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The Individualization of Legal Responsibility in Digital Education: Teacher Liability in Indonesian Senior High Schools

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ABSTRACT

As schools across Indonesia rapidly adopt digital tools, educators face a complex tangle of legal challenges, from student data privacy and cybersecurity to strict regulations governing electronic information. Technology has blended into daily teaching, but little attention is paid to whether teachers are genuinely equipped to manage these legal demands. This socio-legal research portrays the responsibility of senior high school teachers in Medan, Indonesia, when adopting digital technology in their classrooms. It uses a mixed-methods approach, combining survey data with in-depth interviews of educators and legal practitioners. Although teachers may exercise their duty in ways that could threaten students, this legal analysis covers the general obligations of the teaching profession as specified by the Indonesian Personal Data Protection Law (Law No. 27 of 2022) and the Electronic Information and Transactions Law (Law No. 1 of 2024). The results highlight a concerning discrepancy between practical use of technology and teachers' awareness of their legal risks. This exposure is exacerbated by institutional voids and a systemic propensity for flexible, trust-based classroom processes that obscure accountability between teachers and schools. This study concludes that teacher liability in the digital age cannot be treated as an isolated issue; it can only be properly addressed as part of a strong institutional mechanism for comprehensive allocation of liability and real legal and technical protection. Real accountability only comes with objective institutional expectations, enforced digital legal training, and a more unified national regulatory schema.

Keywords: *Digital Accountability, Sociolegal Studies, Teacher Liability, ITE Law, Data Protection*

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I. INTRODUCTION

Digitalization of education has transformed the contours of legal liability—many teachers' 'normal' practice is now performed in strictly regulated digital environments. In this digital age, where the common use of videos, virtual classrooms, cloud storage and social media is commonplace, educators are no longer simply teaching. They are processing sensitive student data, content and communications; all falling under various laws which can have serious ramifications (Widodo, 2026; Abdurrahman, 2026). In this new landscape, data privacy, intellectual property rights, cyber misconduct and professional conduct have integrated with teaching as part of its habitual routine (Erlangga et al., 2025; Saragih, 2023; Nwokocha & Ifeoma, 2025; Abdurrahman, 2026). The post-pandemic normalization of hybrid learning accelerated this shift, permanently promoting digital technology from an ancillary form to the dominant medium for classroom instruction. Yet this rapid technological expansion has outpaced similar advancements in the legal education and policy capacity of schools to enforce compliance, resulting in an alarming gap between everyday technology use and true readiness around the law (Jie et al., 2025; Sucahyanto, 2026; van Dijk, 2005).

Previous studies have outlined the state of data protection in Indonesia from multiple legal angles and sectors. For instance, Nurmansyah et al. (2024) examine restructuring data protection frameworks in the context of AI-assisted phishing crimes, arguing that Law No. 27 of 2022 on Personal Data Protection (the PDP Law), rather than accommodating local interests and norms to a slippery degrees, must instead be brought further into line with global data protection standards in order to defend against more complex cross-border cyber threats. Using a comparative method, Natamiharja and Setiawan (2024) conducted a comparison of the frameworks in Indonesia to those in France

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showing that Indonesia's personal data protection system is still at an early stage, particularly when compared to the relatively complete structure of the EU's General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). In addition, the academic literature on the topic of "right to be forgotten" illustrates that data privacy is not merely about preventing unauthorized collecting or sharing; it is ultimately an issue of personal control over digital identity, privacy and human dignity. In this context, Aditya et al. (2026) underline the importance of enforceable and administrative mechanisms to ensure the ability to exercise data erasure rights in Indonesia.

Other research has looked deeper within certain digital sectors and the normalization of personal data protection in these spaces. An example is the study by Nurhasanah and Rahmatullah (2020), comparing the legal framework for fintech in Indonesia and Malaysia, highlighting systemic weaknesses in the Indonesian system and recommending immediate updates through new/modified legislation as well as improvement of regulatory enforcement mechanisms. Likewise, Raihan and Rosadi (2024) identified artificial intelligence functionalities in the telemedicine applications operating as data controllers where the consumer privacy policies are persistently depersonalized from the overarching the principles of the PDP Law. The nature of these remaining vulnerabilities also applies to digital lending and marketplace platforms, where fragmented regulations, poor oversight mechanisms and weak enforcement put consumer privacy at additional risk (Benseghir et al., 2025; Imanuddin et al., 2023). Synthesis of these sectoral issues was conducted by Palupy et al. (2026), arguing that, while this sets down a set of rules to follow, the effectiveness of data protection laws goes beyond their codification—it depends on institutional capacity, structural accountability, and technological preparation and contextual implementation. This is also

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supported by Huda et al. (2026) and Ramadhani et al. (2025), providing evidence that endemic data breaches arise from poor security architectures, insufficient technical capacity and lack of consistent enforcement in Indonesia.

