



Optimization of the Role of Teachers and Educational Staff in Realizing Quality and Character-Based Education in the Digital Era

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OPEN ACCESS

Keywords:

**teacher,
character
building, digital
era**

Abstract

The advancement of digital technology necessitates fundamental transformation in educational practices, particularly regarding the roles of teachers and educational staff. This literature study examines optimization strategies for teachers and educational personnel in realizing quality character-based education amid digital transformation. Through thematic content analysis of recent academic publications, this research reveals three critical findings. First, 60% of teachers possess minimal digital competencies, requiring structured capacity building through tiered training and peer mentoring programs. Second, effective digital education integration demands a three-pillar model comprising professional digital competencies, character-based innovative learning, and educational ecosystem synergy. Third, educational staff including school principals, digital librarians, and laboratory technicians play strategic yet often overlooked roles in creating conducive digital learning environments. The study demonstrates that successful digital education depends not merely on technological sophistication but on educators' capacity to utilize technology as instruments for enhancing learning quality while maintaining character values. This research contributes a comprehensive framework emphasizing the balance between technological mastery and moral value cultivation, proposing systematic professional development programs and multi-stakeholder collaboration to address implementation barriers including digital gaps, infrastructure limitations, and increased workload burdens.

Kata Kunci:

**guru,
pembentukan
karakter, era
digital**

Abstrak

Kemajuan teknologi digital membawa perubahan signifikan dalam dunia pendidikan yang mengharuskan adanya adaptasi dan penguatan peran guru serta tenaga kependidikan. Penelitian ini bertujuan mengkaji bagaimana guru dan tenaga kependidikan dapat memaksimalkan perannya untuk mewujudkan pendidikan berkualitas dan berkarakter di era digital. Metode yang digunakan adalah studi literatur dengan menganalisis berbagai sumber pustaka terkait kompetensi digital guru, penerapan teknologi dalam pembelajaran, dan pembinaan karakter siswa di lingkungan digital. Melalui analisis konten tematik terhadap publikasi akademik terkini, penelitian ini mengungkap tiga temuan kritis. Pertama, 60% guru memiliki kompetensi digital minimal yang memerlukan penguatan kapasitas terstruktur melalui pelatihan berjenjang dan program pendampingan.

sebaya. Kedua, integrasi pendidikan digital efektif menuntut model tiga pilar yang mencakup kompetensi digital profesional, pembelajaran inovatif berbasis karakter, dan sinergi ekosistem pendidikan. Ketiga, tenaga kependidikan meliputi kepala sekolah, pustakawan digital, dan tenaga laboratorium memainkan peran strategis namun sering terabaikan dalam menciptakan lingkungan belajar digital yang kondusif. Kajian ini menunjukkan bahwa kesuksesan pendidikan digital bukan bergantung semata pada kecanggihan teknologi, melainkan pada kapasitas pendidik memanfaatkan teknologi sebagai instrumen peningkatan mutu pembelajaran sambil mempertahankan nilai-nilai karakter. Penelitian ini berkontribusi menyajikan kerangka komprehensif yang menekankan keseimbangan antara penguasaan teknologi dan penanaman nilai moral, mengusulkan program pengembangan profesional sistematis serta kolaborasi multipihak untuk mengatasi hambatan implementasi mencakup kesenjangan digital, keterbatasan infrastruktur, dan beban kerja yang meningkat.

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INTRODUCTION

Educational institutions in Indonesia currently face complex challenges emerging as consequences of massive acceleration in digital technology development. Digital transformation in education not only changes teaching and learning methods but also demands reformulation of teachers' and educational staff's roles in realizing quality character-based education (Cahyani et al., 2021). The digital era brings both opportunities and challenges in maintaining education's essence as a process of humanizing humans and forming the character of future generations. The presence of digital technology has opened access to various learning facilities, abundant information sources, and modern teaching strategies, yet simultaneously raises concerns about the fading humanistic dimension in educational processes and weak character value development in students (Falloon, 2020). In this context, teachers and educational staff are expected not only to master learning content substance but also to be competent in technology adoption, organize digital learning processes, and consistently serve as role models in character building.

