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Application Models and Practical Pathways of Digital Literacy in Vocational Education Teaching

Yu Liu[1], ZhenGang Yan[2], Heung Kou[3]*
1 Shandong Vocational Animal Science and Veterinary College, Weifang, China; Dept. of Education in Graduate School, Sehan University, Jeollanam-do, Korea
2 Dept. of Education in Graduate School, Sehan University, Jeollanam-do, Korea; Zhengzhou Shengda University, Zhengzhou, China
3 Dept. of Education in Graduate School, Sehan University, Jeollanam-do, Korea
***Corresponding author, E-mail: kou57@sehan.ac.kr**

Abstract:
With the accelerated global digital transformation in education, the digital literacy of vocational education teachers has become a key factor influencing teaching quality and driving educational model innovation. Currently, vocational education teachers face numerous challenges in applying digital literacy, including insufficient technological adaptability, difficulties in transitioning teaching models, limitations in resources and infrastructure, as well as issues related to data privacy and ethics. Enhancing the digital literacy of vocational education teachers can not only promote teaching innovation and strengthen personalized learning but also advance the digital transformation of vocational education. It provides theoretical guidance and practical support for education policymakers, vocational college administrators, and teachers, fostering the development of digital literacy among vocational education teachers.

Keywords:
Digital Literacy; Vocational Education Teachers; Teaching Models; Digital Transformation

1.Introduction

1.1. The Necessity of Digital Literacy for Vocational Education Teacher.

With the accelerated global digital transformation, the education sector is undergoing profound technological changes, particularly in vocational education, where enhancing digital literacy plays a crucial role in improving teachers' instructional capabilities. Vocational education aims to cultivate highly skilled talents that align with industry demands, involving not only the transmission of theoretical knowledge but also the development of practical operational skills. Therefore, vocational education teachers must possess strong digital literacy to effectively integrate modern technologies and digital tools into their teaching, thereby enhancing teaching effectiveness and improving student learning outcomes [1]. With the widespread application of artificial intelligence (AI), virtual reality (VR), and augmented reality (AR), vocational education has gradually transitioned from traditional face-to-face teaching to more flexible and diverse digital

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teaching formats. According to the **International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE)** standards, teachers need to develop multiple aspects of digital literacy, including digital citizenship, data literacy, and technology integration capabilities, to address the challenges of future teaching and technological integration [2].

The cultivation of digital literacy among vocational education teachers has become a key research focus in education. Existing digital literacy frameworks, such as the Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (TPACK) framework and the Digital Competence Framework for Educators (DigCompEdu), provide specific requirements and evaluation criteria for teachers' digital literacy. However, in the specialized field of vocational education, how teachers integrate their subject-specific expertise with practical teaching needs to make reasonable use of digital tools remains a topic worthy of further exploration [3].

The digital literacy of vocational education teachers is not only a key factor in improving teaching quality but also a necessary condition for promoting the digital transformation of vocational education. As technology continues to advance and educational needs evolve, vocational education teachers' digital literacy is no longer limited to the operational ability of traditional digital tools. Instead, teachers are required to innovatively use digital tools in teaching, design learning activities that align with contemporary demands, and ensure that students remain competitive in a rapidly evolving professional environment [4]. Therefore, studying the application models of digital literacy among vocational education teachers and establishing effective practical pathways has become a crucial task in advancing the modernization of vocational education.

1.2. Challenges Faced

1.2.1. Technological Adaptability Issues

Vocational education teachers often face challenges in adapting to emerging digital technologies, such as AI, VR/AR, and online teaching platforms. Studies have shown that many teachers lack the necessary digital skills, particularly in areas such as intelligent teaching and data analysis, resulting in suboptimal teaching outcomes [5]. Insufficient proficiency in utilizing new technologies prevents teachers from fully leveraging the potential of digital tools in their teaching practices.

1.2.2. Resource and Infrastructure Constraints

Although digital education is gradually becoming a mainstream trend in global educational development, many vocational colleges face challenges such as lagging infrastructure development and equipment shortages. Insufficient digital resources and technical support have become major factors limiting the application of teachers' digital literacy. There are significant gaps in the provision of technological facilities and equipment in schools, particularly in the construction and investment of high-tech facilities such as virtual laboratories, smart classrooms, and online course platforms, which hinders the improvement of teachers' digital literacy [6].

1.2.3. Resistance to Teaching Model Transition

The transition from traditional face-to-face teaching to digital teaching models is not a simple task. Many vocational education teachers have long relied on conventional teaching methods and struggle to adapt to new models such as Blended Learning and Online Learning. When attempting to integrate digital tools into their teaching, teachers often face significant psychological resistance and practical challenges due to a lack

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of necessary training and adaptation in instructional design and implementation [7].

