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TECHNOLOGY-DRIVEN TEACHER PROFESSIONALISM: A SYSTEMATIC REVIEW OF DIGITAL SKILLS AND EDUCATOR SUSTAINABILITY

Hasmah
Universitas Negeri Gorontalo
hasmahaiman@ung.ac.id

Ulin Naini
Universitas Negeri Gorontalo
ulinnaini@ung.ac.id

Hasdiana
Universitas Negeri Gorontalo
has_diana@ung.ac.id

Abstract

This study aims to analyze technology-driven teacher professionalism by systematically reviewing digital skills and educator sustainability in the post-pandemic era. The rapid advancement of educational technology and the acceleration of digital learning have transformed teachers' professional roles, requiring educators to possess not only pedagogical competence but also strong digital literacy, technological adaptability, and resilience in technology-enhanced learning environments. This study employs a qualitative approach using the library research method by reviewing scholarly articles, academic books, and institutional reports published between 2020 and 2025. The data were analyzed using descriptive-analytical and thematic analysis techniques to identify trends, challenges, and conceptual developments related to teacher professionalism in the digital era. The findings reveal that digital competence significantly influences teachers' ability to implement innovative and student-centered learning. Technologies such as learning management systems, artificial intelligence, and online collaboration tools enhance instructional effectiveness and professional connectivity. However, the study also identifies major challenges, including technological inequality, workload intensification, digital fatigue, and declining educator well-being. The findings further demonstrate that sustainable teacher professionalism requires balancing technological innovation with emotional resilience, institutional support, and continuous professional development. This study contributes theoretically by integrating Digital Competence Theory, Teacher Professionalism Theory, and Educator Sustainability Theory into a comprehensive framework. In practice, the study provides recommendations for policymakers and educational institutions to strengthen digital training, technological infrastructure, and teacher well-being programs to support sustainable educational transformation in the digital age.

Keywords: teacher professionalism, digital competence, educational technology, educator sustainability, teacher well-being, digital pedagogy.

Introduction

The rapid advancement of digital technology has significantly transformed the global education landscape, particularly in teacher professionalism and instructional

practices. The integration of digital technologies into teaching and learning processes has shifted traditional pedagogical approaches toward more interactive, technology-enhanced, and student-centered learning environments. In the 21st-century educational ecosystem, teachers are expected not only to master subject knowledge and pedagogical competence but also to possess strong digital skills that support innovative teaching practices and adaptive learning strategies (Redecker, 2020). Consequently, teacher professionalism in the digital era increasingly depends on educators' ability to integrate technological innovation into sustainable and effective educational practices.

The COVID-19 pandemic accelerated the adoption of digital learning worldwide and exposed substantial disparities in teachers' technological readiness and digital competencies. During the transition to online and hybrid learning systems, many educators faced challenges related to technological adaptation, digital literacy, and online pedagogical management. Recent studies indicate that teachers with limited digital skills often experienced difficulties in maintaining instructional quality, student engagement, and classroom interaction during remote learning implementation (König et al., 2020). This phenomenon highlighted the urgent need to strengthen technology-driven teacher professionalism in order to support resilient and sustainable education systems in the post-pandemic era.

In contemporary education, digital competence has become an essential component of teacher professionalism. Teachers are increasingly required to utilize digital platforms, artificial intelligence, learning management systems, and educational applications to facilitate effective teaching and assessment processes. Furthermore, the growing influence of digital transformation has shifted the role of teachers from knowledge transmitters to facilitators, mentors, and digital learning designers (Falloon, 2020). However, despite the rapid integration of technology into education, many educators still struggle to balance technological demands with pedagogical effectiveness and professional well-being.

A significant phenomenon emerging in modern education is the increasing pressure experienced by teachers due to technological adaptation and expanding professional responsibilities. While digital technology offers opportunities for instructional innovation, it also contributes to workload intensification, emotional exhaustion, and professional stress among educators. Research has shown that continuous technological changes, administrative digitalization, and the expectation to constantly update digital competencies can negatively affect teacher well-being and job satisfaction (Kim & Asbury, 2020). Therefore, discussions regarding teacher professionalism should not only focus on digital competence but also consider educator sustainability and psychological resilience.

