

Beyond Digital Transformation: Developing The Integrated Educational Ecosystem Framework (IEEF) For Sustainable Innovation in Schools

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Abstract

Digital transformation has become a central priority for schools seeking to improve teaching, learning, and institutional performance. Nevertheless, substantial investment in digital platforms and emerging technologies does not necessarily produce sustainable educational innovation. This study argues that the principal challenge is not merely technological but institutional: innovation becomes sustainable when technology is integrated with the wider capacities of the educational organisation.

The study develops the Integrated Educational Ecosystem Framework (IEEF), a theoretical model that explains sustainable educational innovation through the interaction of seven institutional capacities: educational leadership, professional capacity, educational content, technology, knowledge management, organisational learning, and contextual identity. A qualitative, theory-building case-study approach is employed to examine a real school-based educational institution and to explore how these capacities interact in practice. The case is used not to evaluate or rank the institution, but to refine the proposed framework and illustrate the organisational conditions through which continuous innovation may emerge.

The study also introduces the concept of Educational Self-Reliance, defined as a school's institutional capacity to create, adapt, evaluate, and continuously improve educational solutions through accumulated knowledge and organisational learning. The findings suggest that technology produces lasting educational value only when it is supported by effective leadership, professionally capable staff, relevant educational content, systematic knowledge management, and sensitivity to the institution's social and cultural context.

The framework offers researchers, school leaders, and policymakers an integrated perspective for designing sustainable educational change beyond technology-centred reform.

Keywords: Educational Innovation; Educational Self-Reliance; Institutional Capacity; Digital Transformation; Organisational Learning.