Meanwhile, scholars have also criticized the digital legal governance from structural and demographic angles. Kusworo et al. (2022) go on to claim that protecting public administrative data requires not only strong law, but an independent regulator for oversight, investigation and enforcement without which there would be no way to prevent leaks and systemic abuse. This dimension of institutional gap is compounded by minor data safety. As Agung (2020) claims, the national and international legal tools that exist in this field are not sufficient to address the unique features of children's vulnerabilities on digital platforms, delegating responsibility for online protection entirely to parents and caregivers. In addition, Situmeang et al. (2026) discovered dramatic deficiencies in privacy protection for children—especially in terms of informed consent, erasure rights, and digital profiling and enforcement—and pointed out that the EU's GDPR provided much stronger safeguards for minors. Especially in conjunction with the fast-changing digital infrastructure that possess new forms of liability even beyond the strict data protection. Wardani et al. (2023) set out the major privacy hazards and unknown legal liabilities that general online interactions present, pointing to a dire need for public legal literacy. Similarly, protection, Ezzerouali et al. (2025) highlight that the future of AI will require matured legal systems alongside technical literacy, while Marzuki et al. (2026) claims that the digital legal literacy and accountability of institution is fundamental to the modern technology-friendly governance. With respect to minor welfare, Fauzan and Arifta (2020) argue that a proper institutional framework may reduce overlaps between jurisdictions, whereas Muharrani et al. (2024) and Latifiani and Waspiah (2026) further indicate that youth

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protection laws will always be ineffective if key implementation actors do not have the ability or training to execute them. Finally, even in regard of customary governance, such as the use of *Mapalus* traditions together with modern legal principles, Yusuf et al. (2025) conclude that institutional and community actors are essential for transforming frameworks of legal and ethical principles into viable, practical social practices.

These studies taken together demonstrate that, in the end run, effective protection depends upon a dynamic interaction between legislative structures of regulation, institutional investment in enforcement and legal comprehension by those engaged in the processing of personal information. Meanwhile, existing literary works are either limited to the world of corporate data controllers, e-commerce platforms or general consumers, state institution actors with certain authority over data or cyber threats that have yet been under research. Surprisingly, relatively little research has focused on educators—people who work every day with student data that is sensitive by nature. This study closes this significant gap in the literature through an analysis of teachers' preparedness and professional liability for handling personal data and electronic data with students in senior high schools. Far from a discrete institutional or technological issue, this research considers the relationships between levels of legal awareness within schools, existing protocols and professional ethics as well as wider regulatory frameworks in determining digital conduct within the education sector.

This empirical gap gives rise to an important socio-legal question: What normative standards should be used to assess teachers' preparedness and institutional accountability with respect to digital education? In response, this study aims to offer a framework based on the legal foundations of digital education in Indonesia, focusing on Medan. Teacher readiness is divided into

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four different dimensions: (1) Regulatory compliance: whether laws governing digital governance and data protection being followed; (2) Rights protection: the proactive safeguarding of students' personal data and digital rights; (3) Professional ethics and the responsibilities of pedagogical practice and rules for the correct use of digital technology; and (4) Institutional Government: the availability of necessary organizational systems that make legal compliance possible. Using these criteria, this research differentiates between technology experience and legal preparedness.

The standard specifies that simply functioning well with digital tools is only a bare minimum and many more skills are required to be ready. The challenge requires a full grasp of the potential legal liabilities associated with online activity, including understanding where the appropriate lines are in terms of legally permissible gathering and use of student data engagement as well as how to engage appropriately in cyberspace (as an institution) and knowing when to consult with other institutional offices or outside counsel when there is a problem. Simultaneously, institutional readiness must be more than just hardware and software provision; it should encompass formalized governance structures like Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), targeted legal-digital literacies, data governance policies, and risk mitigation measures.

