into their academic work (Batoebara et al., 2020).

The State Islamic University of North Sumatra, Medan, provides a variety of facilities that support academic activities; however, the extent to which these facilities are utilized by students in the Islamic Guidance and Counseling Study Program requires further investigation (Batubara, 2024). Students frequently encounter psychological challenges, including stress during thesis writing, due to limited literacy in accessing and utilizing reference sources (Lubis, 2022). Low levels of information literacy are directly associated with prolonged study completion periods (Barus, 2022). Many students also lack effective strategies for retrieving scholarly information through academic journal databases (Rizkinaswara, 2020). These conditions indicate that students' media literacy significantly influences the speed at which they are able to fulfill their academic requirements (Sholeh, 2021).

Empirical research is therefore needed to examine the impact of literacy on the academic achievement of students in the Islamic Guidance and Counseling Study Program at the State Islamic University of North Sumatra, Medan (Fauzi & Amin, 2022). This study aims to investigate the relationship between reading habits and students' effectiveness in completing their undergraduate theses (Nasution, 2020). Strong digital literacy contributes positively to a more systematic and effective thesis-writing process (Siregar, 2023). Through this research, the Islamic Guidance and Counseling Study Program is expected to develop more practical strategies for strengthening students' literacy competencies (Hakim, 2024). Ultimately, adequate literacy enables students not only to complete their studies successfully but also to graduate with the intellectual competence necessary to make meaningful contributions to society (Pratama, 2024).

Research Design and Methodology

This study employed a quantitative approach using a questionnaire survey method. This method was selected because it is appropriate for collecting information from a representative sample, thereby allowing the findings to be generalized to a broader population (Sugiyono, 2019). The research adopted a correlational design to examine the effect of literacy on students' ability to complete their studies in the Islamic Guidance and Counseling Study Program, Faculty of Da'wah and Communication, State Islamic University of North Sumatra, Medan.

The study was conducted in the Islamic Guidance and Counseling Study Program, Faculty of Da'wah and Communication, State Islamic University of North Sumatra, Medan, located at Jalan William Iskandar Pasar V, Medan Estate, Medan City, North Sumatra, Indonesia. The research was carried out over a three-month period, from March to May 2026, encompassing the stages of research preparation, data collection, data processing, and report writing (Sugiyono, 2019). The study population consisted of all active students in the Islamic Guidance and Counseling Study Program, Faculty of Da'wah and Communication, State Islamic University of North Sumatra, particularly those registered for their final thesis defense or who had already graduated.

The total population comprised 507 students, from which a sample of 44 students from the 2021 cohort was selected. The sample specifically included students in the Islamic Guidance and Counseling Study Program who were undertaking their munaqashah (final thesis defense) or colloquium examination, as well as graduates/alumni. Instrument validity testing was conducted to determine whether the research instrument accurately measured the intended construct (Arikunto, 2019). Reliability testing was subsequently performed to assess the consistency of the instrument. An instrument is considered reliable when it consistently produces stable and dependable results (Ghozali, 2021).

The collected data were analyzed using descriptive statistical analysis, simple linear regression analysis, and hypothesis testing. Descriptive statistical analysis was employed to summarize and describe the characteristics of the data obtained from the respondents (Sugiyono, 2019). Simple linear regression analysis was used to determine the effect of the literacy variable (X) on students' ability to complete their studies (Y) (Ghozali, 2021). Hypothesis testing was conducted to determine whether a statistically significant relationship existed between the independent variable (X) and the dependent variable (Y) (Sugiyono, 2019; Di et al., 2022).

In this survey research, the primary data collection instrument was a questionnaire administered either directly (offline) or through Google Forms (online). The questionnaire employed a five-point Likert scale consisting of the following response categories: Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Somewhat Disagree (SD), Disagree (D), and Strongly Disagree (SD). The collected data were subsequently analyzed using descriptive statistical methods to provide a comprehensive description of respondents' responses and to test the proposed hypothesis. This analysis was intended to determine whether literacy had a statistically significant effect on students' ability to complete their studies. Accordingly, the hypothesis proposed in this study states that literacy has a positive and statistically significant effect on students' ability to complete their studies in the Islamic Guidance and Counseling Study Program, Faculty of Da'wah and Communication, State Islamic University of North Sumatra.

Findings and Discussion

Based on the analysis of the research data examining the effect of literacy on students' ability to complete their studies in the Islamic Guidance and Counseling Study Program, Faculty of Da'wah and Communication, State Islamic University of North Sumatra, the findings indicate that literacy has a positive and statistically significant effect on students' ability to complete their academic studies.

1. Instrument Quality Testing

a. Validity Test

The validity test was conducted to determine whether the research instrument accurately measured the intended constructs. Instrument validity was assessed by examining the Corrected Item-Total Correlation values for each questionnaire item and comparing them with the critical r-table value of 0.297 (N = 44).