Several studies have examined the integration of technology into education and teachers' roles in the digital era. Some research proves that teachers with adequate digital competencies can design more effective and engaging learning for digital generation students (Diana et al., 2021). Other studies highlight that digital literacy has become a basic competency that educators must master in the 21st century. However, gaps still exist between teachers' digital competencies and digital learning needs, particularly in areas with minimal technology infrastructure. Furthermore, previous research tends to focus on technical dimensions of technology application, while character building and professional morality dimensions in digital contexts remain underexplored. An aspect overlooked by previous researchers is how to integrate teachers' function as digital learning mediators with their function as character builders simultaneously and proportionally. Most research separates digital competencies from pedagogical character-building abilities, although both should be integrated in modern education implementation. Additionally, educational staff's contribution to building character-oriented digital educational environments has not been

comprehensively examined.

This article presents a comprehensive perspective on optimizing teachers' and educational staff's functions that emphasizes not merely technology mastery but also professional morality strengthening, exemplary behavior, and integrative approaches in realizing quality character-based education in the digital era. The proposed concept is a role optimization model based on three main foundations: professional digital competencies, character-based innovative learning, and educational ecosystem synergy. This model affirms that technology must function as an instrument to strengthen, not substitute, teachers' humanistic role in educational processes. This approach also integrates educational staff's function as strategic partners in building learning environments supporting students' academic and character development. This study aims to analyze and formulate optimization strategies for teachers' and educational staff's functions in realizing quality character-based education in the digital era, considering aspects of professional competencies, technology integration in learning, and comprehensive character value cultivation.

METHODS

This research employs a systematic literature review approach with a descriptive qualitative paradigm to analyze the optimization of teachers' and educational staff's roles in the digital era (Snyder, 2019). Data collection was conducted through documentation study of various literature sources related to the research topic, including indexed scientific journal articles, educational textbooks, empirical research results, and national education policy documents regarding the transformation of teachers' and educational staff's roles in the context of learning digitalization. The research procedure began with identification and selection of literature sources using strict inclusion criteria, including: (1) publications within the last five years (2020-2025) to ensure relevance with current technological developments, (2) substantive focus on digital era education, teacher competencies, and character education, and (3) academic credibility through publication in reputable journals or trusted publishers (Booth et al., 2016). Literature sources were collected from various international academic databases such as Google Scholar, ERIC, and Scopus, as well as national scientific repositories to obtain Indonesian contextual perspectives.

The analysis stage employed thematic content analysis method enabling identification of patterns, main themes, and core concepts from collected literature (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The analysis process was conducted systematically through several stages: (1) in-depth reading and familiarization with all literature sources, (2) initial coding to identify relevant information segments, (3) grouping codes into potential themes, (4) reviewing and refining themes to ensure internal coherence and differentiation between themes, and (5) naming and defining final themes. Data obtained from various sources were then thematically examined by categorizing information based on three main research dimensions: (a) digital competencies of teachers and educational staff in the context of learning transformation, (b) innovative learning strategies and models in the digital era integrating technology, and (c) implementation of character education in digital learning environments.

The synthesis process was conducted by comparing, contrasting, and integrating findings from various sources to obtain comprehensive understanding of problem

complexity and alternative solutions for optimizing teachers' roles in the digital era. Study validity and credibility were maintained through application of source triangulation by utilizing literature from various theoretical perspectives, diverse geographical research contexts, and varied methodological approaches (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). All analysis processes were systematically documented to ensure transparency and auditability. Analysis results were then coherently and logically assembled to answer research objectives and present practical and theoretical recommendations for optimizing teachers' and educational staff's roles in realizing quality character-based education in the digital transformation era.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Transformation of Educators' Roles in the Digital Era

The digital era has transformed the paradigm of teachers' function from being the sole source of knowledge to facilitators, motivators, and learning managers. Teachers in the digital era require more complex and diverse competencies, where digital abilities must be integrated with flexible pedagogical capabilities and personalities that can be exemplified by students. Literature review results show that effective teachers are those capable of integrating technology in learning processes without eliminating personal touch and humanitarian values (Khadijah et al., 2021). Technology functions as an instrument to improve learning interaction quality, expand material reach, and accommodate diversity in students' learning styles. Contemporary teachers also need analytical abilities to sort credible information from hoaxes or misinformation, and transfer these skills to students as part of comprehensive digital literacy.

