

Challenges and Opportunities of Information and Communication Technology Integration in Indonesian School Learning: A Critical Literature Review

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ABSTRACT

The integration of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in school learning represents a strategic agenda in contemporary educational transformation. This study aims to comprehensively examine the challenges and opportunities of ICT integration in Indonesian school learning through a critical literature review approach. Data were collected through a systematic search of relevant scholarly articles published in reputable national and international journals between 2016 and 2025. A total of 15 selected studies were analyzed using thematic analysis to identify dominant patterns and key findings. The results indicate that major challenges in ICT integration include disparities in digital infrastructure access, limitations in teachers' pedagogical competence, and varying levels of acceptance of digital learning platforms. Conversely, ICT integration also offers significant opportunities to enhance instructional flexibility, student motivation, and access to diverse learning resources. This review highlights that successful ICT integration depends not only on technological availability but also on systemic readiness and sustained policy support. The findings of this study provide a conceptual foundation for policymakers and educators in developing inclusive and sustainable digital curriculum management in schools.

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Introduction

The rapid advancement of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) has profoundly reshaped the educational landscape across the globe (Padamati Anusha Reddy & Yedavelly Srinivas Reddy, 2022; Saif et al., 2022), including in Indonesia. In contemporary educational discourse (Fitriansyah, 2024), ICT integration is no longer confined to the mere utilization of digital tools or online platforms; rather, it represents a fundamental transformation in pedagogical practices, learning interactions, and curriculum management (Kaur, 2017; Kumar, 2023). Previous studies consistently demonstrate that well-designed ICT integration can expand access to learning resources, foster instructional flexibility, and support the development of essential twenty-first-century skills such as critical thinking, collaboration, and digital literacy (Puspitasari & Ishii, 2016; Zulherman et al., 2021). Nevertheless, the effectiveness of ICT integration remains contingent upon the readiness of educational systems to accommodate technological, pedagogical, and organizational change.

In the Indonesian educational context, the integration of ICT into school learning experienced unprecedented acceleration during the COVID-19 pandemic. Schools were compelled to adopt online learning modalities and digital learning management systems within a relatively short period of time. While this transition enabled the continuity of education, several studies reveal that the shift was largely reactive and implemented under emergency conditions, rather than through systematic and strategic planning (Anugrahana, 2020; Cahyadi et al., 2021). Structural inequalities, particularly disparities in internet connectivity, access to digital devices, and institutional support, have further intensified learning gaps between urban and rural schools (Hermanto, 2021). These realities underscore that ICT integration in Indonesia is not merely a technological challenge, but also a structural issue closely linked to educational equity and social justice.

Beyond infrastructural limitations, teacher competence and pedagogical readiness constitute a critical dimension of ICT integration. Research grounded in the Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (TPACK) framework emphasizes that the meaningful use of technology in learning requires a balanced integration of technological skills, pedagogical understanding, and subject matter expertise (Prasetyo, 2022). Empirical evidence suggests that many teachers continue to face difficulties in designing engaging digital learning experiences, selecting appropriate instructional platforms, and conducting valid and ethical online assessments (Zulherman et al., 2021). Without adequate professional development and sustained institutional support, ICT adoption risks becoming superficial, serving administrative functions rather than enhancing learning quality.

Despite these challenges, the literature also highlights substantial opportunities arising from ICT integration in school learning. Digital technologies enable more

interactive, collaborative, and personalized learning environments, allowing students to engage with content at their own pace and according to their individual learning needs. Moreover, online platforms facilitate access to global knowledge networks and diverse educational resources that were previously inaccessible to many learners (Puspitasari & Ishii, 2016). When implemented thoughtfully, ICT integration has been shown to increase student motivation, improve engagement, and strengthen communication between teachers and learners (Zulherman et al., 2021). These opportunities, however, can only be realized through deliberate instructional design and context-sensitive implementation.

Although scholarly attention to ICT integration in Indonesian education has grown in recent years, existing studies remain largely fragmented. Many focus on isolated cases, specific technologies, or single stakeholder perspectives, such as teachers or students, without offering a comprehensive synthesis of broader patterns. Consequently, there is a lack of critical literature that systematically maps the interconnected challenges and opportunities of ICT integration at the school level. Addressing this gap, the present study seeks to provide a critical literature review that synthesizes existing research on ICT integration in Indonesian school learning. By doing so, this study aims to contribute a more holistic understanding of the issue and to inform the development of sustainable digital curriculum management and evidence-based educational policies.