The research problem addressed in this study concerns how technology-driven teacher professionalism can be developed sustainably while balancing digital competence, pedagogical innovation, and educator well-being. Existing educational policies and professional development programs frequently emphasize technological integration without sufficiently addressing teachers' emotional adaptation, workload management,

and long-term professional sustainability. As a result, many educators experience difficulties maintaining professional performance in increasingly technology-oriented educational environments (Trust & Whalen, 2021).

Previous studies have revealed several research gaps related to teacher professionalism in the digital age. First, most studies focus primarily on digital literacy and technological competence, while limited attention is given to the relationship between digital transformation and educator sustainability (Schleicher, 2021). Second, research concerning teacher professionalism often examines technology adoption separately from teacher well-being, despite evidence showing that psychological resilience significantly influences instructional effectiveness and professional adaptation. Third, many studies remain context-specific and lack comprehensive theoretical integration between digital pedagogy, teacher competencies, and sustainable professional development in post-pandemic education systems (Tondeur et al., 2021). Therefore, a more integrative perspective is required to understand the multidimensional nature of technology-driven teacher professionalism.

This study offers novelty by integrating discussions on digital skills, technological innovation, educator sustainability, and teacher well-being within a single analytical framework. Unlike previous studies that primarily emphasize technological readiness, this research conceptualizes teacher professionalism as a multidimensional construct involving digital competence, pedagogical adaptability, emotional resilience, and sustainable professional development. Additionally, this study contributes incrementally by highlighting the importance of balancing technology integration with educator well-being to ensure sustainable educational transformation in the digital era.

The urgency of this research is increasingly relevant as educational institutions worldwide continue transitioning toward technology-enhanced learning systems. Teachers are expected to become future-ready educators capable of adapting to rapid technological changes while maintaining instructional quality and professional well-being. Understanding the relationship between digital competence and educator sustainability is essential for designing effective teacher training programs, educational policies, and institutional support systems. Moreover, this study contributes to broader discussions regarding sustainable education by emphasizing that successful digital transformation in education depends not only on technological infrastructure but also on the professional resilience and well-being of educators themselves.

Literature Review

Teacher Professionalism in the Digital Era

Teacher professionalism refers to the competencies, values, attitudes, and professional responsibilities that enable educators to effectively facilitate student learning and contribute to educational development. In the digital era, the concept of teacher professionalism has evolved beyond traditional pedagogical competence toward the integration of digital literacy, technological adaptability, and innovation-oriented teaching

practices. Teachers are now expected to become facilitators of digital learning environments capable of utilizing technology to support collaborative, interactive, and student-centered education (Redecker, 2020).

The rapid expansion of educational technology has transformed teaching methods, communication patterns, and assessment systems within schools and higher education institutions. According to Schleicher (2021), digital transformation in education requires teachers to continuously update their competencies in order to respond to changing educational demands. Consequently, teacher professionalism in the 21st century increasingly depends on educators' ability to combine pedagogical expertise with digital competence and lifelong learning skills.

However, technological transformation also presents challenges for educators. Many teachers experience difficulties adapting to rapidly changing digital platforms, online instructional methods, and technology-driven administrative systems. These challenges indicate that teacher professionalism should not only emphasize technical competence but also include adaptability, resilience, and sustainable professional growth.

Digital Skills and Teacher Competence

Digital skills have become an essential component of teacher competence in modern education systems. Digital competence refers to the ability to effectively use digital technologies for communication, collaboration, content creation, problem-solving, and teaching innovation (Falloon, 2020). In educational contexts, digital competence includes the ability to integrate technology into pedagogy, manage online classrooms, develop digital learning resources, and utilize educational data for instructional improvement.