1.2.4. Data Ethics and Privacy Security Issues

With the widespread adoption of big data and learning analytics technologies, student learning data and personal information have become crucial for educational management and assessment. However, data privacy and ethical concerns have emerged as significant challenges in the digitalization of vocational education. Ensuring student privacy and data security while effectively utilizing student data for personalized teaching and learning assessment remains a critical issue that needs to be addressed in the field of vocational education [8].

1.3. Research Questions

Given the current limitations in the application of digital literacy among vocational education teachers, this study aims to explore the following key questions:

(1) What are the core components of vocational education teachers' digital literacy?

(2) How can digital literacy be effectively applied in different teaching models, including traditional classrooms, blended learning, and online education?

(3) How can vocational education teachers' digital literacy be enhanced through teacher training, technical support, and policy optimization?

2.The Connotation of Digital Literacy and the Core Competencies of Vocational Education Teachers

2.1. Definition and Components of Digital Literacy

Digital literacy refers to an individual's ability to acquire, process, evaluate, and create information in a digital environment. For vocational education teachers, digital literacy is not merely about possessing basic technical operational skills; it also encompasses the ability to integrate information technology into teaching practices to enhance instructional effectiveness and improve students' learning experiences [9]. According to studies based on the TPACK (Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge) framework, digital literacy should integrate technological knowledge, pedagogical methods, and subject content knowledge, enabling teachers to effectively utilize technological tools in accordance with the characteristics of their disciplines to optimize the teachings process and learning outcomes [10]. Meanwhile, the DigCompEdu (Digital Competence Framework for Educators) identifies six core competencies that teachers should possess: information and data literacy, digital communication, content creation, teaching management, learning assessment, and professional development [11].

2.2. Core Competencies of Digital Literacy for Vocational Education Teachers

The core competencies of digital literacy for vocational education teachers not only include basic technical application skills but also involve the ability to integrate digital tools into teaching practices based on subject characteristics and student needs to drive instructional innovation and enhance teaching quality. The following are four key aspects of vocational education teachers' digital literacy:

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2.2.1. Information and Data Literacy

Information and data literacy refer to teachers' ability to effectively acquire, analyze, evaluate, interpret, and utilize data in the teaching process. This competency is particularly crucial for vocational education teachers, as vocational training often requires data analysis to assess students' learning progress, behaviors, and skill acquisition, allowing for the adjustment of teaching content and methods to meet individualized learning needs. For instance, teachers can use learning analytics tools (such as Moodle's learning management system and Google Analytics) to analyze students' assignment submissions, online discussions, and test scores, identifying weak areas and providing timely interventions [12]. Moreover, teachers should be able to apply data analysis techniques to develop personalized learning plans, ensuring that students receive timely feedback at different learning stages to enhance their overall learning outcomes.

2.2.2. Digital Instructional Design Competence

Digital instructional design competence refers to teachers' ability to proficiently utilize digital tools and technologies to design, organize, and implement teaching activities. With the promotion of modern teaching models such as Blended Learning and Flipped Classroom, teachers need to develop the ability to design digital teaching plans that cater to students' needs. In vocational education, teachers create highly interactive course content through digital platforms, leveraging resources such as MOOCs, micro-courses, and online assessment tools to seamlessly integrate theoretical instruction with practical training, thereby enhancing teaching flexibility and student engagement [13]. Additionally, teachers should fully utilize digital tools (such as electronic whiteboards and interactive classroom software) to enhance teaching interactivity and student participation, stimulating students' learning motivation

2.2.3. Competence in the Application of Virtual Training and Simulation Technologies

A defining characteristic of vocational education is its emphasis on practical skill development, and the application of virtual training and simulation technologies provides new teaching pathways for vocational education. Vocational education teachers need to be proficient in using virtual reality (VR) and augmented reality (AR) tools to facilitate skill training. These digital technologies enable students to practice in simulated environments, overcoming the limitations of physical equipment while minimizing safety risks associated with high-risk operations. For example, in fields such as medicine, engineering, and mechanical manufacturing, virtual training platforms allow students to engage in hands-on skill development through virtual simulations, thereby enhancing their practical abilities and problem-solving skills [14]. Therefore, vocational education teachers must be capable of integrating these virtual training technologies into subject curricula to achieve a digital transformation of traditional skill training methods.

2.2.4. Digital Citizenship Literacy

Digital citizenship literacy concerns how teachers ethically and responsibly use digital tools in the teaching process, ensuring compliance with regulations, respecting student privacy and data security, and adhering to digital ethical standards. In vocational education, teachers must not only understand and utilize digital tools effectively to enhance teaching but also develop a strong awareness of digital ethics, particularly when handling students' personal information and learning data. With the widespread adoption of big data analytics and learning management systems (LMSs), teachers need to understand how to ensure data privacy and security throughout the data collection and analysis process, preventing data breaches and misuse [15].