Methods

This study employed a critical literature review approach to systematically examine the challenges and opportunities of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) integration in Indonesian school learning. This approach was selected because it enables the synthesis of findings from previous studies to develop a comprehensive understanding of a research phenomenon without direct field data collection. A literature review, in this sense, is not merely a summary of existing studies but an analytical and reflective process aimed at identifying patterns, trends, and research gaps within a particular field (J. W. , & P. C. N. Creswell, 2018; J. W. Creswell, 2014; Snyder, 2019).

Data were collected through a systematic search of academic databases, including Google Scholar and reputable national and international journals. The inclusion criteria consisted of peer-reviewed articles published between 2016 and 2025 that addressed ICT integration in school education and were relevant to learning processes, teacher readiness, student engagement, or digital learning management. Studies that lacked methodological clarity or did not directly address educational contexts were excluded. This selection process followed established principles of rigor and relevance in literature review research (Booth et al., 2016; Webster & Watson, 2002).

Data analysis was conducted using thematic analysis, involving coding, categorization, and interpretation of key findings. Each selected study was examined to identify dominant themes related to structural challenges, pedagogical readiness,

instructional opportunities, and policy implications of ICT integration. The findings were then critically synthesized to construct a coherent conceptual mapping of ICT integration dynamics in Indonesian school learning. This analytical process allowed the study to generate evidence-based insights that inform sustainable digital curriculum development and educational policy formulation.

Result

Based on a systematic literature search process, this study identified 15 scholarly articles that were directly relevant to the integration of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in school learning. The literature was retrieved from academic databases such as Google Scholar as well as reputable national and international journals. The selected articles were published within the period 2016–2025, representing the development of research on ICT integration in school education over the last decade.

In terms of publication sources, the reviewed studies were drawn from internationally recognized journals, including Telematics and Informatics, Heliyon, European Journal of Educational Research, and Data in Brief, alongside several accredited national education journals. The diversity of these sources indicates that ICT integration has attracted broad scholarly attention across different educational contexts, encompassing policy discussions, instructional practices, and teacher competence development.

Substantively, the findings of the literature review reveal that the most frequently reported issues relate to technological access disparities, teacher readiness and competence, and the adoption and utilization of digital learning platforms. A large proportion of the reviewed studies identified limited infrastructure and unequal internet access as primary findings, particularly in non-urban and under-resourced areas. In addition, several studies highlighted constraints in teachers' digital literacy and pedagogical preparedness to integrate ICT meaningfully into classroom practice. Conversely, a number of studies also reported positive outcomes associated with ICT use, such as increased instructional flexibility, enhanced student motivation, and improved communication in digitally mediated learning environments. To provide a clearer overview of the literature mapping, the main findings of the reviewed studies are summarized in the following Table, which presents key characteristics of each study, including authorship, year of publication, research method, principal findings, and reported outcomes.

Table 1. Summary of Research Findings on ICT Integration in School Learning

No	Author(s)	Year	Method	Main Findings	Research Outcomes
1	Imaduddin & Firdaus	2025	Literature review	Digital divide remains a major issue	Need for equitable ICT policies
2	Puspitasari & Ishii	2016	Quantitative survey	High smartphone access, low digital literacy	Digital literacy reinforcement required
3	Anugrahana	2020	Qualitative study	Limited devices and internet access in primary schools	Strong technical support for teachers needed
4	Diarsini et al.	2022	Literature review	Online assessment faces validity challenges	Adaptive digital assessment design required
5	Na'imah et al.	2023	Mixed methods	Learning flexibility increased	Hybrid learning models show potential
6	Faza et al.	2021	Survey study	Increased workload among educators	Institutional support is essential
7	Cahyadi et al.	2021	Program evaluation	Online learning remains suboptimal	Long-term digital planning is required
8	Prasetyo et al.	2022	TPACK survey	Teacher TPACK significantly influences learning	Teacher competence strengthening is crucial
9	Riyanda et al.	2020	Program evaluation	LMS utilization remains limited	LMS literacy improvement is necessary
10	Zulherman et al.	2021	UTAUT-based survey	Perceived usefulness affects adoption	Psychological factors play a key role
11	Santiadi et al.	2024	TAM analysis	LMS platforms show	Context-based LMS selection is needed

				different strengths	
12	Bannus	2025	Qualitative study	Limited ICT training for teachers	Continuous professional development is required
13	Dewi	2020	Qualitative study	Parental involvement is critical	School-home collaboration is essential
14	Hermanto	2021	Descriptive study	Access inequality widens learning gaps	Educational equity must be addressed
15	Chai et al.	2021	Survey study	Pedagogical beliefs shape ICT use	ICT integration must be pedagogy-driven