Recent studies show that teachers with strong digital skills are more capable of creating engaging learning experiences and improving student participation in technology-enhanced learning environments (Tondeur et al., 2021). Digital technologies such as learning management systems, artificial intelligence, educational applications, and virtual collaboration tools enable teachers to personalize learning and support flexible instructional models. Furthermore, digital competence allows educators to access broader professional networks and participate in global educational communities.

Nevertheless, disparities in digital competence remain a major issue in many education systems. Factors such as age, technological access, institutional support, and training opportunities significantly influence teachers' readiness to adopt digital technologies. Teachers in developing regions often face limitations in infrastructure and digital training, which negatively affect their professional performance and confidence in technology integration (Trust & Whalen, 2021). Therefore, strengthening digital competence requires comprehensive institutional and policy support.

Technological Innovation in Education

Technological innovation has become a major driver of educational transformation in the post-pandemic era. The integration of digital platforms, artificial intelligence, cloud computing, and virtual learning systems has expanded opportunities for flexible and

personalized learning. According to Dwivedi et al. (2021), educational innovation supported by technology can improve instructional efficiency, student engagement, and accessibility in modern education systems.

In the context of teacher professionalism, technological innovation encourages educators to redesign instructional strategies and learning environments. Teachers are increasingly required to adopt blended learning, flipped classrooms, gamification, and digital assessment methods. These innovations shift the traditional teacher-centered approach toward more collaborative and interactive learning processes. Consequently, teacher professionalism now involves continuous technological adaptation and pedagogical innovation.

However, technological innovation also creates challenges related to workload intensification and professional pressure. Teachers are often expected to quickly master new technologies while simultaneously maintaining instructional quality and administrative responsibilities. Continuous adaptation to technological changes can lead to stress, emotional exhaustion, and reduced professional satisfaction if adequate institutional support is unavailable (Kim & Asbury, 2020). Therefore, technological innovation should be accompanied by sustainable professional development and psychological support for educators.

Educator Sustainability and Well-being

Educator sustainability refers to the ability of teachers to maintain professional effectiveness, psychological well-being, and career resilience over time. Teacher well-being has become an increasingly important issue in educational research, particularly following the COVID-19 pandemic, which significantly increased teachers' emotional and professional burdens. Studies indicate that high workloads, technological pressure, and limited work-life balance contribute to burnout and declining job satisfaction among educators (Kim & Asbury, 2020).

Teacher well-being is closely related to instructional quality and educational outcomes. Educators with strong psychological resilience and professional support are more capable of adapting to educational changes and maintaining positive classroom environments. Conversely, poor well-being negatively affects teacher motivation, instructional effectiveness, and student learning experiences (Collie, 2021). Therefore, teacher professionalism should not be understood solely through competence and performance indicators but also through emotional sustainability and professional resilience.

Institutional support plays a critical role in maintaining educator sustainability. Professional development programs, collaborative work cultures, mental health support, and manageable workloads are essential factors in strengthening teacher resilience in digital education environments. Sustainable teacher professionalism requires balancing technological expectations with educator well-being to ensure long-term educational effectiveness.

21st-Century Skills and Future-Ready Educators

The concept of 21st-century skills has become central to discussions regarding future-ready educators. Teachers are expected to develop competencies such as critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, communication, digital literacy, and problem-solving to prepare students for rapidly changing global societies (Voogt & Roblin, 2020). Consequently, teachers themselves must possess these competencies in order to effectively facilitate future-oriented learning.

Digital transformation has reinforced the importance of adaptive learning and lifelong professional development among educators. Teachers are increasingly required to become reflective practitioners who continuously evaluate and improve their teaching strategies through technological innovation and evidence-based practices. Moreover, educational institutions expect teachers to function as facilitators of innovation capable of integrating interdisciplinary learning and digital technologies into classroom instruction.

Nevertheless, achieving future-ready teacher professionalism requires systemic educational reform. Teacher training institutions, policymakers, and schools must collaborate to develop sustainable professional development systems that integrate technological competence, pedagogical innovation, and educator well-being. Without adequate support, teachers may struggle to meet the increasing expectations of modern education systems.