In Indonesia, these normative imperatives are institutionalized within a holistic framework governing electronic information, personal data protection and professional teaching standards. The Electronic Information and Transactions Law (ITE Law), as well as its revising laws are the minimum regulations regarding electronic communication and data management. In addition to this, the Personal Data Protection Law (PDP Law) establishes stringent statutory obligations on gathering, processing, retention and securing personal data. In modern schools, teachers frequently collect, analyze and send

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data to students and parents through learning management systems, cloud storage sites and instant messaging apps—all of which makes these laws deeply relevant. As a result, these statutes are the initial reference that this study employed to explore teachers' adherence to their digital legal duties.

Yet the existence of these statutory duties does not in itself make more complex legal problems that arise within education straightforward to resolve. Existing regulations do not offer practical, operational guidance on what schools should do in response to data protection and electronic information requirements within established day-to-day practices for interacting with digital classrooms. This ambiguity is especially problematic when using third-party applications, cloud storage systems, online teacher-student messages and digital learning resources (Azmi, 2020; Diniyanto & Suhendar, 2020; Putra et al., 2024; Erlangga et al., 2025; Saragih, 2023). As a result, the best challenge is not one of total statutory absence but, instead, a structural inability to render abstract legal statutes into tangible professional ethics and school-level operating procedures.

The result of these governance gaps is deep uncertainty about what digital responsibilities consist of in the first place, and how they out to be distributed. Moreover, Indonesian digital laws clearly define statutory violations and criminal liabilities, but leaves ambiguity around the shared civil and administrative obligations of teachers versus schools resulting from legal disputes over common educational practices. That leads teachers to navigate an intricate digital landscape in the absence of clear institutional guidelines or formalized legal advice, rendering them extremely susceptible to unintentional non-compliance (Saragih, 2023).

To grasp these dynamics in their fullness, one must look at the broad legal architecture of such frameworks and also at the social-institutional contexts that

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determine how it is actually implemented. In reality, the enforceability of legal liability is closely tied to an educator's access to formal legal training, organizational counsel and institutional performance expectations. Due to the rapid nature of technology development which continuously outruns documentation and learning in education, teachers are often left on their own to resolve complex digital risks (Erlangga et al., 2025; Nwokocha & Ifeoma, 2025; Amin, 2026; Aulia, 2026). Institutional neglect creates a heavily administrative burden, whereby educators are soon expected to grapple with the legal nuance of digital consent and confidentiality of student data alongside rigorous curriculum requirements (Sufrapto et al., 2024). In addition to this, when it comes to the digital communication channels which are everywhere, the professional boundaries for parental access seem increasingly lower and there seems to be a smaller boundary between an educator's private life and their work (Nwokocha & Ifeoma, 2025; Maulana et al., 2012). From this socio-legal perspective, breaches of regulations by educators are rarely isolated incidents in which individuals willingly act against the rules but are rather manifestations of broadly problematic institutional contexts.

The systemic vulnerability is particularly pronounced in Medan, the largest city and education focal point in North Sumatra. Digital tools have been pushed aggressively through Medan's senior high schools, but almost no empirical research has looked at how local educators understand their legal requirements and navigate them. Academics tend to privilege certain discourses over others and the current dominating discourse within education is overwhelmingly focused on the pedagogical outcomes, nearly exclusively fixated on the quality of digital instruction, what skills teachers need (usually technical) or what students need (academic achievement), all while ignoring systemic legal liabilities associated with any use of technology (Saragih, 2023).

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In addition, studies on law that deal with the specific institutional vulnerabilities of senior high school teachers do so only in rare cases (Azmi, 2020; Diniyanto & Suhendar, 2020; Putra et al., 2024).

Initial observations and reviews of published literature indicate that many Medan educators live in an unregulated digital bubble, where risking serious legal exposure through violations of student privacy, copyright obligations or breaches in custodial supervision online is a common hazard (Sufrapto et al., 2024; Nwokocha & Ifeoma, 2025). Nonetheless, the absence of empirical baseline data verifying nationally based digital compliance standards for high schools in Medan remain. In particular, the existing literature has not specifically evaluated local teachers' legal awareness and ability to defend student and personal digital rights or whether overall school protocols meet statutory requirements. At this juncture, a tripartite socio-legal investigation urgently needs to be conducted to chart the empirical realities of digital compliance across these secondary institutions.