Discussion

The findings of this literature-based study indicate that the integration of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in Indonesian school learning represents a complex and multidimensional process rather than a purely technical intervention. ICT integration extends beyond the introduction of digital tools into classrooms and involves fundamental changes in pedagogical design, learning interactions, and curriculum management. A growing body of research suggests that ICT has the potential to enhance learning flexibility, broaden access to educational resources, and support the development of twenty-first-century competencies among students (Puspitasari & Ishii, 2016; Zulherman et al., 2021). However, the realization of these benefits is highly contingent upon the readiness of the educational system as a whole.

One of the most prominent issues emerging from the reviewed literature is the persistent digital divide across regions and schools. Limitations in digital infrastructure particularly internet connectivity and the availability of learning devices continue to constrain the effective implementation of ICT in many educational settings. Schools located in non-urban and under-resourced areas face substantially greater challenges than those in urban contexts, resulting in uneven learning opportunities for students (Hermanto, 2021). Evaluative studies further demonstrate that rapid shifts toward digital learning, especially during emergency situations, often exacerbate existing inequalities when not accompanied by adequate planning and support (Cahyadi et al., 2021). These findings underscore that ICT integration is inseparable from broader issues of educational equity and social inclusion.

In addition to structural constraints, teacher readiness and professional competence emerge as decisive factors in determining the success of ICT integration. The literature consistently emphasizes that technological skills alone are insufficient to improve learning quality if they are not aligned with sound pedagogical practices. The Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (TPACK) framework highlights that effective ICT-based instruction requires teachers to integrate technology, pedagogy, and subject matter knowledge in a coherent and balanced manner (Chai, 2021; Prasetyo, 2022). Without this integration, the use of ICT tends to remain superficial, serving administrative or supplementary purposes rather than transforming teaching and learning processes in meaningful ways.

Another key dimension discussed in the literature concerns users' acceptance of digital learning platforms. Studies examining the adoption of Learning Management Systems (LMS) reveal that perceived ease of use and perceived usefulness strongly influence teachers' and students' willingness to engage with digital technologies on a sustained basis (Santiadi et al., 2024; Zulherman et al., 2021). Technologies that are perceived as relevant, intuitive, and supportive of instructional goals are more likely to be integrated into daily teaching practices. Conversely, platforms that are misaligned with users' needs or contextual realities are often underutilized, regardless of their technical sophistication. This finding suggests that successful ICT integration depends not only on technological availability but also on contextual compatibility and user-centered design.

Despite the numerous challenges identified, the reviewed literature also highlights significant opportunities associated with ICT integration in school learning. When implemented thoughtfully, ICT can foster more interactive, flexible, and adaptive learning environments, while enhancing student motivation and engagement (Anugrahana, 2020). However, these positive outcomes are most evident in educational contexts where ICT integration is supported by coherent institutional policies, continuous teacher professional development, and long-term digital learning strategies. In the absence of such support, ICT initiatives risk becoming temporary responses to specific circumstances rather than sustainable components of educational transformation. Consequently, ICT integration should be understood as a long-term developmental process that requires consistent institutional commitment and evidence-based policymaking.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of this literature review, it can be concluded that the integration of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in Indonesian school learning constitutes a complex process that cannot be reduced to technical implementation alone. The review demonstrates that successful ICT integration is shaped by the interplay between digital infrastructure availability, teachers' pedagogical competence, users' acceptance of technology, and institutional as well as policy support.

While ICT offers significant opportunities to enhance learning flexibility, interactivity, and instructional quality, the literature also reveals persistent structural and pedagogical challenges that limit equitable and sustainable implementation. Consequently, ICT integration should be regarded as a long-term educational transformation agenda that requires a comprehensive approach, sustained capacity building, and evidence-based policymaking to effectively support inclusive digital learning and curriculum management.

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