Theoretical Framework of the Study

This study integrates Digital Competence Theory, Teacher Professionalism Theory, and Educator Sustainability Theory to explain the multidimensional nature of technology-driven teacher professionalism. Digital Competence Theory emphasizes the importance of technological literacy and digital adaptability in educational practice. Teacher Professionalism Theory highlights pedagogical competence, ethical responsibility, and professional identity as essential dimensions of effective teaching. Meanwhile, Educator Sustainability Theory focuses on psychological resilience, work-life balance, and long-term professional well-being.

By integrating these perspectives, this study seeks to provide a comprehensive understanding of how digital skills, technological innovation, and educator sustainability interact within contemporary educational systems. The study positions teacher professionalism as a dynamic and holistic construct that requires balancing technological advancement with sustainable professional well-being.

Research Method

This study employs a qualitative approach using the library research method to examine technology-driven teacher professionalism in the context of digital skills and educator sustainability. Library research is considered appropriate because the study focuses on conceptual analysis, theoretical synthesis, and critical evaluation of previous scholarly works related to digital competence, educational technology, teacher professionalism, and educator well-being in the post-pandemic era. The research relies on

secondary data obtained from peer-reviewed journal articles, academic books, conference proceedings, and official institutional reports published by international organizations such as OECD, UNESCO, and the European Commission. Through the library research approach, the study seeks to comprehensively understand contemporary developments, challenges, and theoretical perspectives regarding teacher professionalism in technology-enhanced educational environments.

The data collection process was conducted systematically through academic databases including Scopus, Google Scholar, ScienceDirect, SpringerLink, Emerald Insight, and Taylor & Francis Online. The literature selection focused on publications from 2020 to 2025 to ensure relevance to recent developments in digital education and post-pandemic educational transformation. Keywords used during the literature search included "teacher professionalism," "digital competence," "educational technology," "teacher well-being," "educator sustainability," "digital pedagogy," "21st-century skills," and "technology-driven education." The collected literature was then classified into several thematic categories, such as digital skills development, technological innovation in education, teacher resilience, educator mental well-being, and sustainable professional development.

The data analysis in this study utilized descriptive-analytical and thematic analysis techniques. The descriptive approach was used to explain trends and developments in teacher professionalism within digital learning environments, while thematic analysis was applied to identify recurring patterns, conceptual relationships, research trends, and major challenges discussed in previous studies. The researcher critically compared findings from the selected literature to identify research gaps, theoretical inconsistencies, and emerging issues related to digital transformation and educator sustainability. Furthermore, this study integrates Digital Competence Theory, Teacher Professionalism Theory, and Educator Sustainability Theory to construct a comprehensive analytical framework for understanding the multidimensional nature of technology-driven teacher professionalism in contemporary education systems.

Results and Discussion

The Transformation of Teacher Professionalism in the Digital Era

The findings of this study indicate that teacher professionalism has undergone significant transformation due to rapid technological advancement and digitalization in education. Traditionally, teacher professionalism primarily focused on pedagogical competence, subject mastery, and classroom management. However, in the contemporary educational landscape, teachers are increasingly expected to possess digital competencies that enable them to effectively integrate technology into teaching and learning processes. Digital transformation has shifted the role of teachers from knowledge transmitters to facilitators, mentors, instructional designers, and digital learning innovators (Redecker, 2020).

The COVID-19 pandemic accelerated this transformation by forcing educational institutions worldwide to adopt online and hybrid learning systems. Teachers who

previously relied on face-to-face instructional methods were required to rapidly adapt to digital platforms and virtual teaching environments. This transition revealed substantial differences in teachers' technological readiness and digital literacy levels. Educators with strong digital competencies were more capable of maintaining instructional quality and student engagement during remote learning, while those with limited technological skills experienced significant professional challenges (König et al., 2020).