Table 1. Summary of the Validity Test Results

Variable	Number of Items	Range of Calculated <i>r</i> Values	<i>r</i> -table	Interpretation
Literacy (X)	14	0,812 - 0,944	0,297	Valid
Students' Ability to Complete Their Studies (Y)	16	0,832 - 0,955	0,297	Valid

As shown in Table 1, all questionnaire items measuring the literacy variable (X) produced corrected item-total correlation values ranging from 0.812 to 0.944, while the items measuring students' ability to complete their studies (Y) yielded values ranging from 0.832 to 0.955. Since all calculated correlation coefficients exceeded the critical *r*-table value (0.297), all questionnaire items for both variables were considered valid and appropriate for use in this study.

b. Reliability Test

The reliability test was conducted to assess the internal consistency of the research instrument using Cronbach's Alpha, with a minimum acceptable coefficient of 0.70.

Table 2. Summary of the Reliability Test Results

Variable	Reliability Coefficient (Cronbach's Alpha)	Criterion	Interpretation
Literacy (X)	0.980	> 0.70	Reliable
Students' Ability to Complete Their Studies (Y)	0.983	> 0.70	Reliable

The reliability analysis revealed Cronbach's Alpha coefficients of 0.980 for the literacy variable and 0.983 for students' ability to complete their studies. Since both values substantially exceeded the recommended threshold of 0.70, the research instrument demonstrated excellent internal consistency and was considered reliable for data collection.

2. Classical Assumption Tests

The classical assumption tests consisted of normality and linearity tests to determine whether the data satisfied the assumptions required for simple linear regression analysis.

Table 3. Summary of the Normality Test Results

Variable	Test	Statistic	Sig.	Criterion	Interpretation
Literacy (X)	Shapiro-Wilk	0.978	0.563	> 0.05	Normally Distributed
Students' Ability to Complete Their Studies (Y)	Shapiro-Wilk	0.974	0.423	> 0.05	Normally Distributed

The normality test was conducted to determine whether the data were normally distributed. Because the sample size was relatively small ($N = 44$), the Shapiro-Wilk test was selected, as it provides greater statistical power than the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test for small to moderate sample sizes. As shown in Table 3, the significance values for the literacy variable (0.563) and students' ability to complete their studies (0.423) were both greater than 0.05, indicating that the data were normally distributed. Therefore, the assumption of normality was satisfied.

Table 4. Summary of the Linearity Test Results

Source	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups (Combined)	7424.958	24	309.373	111.057	0.000
Linearity	7237.982	1	7237.982	2598.250	0.000
Deviation from Linearity	186.976	23	8.129	2.918	0.010

Within Groups	52.929	19	2.786		

The linearity test indicated a statistically significant linear relationship between literacy (X) and students' ability to complete their studies (Y). The Linearity significance value was 0.000 ($p < 0.05$), while the exceptionally high F-value of 2598.250 confirmed that the linear relationship strongly explained the association between the two variables. Therefore, the application of simple linear regression analysis in this study was statistically appropriate.

3. Pearson Correlation Analysis

Table 5. Summary of the Pearson Correlation Results

Variables	Pearson Correlation	Sig. (2-tailed)	Interpretation
Literacy (X) and Students' Ability to Complete Their Studies (Y)	0.984	0.000	Very Strong

The Pearson correlation analysis produced a correlation coefficient of 0.984, which falls within the range of 0.80-1.00, indicating a very strong positive relationship between literacy and students' ability to complete their studies. The significance value of 0.000, which is well below the 0.05 significance level, demonstrates that the observed relationship is statistically significant rather than occurring by chance. The positive correlation indicates that higher levels of literacy are associated with greater ability to complete academic studies.

4. Simple Linear Regression Analysis

Table 6. Summary of the Simple Linear Regression Results

R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Standard Error of the Estimate
0.984	0.968	0.967	2.38998

The correlation coefficient ($R = 0.984$) indicates a very strong relationship between literacy and students' ability to complete their studies. The coefficient of determination ($R^2 = 0.968$) shows that literacy accounts for 96.8% of the variance in students' ability to complete their studies, while the remaining 3.2% is attributable to other factors not investigated in this study, including learning motivation, family support, economic conditions, and the campus environment. The Adjusted R^2 value of 0.967 further confirms that the explanatory power of the model remains exceptionally high after accounting for the sample size and the number of variables included in the analysis.

Table 7. Summary of t-test Results (Hypothesis Testing)

Model	Regression Coefficient (B)	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
Constant	1.427	1.612	-	0.885	0.381
Literacy (X)	1.182	0.033	0.984	35.597	0.000

a. Dependent Variable:

The resulting simple linear regression equation is:

$$Y = 1,427 + 1,182X$$

The constant value (1.427) indicates the baseline level of students' ability to complete their studies when literacy remains unchanged. The regression coefficient (1.182) indicates that every one-point increase in literacy is associated with a 1.182-point increase in students' ability to complete their studies. This finding demonstrates that literacy has a positive effect on students' academic completion; therefore, higher literacy levels are associated with greater ability to complete university studies successfully.