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Additionally, teachers should cultivate a heightened awareness of cybersecurity, ensuring that students remain safe in digital learning environments. This is particularly important during online assessments and assignment submissions, where students' information must be safeguarded against unauthorized access. Enhancing digital citizenship literacy not only contributes to the creation of a healthy digital learning environment but also strengthens students' trust and engagement with digital learning tools.

3.The Digital Transformation of Vocational Education Teachers' Teaching Models

3.1. Digital Application in Traditional Classroom Teaching

Traditional classroom teaching in vocational education typically focuses on subject knowledge instruction and skill operation guidance. However, with the continuous advancement of digital technology, traditional classroom teaching is gradually being digitalized. The extensive application of digital teaching resources provides teachers with more diverse instructional methods. First, digital textbooks and online learning platforms enable vocational education teachers to interact with students beyond class time and enhance classroom engagement through interactive electronic courseware and video lessons. Students can access teaching content at any time, participate in online discussions, submit assignments, and receive instant feedback, thereby improving learning flexibility and autonomy. Second, teachers can use electronic whiteboards and interactive classroom software for real-time instruction, increasing student participation and engagement in class. Particularly in skill-based instruction, digital tools help teachers vividly present complex operational processes, such as through video demonstrations and animated simulations, making practical teaching more intuitive and effective [16].

3.2. Application of Digital Literacy in Blended Learning

Blended learning is an emerging instructional model in vocational education that integrates online learning and offline practice, making it particularly suitable for skill-based courses. Teachers must design instruction based on students' learning needs and course requirements by providing theoretical learning materials via online platforms, such as MOOCs and micro-course platforms, while facilitating skill training through virtual laboratories and in-person practice [17]. For example, students can engage with theoretical content through MOOCs outside of class, while virtual training and hands-on skill operations during in-person sessions help deepen their understanding and practical application of knowledge. The strength of blended learning lies in its flexibility and personalization, allowing teachers to adjust lesson plans based on students' learning progress, ensuring that instruction better aligns with students' practical needs and ultimately enhances learning outcomes.

3.3. Application of Digital Literacy in Remote Teaching Models

As a new teaching model, remote teaching has been increasingly applied in vocational education, particularly during exceptional circumstances such as the global education transition during the pandemic. The remote teaching model requires teachers to effectively utilize video conferencing platforms, such as Zoom and Microsoft Teams, for instruction, while also managing course content, assessments, and feedback through online platforms. Vocational education teachers need to develop the following competencies.

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First, they must be able to maintain real-time interaction with students through online classrooms to ensure engagement and effective communication. Second, teachers should be proficient in conducting academic assessments and collecting student feedback using online testing tools such as Google Forms and Quizlet, allowing for continuous monitoring of students' progress. Third, enhancing student interaction and collaborative learning is essential, which can be achieved through online collaboration tools like Google Docs and Padlet, fostering teamwork and knowledge sharing among students. These competencies require teachers not only to possess basic technical skills but also to be capable of designing and implementing digital learning activities that sustain students' learning interest and engagement, ensuring the effectiveness of remote teaching in vocational education [18].

3.4. Application of Digital Literacy in Intelligent Teaching Models

With continuous advancements in artificial intelligence (AI) and big data technologies, intelligent teaching has become a crucial development direction for the future of vocational education. Teachers need to leverage AI-driven personalized learning platforms and learning analytics tools to provide customized learning content and feedback based on students' progress and learning behaviors. For example, AI systems that analyze student learning data can automatically adjust learning pathways, recommend appropriate learning resources, and utilize intelligent grading systems to automatically assess assignments, thereby reducing teachers' workload while improving teaching efficiency and quality [19]. In this intelligent teaching environment, teachers must continuously enhance their understanding and application of AI-driven tools. They should be able to effectively integrate technology into teaching to optimize learning outcomes while maintaining a balance between teacher guidance and student autonomy in the learning process.

4.Practical Pathways for Enhancing Digital Literacy Among Vocational Education Teachers

4.1. Teacher Training and Professional Development

Enhancing the digital literacy of vocational education teachers requires a systematic training framework and ongoing professional development support. The content of teacher training should cover multiple aspects, including the use of digital tools, digital instructional design, data analysis, and learning assessment. First, vocational colleges should organize targeted technical training and instructional design workshops through online platforms and school-based training programs, helping teachers master the latest digital tools and teaching methodologies. Second, international educational exchanges and collaborations provide teachers with opportunities for cross-border learning and experience sharing. By participating in international education projects and conferences, teachers can broaden their perspectives and enhance their digital literacy competencies.