Furthermore, the findings demonstrate that teacher professionalism in the digital era is no longer limited to technological operation skills but also involves the ability to design innovative, flexible, and student-centered learning experiences. Teachers are increasingly expected to utilize digital technologies creatively to support collaboration, critical thinking, communication, and personalized learning. Therefore, digital competence has become an essential dimension of contemporary teacher professionalism.

Digital Skills and Educational Innovation

The study reveals that digital skills significantly influence teachers' ability to implement educational innovation effectively. Teachers who possess advanced digital competencies tend to adopt innovative instructional strategies such as blended learning, flipped classrooms, gamification, virtual collaboration, and digital assessment systems more successfully. Technological innovation enables educators to create more interactive learning environments and improve students' participation in classroom activities (Falloon, 2020).

The integration of artificial intelligence, learning management systems, and educational applications also contributes positively to instructional efficiency and personalized learning experiences. Teachers can utilize digital platforms to monitor student progress, provide individualized feedback, and facilitate collaborative learning beyond physical classroom boundaries. Additionally, digital technologies allow educators to access broader professional development resources and participate in global educational communities, thereby strengthening continuous professional learning.

However, despite these opportunities, the findings indicate that technological innovation also creates professional pressure for educators. Teachers are expected to continuously adapt to rapidly changing digital tools and educational technologies while simultaneously maintaining instructional quality and administrative responsibilities. Many educators experience technological fatigue due to constant updates in digital platforms and increasing expectations regarding digital proficiency. Consequently, technological innovation must be accompanied by adequate institutional support and sustainable professional development programs.

Challenges of Technology-Driven Teacher Professionalism

One of the major findings of this study is that the transition toward technology-driven professionalism remains uneven across educational contexts. Teachers in technologically advanced institutions generally demonstrate higher levels of digital readiness compared to educators in under-resourced schools or rural regions. Limited internet access, inadequate technological infrastructure, and insufficient professional

training continue to hinder teachers' ability to fully integrate digital technologies into classroom practices (Trust & Whalen, 2021).

Additionally, disparities in digital competence are influenced by factors such as age, teaching experience, institutional culture, and access to professional development opportunities. Older educators often encounter greater difficulties adapting to digital teaching methods compared to younger teachers who are more familiar with technology-based communication and learning environments. These disparities highlight the importance of equitable digital training programs and institutional support systems for educators.

The findings also reveal that many teachers perceive digital transformation as increasing professional workload and emotional stress. Online teaching requires additional preparation, technological troubleshooting, and continuous communication with students and parents outside formal teaching hours. As a result, teachers frequently experience work-life imbalance and professional exhaustion, particularly during periods of emergency remote teaching. Therefore, strengthening teacher professionalism should not solely focus on digital competence enhancement but also address educators' psychological well-being and workload management.

Educator Sustainability and Teacher Well-being

The study highlights that educator sustainability and teacher well-being are critical dimensions of sustainable teacher professionalism in the digital age. While digital technologies provide opportunities for instructional innovation and flexibility, they also contribute to emotional exhaustion, stress, and burnout among educators. Teachers are increasingly expected to perform multiple professional roles simultaneously, including technological adaptation, administrative digitalization, student mentoring, and emotional support provision (Kim & Asbury, 2020).

Research findings indicate that teacher well-being significantly affects instructional effectiveness, motivation, and classroom performance. Educators with strong psychological resilience and institutional support tend to demonstrate greater adaptability and professional confidence in technology-enhanced learning environments. Conversely, poor mental well-being negatively impacts teaching quality, student engagement, and overall educational outcomes (Collie, 2021).

Institutional support emerges as a crucial factor in maintaining educator sustainability. Schools and educational institutions that provide collaborative work environments, manageable workloads, professional development opportunities, and mental health support contribute positively to teacher resilience and job satisfaction. Consequently, sustainable teacher professionalism requires balancing technological expectations with emotional and professional support systems for educators.