The t-test further revealed that literacy exerted a statistically significant effect on students' ability to complete their studies ($t = 35.597$, $p < 0.001$). The exceptionally high t-value and the significance level far below 0.05 confirm that the observed effect is genuine rather than attributable to random variation. Furthermore, the standardized regression coefficient ($B = 0.984$) indicates that

the relationship and effect of literacy on students' ability to complete their studies are exceptionally strong. Consequently, the research hypothesis is accepted because the obtained significance value (0.000) is substantially lower than the predetermined significance level (0.05). These findings provide strong empirical evidence that literacy has a positive and statistically significant effect on students' ability to complete their studies in the Islamic Guidance and Counseling Study Program, Faculty of Da'wah and Communication, State Islamic University of North Sumatra.

The findings of this study demonstrate that literacy has a positive and statistically significant effect on students' ability to complete their studies in the Islamic Guidance and Counseling Study Program, Faculty of Da'wah and Communication, State Islamic University of North Sumatra. Accordingly, the research hypothesis, which proposed that literacy positively and significantly influences students' ability to complete their studies, is supported. Based on the analysis of data collected from 44 students of the 2021 cohort, literacy was found to exert a very strong, positive, and statistically significant influence on students' academic completion. These findings further indicate that higher levels of literacy are associated with greater ability to complete academic studies, whereas lower literacy levels correspond to lower levels of academic completion.

The Pearson correlation analysis yielded a correlation coefficient of $r = 0.984$ with a significance level of $p = 0.000$ ($p < 0.05$), indicating a very strong positive relationship between literacy and students' ability to complete their studies. Because the correlation coefficient approaches 1.00, the relationship between the two variables is exceptionally strong. This finding suggests that students with higher literacy levels tend to demonstrate greater capability in completing their academic studies, whereas students with lower literacy levels are more likely to experience difficulties in completing their studies. Therefore, the research hypothesis stating that literacy has a positive and statistically significant effect on students' ability to complete their studies in the Islamic Guidance and Counseling Study Program, Faculty of Da'wah and Communication, State Islamic University of North Sumatra, is accepted. The simple linear regression analysis produced an R^2 value of 0.968, indicating that literacy explains 96.8% of the variance in students' ability to complete their studies.

The remaining 3.2% may be attributed to other factors not examined in this study, such as learning motivation, family support, economic conditions, and the campus environment. Furthermore, the t-test yielded a t-value of 35.597 with a significance level of 0.000 ($p < 0.05$), confirming that the research hypothesis is accepted because the obtained significance value is substantially lower than the predetermined significance level.

These findings demonstrate that students with higher levels of literacy tend to be more independent, focused, and effective in overcoming research-related challenges, thereby enabling them to complete their studies more efficiently. Students who are capable of locating, evaluating, and effectively utilizing information for academic purposes are better equipped to access, critically evaluate, and integrate scholarly references into their undergraduate thesis writing process.

The findings of this study are consistent with those reported by Rohman (2022), who argued that information literacy plays a significant role in enabling students to produce high-quality scholarly publications. Likewise, Zega and Batubara (2024) concluded that students' digital literacy substantially influences their ability to graduate on time. Similarly, Siregar (2023) emphasized that strong digital literacy contributes positively to a more systematic and effective thesis-writing process.

Literacy represents an important determinant of students' ability to complete their studies successfully. Students with high literacy levels tend to perceive thesis writing not as an obstacle but as an academic challenge that can be successfully addressed. They also possess stronger competencies in identifying credible references, avoiding plagiarism, understanding academic materials, and preparing citations and reference lists in accordance with academic writing standards. This finding supports Lubis (2024), who emphasized that academic literacy serves as an effective strategy for preventing plagiarism among university students.

Conversely, students with lower literacy levels often experience greater difficulty in understanding academic materials and generally require a longer period to complete their studies. This finding is consistent with Barus (2022), who reported that low information literacy is directly associated with prolonged study completion. Likewise, Lubis (2022) noted that limited literacy in

accessing and utilizing reference sources frequently contributes to psychological challenges, including stress during undergraduate thesis preparation.

Overall, these findings suggest that literacy including information literacy, media literacy, and digital literacy is a critical determinant of students' ability to complete their studies on time. Therefore, strengthening information literacy programs should be integrated into the curriculum and student academic support initiatives as a strategic effort to improve graduation rates and enhance the quality of graduates in the Islamic Guidance and Counseling Study Program, Faculty of Da'wah and Communication, State Islamic University of North Sumatra.

Conclusion

Based on the findings and discussion presented in this study, it can be concluded that literacy has a positive and statistically significant effect on students' ability to complete their studies in the Islamic Guidance and Counseling Study Program, Faculty of Da'wah and Communication, State Islamic University of North Sumatra. The results of the statistical analysis indicate that students' literacy levels have a very strong positive influence on their ability to complete their academic studies.

The regression analysis revealed that literacy accounts for 96.8% of the variance in students' ability to complete their studies, while the remaining 3.2% is attributable to other factors, such as learning motivation, family support, and the academic environment. These findings suggest that higher levels of literacy substantially reduce academic barriers, particularly in the preparation of scholarly articles and other academic writing tasks. Therefore, strengthening students' literacy competencies should be regarded as a strategic priority for improving academic performance, facilitating timely graduation, and enhancing the overall quality of graduates in the Islamic Guidance and Counseling Study Program.

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