4.2. Technical Support and Resource Optimization

To effectively enhance the digital literacy of vocational education teachers, schools and educational management authorities must provide comprehensive technical support and optimize existing resource allocation. First, vocational colleges should increase investment in digital teaching resources, ensuring that both teachers and students have access to adequate digital tools and instructional platforms. These platforms

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can be used for content distribution, assignment submission and grading, and as interactive learning spaces to facilitate real-time communication and feedback between teachers and students.

Specifically, vocational colleges should invest in smart classrooms and virtual laboratories to provide diverse technological support for teachers. Virtual laboratories enable students to conduct skill training without physical equipment, making them especially valuable for fields involving high-risk operations or expensive equipment, such as medicine, engineering, and chemistry. Meanwhile, smart classrooms integrate interactive electronic whiteboards, real-time data analytics systems, and cloud storage platforms, allowing teachers to adjust instructional strategies based on real-time data feedback, making classroom teaching more personalized and interactive. Additionally, teachers can leverage mobile learning platforms to enhance student engagement, promote learning flexibility, and foster students' self-directed learning abilities.

4.3. Educational Policy and System Reform

Enhancing the digital literacy of vocational education teachers is not solely the responsibility of schools and teachers; government and educational authorities play a crucial role in providing necessary support. To drive the digital transformation of vocational education, policymakers should implement a range of policy measures, offering practical support to teachers in terms of training, technical assistance, and resource allocation.

4.3.1. Establishing Digital Literacy Standards for Vocational Education Teachers

To ensure the systematic improvement of teachers' digital literacy, the government and educational authorities should introduce assessment standards for vocational education teachers' digital competencies, providing a clear framework and guidelines for their professional development. For instance, drawing inspiration from the DigCompEdu framework, teacher training programs should explicitly define essential digital competencies, such as integrating digital tools into instructional design, leveraging data analytics for teaching assessment, and conducting effective online interaction and collaboration. By establishing a unified evaluation standard, teachers can better identify gaps in their digital literacy, while educational authorities can detect issues and implement timely improvements to optimize digital competency development in vocational education.

4.3.2. Providing Financial Support and Policy Incentives

The digital transformation of vocational education requires substantial financial investment. The government should allocate special funds to vocational colleges to support the development of digital infrastructure, the procurement of high-quality teaching resources, and the implementation of digital literacy training programs for teachers. In low-income regions, financial support can equip vocational institutions with necessary technological tools and provide training opportunities, helping to bridge the digital divide. Additionally, the government can introduce tax incentives and subsidy policies to encourage enterprises to participate in the digital transformation of vocational education, fostering the development and innovation of digital tools and resources.

4.3.3. Reforming the Teacher Training System

Enhancing vocational education teachers' digital literacy requires long-term, systematic training and support. Educational authorities should establish a continuous professional development system that

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encourages teachers to regularly participate in online and offline training programs to stay updated on the latest digital tools and teaching methodologies. Furthermore, interdisciplinary collaboration and international exchange programs can help teachers broaden their perspectives and improve their digital literacy competencies. For example, through international education projects, teachers can learn from successful experiences in vocational education digitalization in other countries and apply these insights to local educational practices.

5. Conclusion

This study conducts an in-depth analysis of the composition of vocational education teachers' digital literacy and the transformation of teaching models, proposing multiple pathways for enhancing digital literacy among vocational education teachers. The findings indicate that information and data literacy, digital instructional design competence, virtual training and simulation technology application ability, and digital citizenship literacy are core competencies required by vocational education teachers. The improvement of these competencies requires collaborative efforts from educational management authorities and teachers. By increasing investment in technological resources, providing sufficient teacher training, and establishing clear policy standards, vocational education teachers' digital literacy can be effectively developed, thereby driving the digital transformation of vocational education.

The theoretical contribution of this study lies in expanding existing digital literacy frameworks, providing systematic theoretical support for research on vocational education teachers' digital literacy. From a practical perspective, this study offers specific strategies for transforming teaching models in vocational education and provides practical recommendations for education administrators and policymakers on how to enhance teachers' digital literacy.

Future research could further explore how big data and artificial intelligence technologies can be leveraged to provide personalized digital literacy training programs for vocational education teachers. Additionally, cross-cultural applications of digital literacy and the evaluation standards for teachers' digital literacy are important topics worthy of further investigation. By conducting in-depth research on these issues, future studies can provide more comprehensive and scientific theoretical support and practical guidance for the continued development of vocational education.

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