Technology-Driven Professionalism and 21st-Century Education

The findings further demonstrate that technology-driven teacher professionalism is closely connected to the development of 21st-century education systems. Teachers are increasingly required to cultivate competencies such as critical thinking, creativity,

communication, collaboration, and digital literacy among students. To effectively facilitate these competencies, educators themselves must become adaptive and future-ready professionals capable of integrating technology into pedagogical innovation (Voogt & Roblin, 2020).

Technology-driven professionalism also promotes lifelong learning among educators. Teachers are expected to continuously update their knowledge and instructional strategies in response to emerging educational technologies and evolving student needs. Digital learning environments encourage educators to participate in online professional communities, collaborative knowledge-sharing platforms, and international educational networks, thereby strengthening global professional engagement.

Nevertheless, achieving sustainable technology-driven professionalism requires systemic educational reform. Educational institutions and policymakers must develop long-term professional development frameworks that integrate digital competence, pedagogical innovation, educator well-being, and institutional support. Without comprehensive support systems, digital transformation risks increasing professional inequality and reducing the sustainability of teaching careers.

Theoretical and Practical Implications

Theoretically, this study contributes to the understanding of teacher professionalism by integrating Digital Competence Theory, Teacher Professionalism Theory, and Educator Sustainability Theory into a comprehensive framework. The findings demonstrate that technology-driven teacher professionalism is multidimensional, involving not only technological skills but also pedagogical adaptability, emotional resilience, and sustainable professional development.

Practically, the study suggests that educational institutions should prioritize continuous digital training, technological infrastructure improvement, and teacher well-being programs to support sustainable professional development. Policymakers should also design inclusive educational policies that balance technological innovation with psychological and professional support for educators. By integrating digital competence with educator sustainability, educational systems can better prepare teachers for the demands of future learning environments.

Conclusion

This study concludes that technology-driven teacher professionalism has become an essential component of contemporary education systems in the digital and post-pandemic era. The rapid advancement of educational technology, digital learning environments, and online instructional systems has transformed the role of teachers from traditional knowledge transmitters into facilitators, innovators, and adaptive digital educators. Consequently, teacher professionalism is no longer limited to pedagogical competence and subject mastery but increasingly depends on educators' digital skills, technological adaptability, and ability to facilitate student-centered learning through innovative instructional approaches.

The findings reveal that digital competence significantly influences teachers' ability to implement educational innovation effectively. Educators who possess strong digital skills are more capable of utilizing learning management systems, artificial intelligence, online collaboration tools, and digital assessment methods to create interactive and flexible learning environments. In addition, technology integration contributes positively to instructional effectiveness, personalized learning experiences, and professional collaboration among educators. However, the study also identifies substantial disparities in digital readiness caused by differences in infrastructure availability, institutional support, access to professional training, and technological literacy among teachers.

This study further demonstrates that technology-driven professionalism presents both opportunities and challenges for educators. While digital transformation enhances instructional innovation and professional connectivity, it simultaneously increases workload, emotional pressure, and technological stress among teachers. Many educators experience difficulties balancing technological adaptation, administrative responsibilities, and personal well-being, particularly during periods of rapid educational change. Therefore, teacher professionalism in the digital era should not only emphasize technological competence but also prioritize educator sustainability, psychological resilience, and professional well-being.

Theoretically, this research contributes to the development of teacher professionalism literature by integrating Digital Competence Theory, Teacher Professionalism Theory, and Educator Sustainability Theory into a comprehensive analytical framework. The study highlights that sustainable teacher professionalism requires balancing technological innovation with emotional resilience, continuous professional development, and institutional support systems. This integrated perspective expands current discussions regarding the multidimensional nature of teacher professionalism in technology-enhanced education.

Practically, the study recommends that educational institutions and policymakers strengthen digital training programs, improve technological infrastructure, and provide sustainable professional support systems for educators. Schools and universities should prioritize teacher well-being initiatives, collaborative professional learning communities, and adaptive digital pedagogy training to ensure sustainable educational transformation. By integrating digital competence with educator sustainability, education systems can better prepare teachers to become future-ready professionals who can support high-quality, inclusive, and resilient learning environments in the digital age.

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