Strategic Role of Educational Staff in Digital Education Ecosystem

Educational staff have crucial functions often forgotten in discussions about digital education. Optimization of educational systems in the digital era requires systemic support from all educational staff. School principals serve as transformative leaders who formulate digital education visions, facilitate teachers' professional development, and build innovation in educational institutions. Modern digital librarians no longer merely organize physical book collections but also serve as curators of digital learning resources, managers of learning material repositories, and information literacy mediators. Laboratory personnel and technicians need capabilities in managing educational technology infrastructure, ensuring devices and networks operate optimally (Nanda, 2021). Effective synergy between teachers and educational staff becomes a determining factor for successful implementation of digital education in building learning ecosystems that are conducive and adaptive to students' needs.

Table 1. Role of Educational Staff in Digital Ecosystem

No.	Position	Main Role	Contribution to Digital Transformation
1	School Principal	Transformational leader and creator of the digital education vision	Determines policy direction and allocates strategic resources to support digital transformation.
2	Librarian	Digital literacy specialist and curator of digital learning resources	Supports students in searching for, accessing, evaluating, and utilizing digital information effectively.

3	Laboratory Personnel	Technology infrastructure manager and technical support provider	Ensures the availability, maintenance, and optimal operation of digital learning infrastructure.
4	Administrative Staff	Operator of digital institutional management information systems	Improves the efficiency, accuracy, and accessibility of administrative services through digital systems.

Innovative Learning Strategies and Character Education Integration

Learning in the digital era requires innovative approaches that utilize technology to increase student participation and learning achievement. Digital project-based learning facilitates students in developing 21st century competencies such as critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, and communication abilities while creating meaningful digital products (Saputra & Siddiq, 2020). The flipped classroom model changes conventional learning sequences by utilizing learning videos for students to study independently at home, while classroom time is allocated for in-depth discussions and complex problem solving. Learning gamification applies game elements to increase student motivation and participation, while online collaborative learning facilitates interaction beyond physical classroom boundaries. Digital assessment platforms enable teachers to provide faster and more personal responses, while digital portfolios become comprehensive assessment instruments recording students' learning journeys.

One of the main challenges of education in the digital era is maintaining and strengthening students' character formation (Mustakim & Kamal, 2021). Digital technology can become an effective means for character education if designed and implemented strategically. Teachers need to integrate character values such as academic integrity, digital responsibility, digital empathy, and communication ethics in every digital learning activity. Character education in the digital era requires different approaches from traditional methods, where teachers need to teach digital ethics such as behaving politely in online communication, respecting others' copyright and privacy, and thinking critically about digital information. Digital character formation includes development of responsible digital citizenship, education about cyberbullying, and development of academic integrity in digital contexts with easy information accessibility (Rusydiyah et al., 2020).

Continuous Professional Development and Ecosystem Collaboration

Sustainability of digital education transformation heavily depends on strategically designed continuous professional development. Effective digital training programs need to be conducted gradually and adapted to each teacher's initial ability level, as this approach proves more successful than uniform mass training (Fraillon et al., 2020). Comprehensive professional development models must integrate various components, from tiered formal training equipped with digital proficiency certification, formation of communities of practice as forums for sharing experiences and best practices among teachers, peer mentoring systems enabling senior teachers to guide junior colleagues, to self-learning opportunities through online platforms such as MOOCs. Mentoring and coaching in this process have crucial roles, not only to reduce resistance to technological change but also to build collaborative and continuous learning culture in educational environments.

Achievement of optimization of teachers' and educational staff's roles requires strong synergy from all stakeholders in the education ecosystem. Government authorities

have responsibilities to formulate supportive policies, allocate sufficient budgets for infrastructure development and capacity enhancement, and establish regulations ensuring protection of students' rights and safety (Thohir et al., 2021). Higher education institutions are required to prepare prospective teachers with digital competencies through teacher education curriculum renewal and joint research implementation. Parents' role becomes very important in supporting digital learning processes and children's character formation, so schools need to conduct digital literacy programs for parents to effectively accompany children's learning at home (Layyinah & Roebianto, 2020). Meanwhile, the private sector can make significant contributions through public-private collaboration in providing learning platforms, developing quality educational content, and implementing corporate social responsibility programs in education.

Implementation Challenges and Strategic Solutions

Transformation of teachers' and educational staff's roles in the digital era faces several serious obstacles. Digital competency gaps remain a major issue, reflected in the fact that 60% of teachers have minimal digital abilities, requiring resolution efforts through tiered training, certification programs, and formation of communities of practice. Infrastructure limitations, particularly in rural areas where 40% of schools lack adequate internet access, demand intervention through government subsidies and collaboration with private parties (Muhtar & Dallyono, 2020). Resistance to change shown by 35% of senior teachers reluctant to use new technology requires empathetic approaches and support through mentoring programs, sharing success stories of technology implementation, and providing incentives for learning innovation. Increased workload felt by 70% of teachers due to additional digital administrative tasks requires solutions such as administrative system automation, task distribution adjustment, and provision of adequate IT technician support.

Issues of data security and student privacy protection in implementing digital learning platforms demand special attention through formulation of comprehensive data protection regulations, selection of security standard-certified platforms, and socialization of digital security practices to all involved parties. Government policy roles at both central and regional levels are crucial in creating environments supporting digital education transformation, including human resource capacity strengthening, fair and equitable infrastructure distribution, formulation of digital learning-related regulations, and establishment of evaluation systems relevant to 21st century learning demands. In the future, digital evolution in education will continue with emergence of technological innovations such as generative artificial intelligence and increasingly complex adaptive learning systems, requiring teachers and educational staff to consistently develop themselves and adapt to change dynamics while maintaining fundamental education values as efforts for humanization and formation of complete human character (Zawacki-Richter et al., 2019).

CONCLUSION

This study reveals that optimization of teachers' and educational staff's roles in the digital era requires integration of three pillars: professional digital competencies, character-based innovative learning, and educational ecosystem synergy. Critical findings show 60% of teachers still have minimal digital competencies, 70% experience increased digital

administrative burdens, and 35% of senior teachers resist new technology. This research also highlights the strategic role of educational staff—school principals as transformative leaders, digital librarians as information literacy curators, and laboratory personnel as technology infrastructure managers—which have been overlooked. Integration of character education in digital learning requires new approaches teaching digital ethics, responsible digital citizenship, and academic integrity, while innovative learning models such as digital project-based learning, flipped classroom, and gamification prove effective when combined with character value cultivation to produce academically excellent and high-integrity graduates.

This research's contribution lies in presenting a comprehensive framework emphasizing balance between technological literacy and humanistic value cultivation, proposing continuous professional development strategies through tiered training, formation of communities of practice, peer mentoring, and multi-party collaboration among government, educational institutions, parents, and private sector to overcome digital gaps, infrastructure limitations, and increased workload. The main limitation is the literature study approach not yet validated empirically, requiring further research in the form of experimental studies to test the three-pillar model's effectiveness to measure long-term impacts, and development of valid measurement instruments to assess teachers' digital competencies and students' character holistically in Indonesian cultural contexts. This research affirms that digital transformation is not the final goal but an instrument to form complete humans who are intellectually intelligent, strong in character, and beneficial to society, with teachers and educational staff as determinants so that technology serves education's noble purpose.

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