II. RESEARCH METHODS

This study employs a mixed-method socio-legal design to assess the legal preparedness of teachers and their potential professional liability in implementing digital technology integration into senior high schools in Medan, Indonesia. The empirical framework we developed combines qualitative, in-depth interviews with quantitative surveys (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009). A purposive sample of around 100 senior high school teachers in Medan is chosen to yield a representative diversity of institutional disposition and instructional experience, providing a solid starting point for detecting wider patterns across the sample of legal literacy and systemic compliance (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2017; Sugiyono, 2022). This polls how well teachers know about statutory

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needs, which digital platforms they have experience with, and the institutional pain point they contend with along the way. Complementing these data, semi-structured interviews can provide context-rich narratives regarding teachers lived experiences during day-to-day events that are perceived as operational risks of a legal mandate. The final aspect of the study is document analysis, which includes reviewing relevant statutes, ministerial circulars and school internal rules, permitting the integration of the empirical data into a formal statutory framework (Bowen, 2009; Sekaran & Bougie, 2019).

At the same time, the doctrinal part thoroughly analyzes national and international laws concerning teaching-digital practices. This study mainly discusses the Personal Data Protection Law (Law No. 27 of 2022) along with its implications and possible amendments, as well as the Electronic Information and Transactions Law (Law No. 1 of 2024), in addition to other relevant educational regulations and intellectual property laws. Through parsing these legal instruments, the study realizes explicit teacher rights, obligations and liabilities translating them into four analytical dimensions: (1) compliance concerning student data privacy and digital rights; (2) ethical responsible practice in digital spaces; (3) teachers' legal-digital competences; and (4) institutional safeguards an organizational support structuring practice. We contrast formal benchmarks of what students should learn in mathematics with empirical data from global assessments as well as studies of actual teaching practice and school contexts. This doctrinal-empirical integration sheds light both on the floor of teachers' legal readiness and how institutional structures shaped by administrative practice may serve as facilitating or constraining factors in statutory compliance.

The two sources of data are processes with differing techniques—quantitative data on survey responses are analyzed descriptively for macro-

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level trends in legal awareness and structural challenges, while interview transcripts are thematically analyzed to explore the narratives of legal uncertainty, workplace workarounds, and institutional deficits (Field, 2018; Braun & Clarke, 2022). The doctrinal findings are triangulated with these two empirical stands to highlight this disconnect between de jure legal mandates and de facto classroom realities. This broad investigative approach results in four overarching research questions: (1) What legal rules govern the use of digital technology by teachers and schools? (2) To what extent are teachers informed about relevant regulations governing their practice prior to, during, and/or after using such technologies in educational settings? Are they compliant with these regulations? (3) Do institutional policies, protocols and professional training programs properly account for statutory compliance? and (4) What regulatory, structural and socio-educational drivers best explain the sometimes-dissonant relationship between formal mandates on the books versus actual practice? Throughout the lifecycle of the research, strict ethical protocols that include obtaining informed consent, absolute participant anonymity, and data confidentiality are in place (Israel & Hay, 2020). In the end, these results were intended to lead to tighter rules at institutions, legal-digital education programs with precise goals and a more equitable assignment of accountability between teachers and their schools.

III. RESEARCH RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

A. Empirical Evidence about the Legal Knowledge of Teachers

To ensure modern school governance, educators must be legally literate (Batubara et al., 2025). Here, legal awareness refers not to a mere academic understanding of statutory text but the immediate ability to identify actual law and apply it in the course or regular teaching practice. The purpose of this study

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is to assess the legal literacy of teachers across four areas—data privacy, electronic transaction, online communication channels, and digital professional conduct. More specifically, this part identifies the awareness and implementation of statutory duties by educators while also evaluating how institutional frameworks, internal school policies and supportive administrative structures aid (lead) to the process.

We find deep systemic divides in legal literacy among senior literacy among senior high school teachers in Medan, especially at the intersection of the classroom and digital law. Survey results indicate that while widespread awareness of digital communication laws among educators exists, fewer than 30% completely understand how these statutes change their duty as professionals in the classroom. This is a big deal, since the laws of electronic transaction for virtual environments in this era are stringent and if any responsible party streamed or hosted illegal digital items into learning spaces (Azmi, 2020; Diniyanto & Suhendar, 2020; Putra et al., 2024). When examined with Soerjono Soekanto's (2002) Legal Awareness Theory, just being aware of the existence of a statute only marks the initial step in law literacy; compliance is achieved through internalizing that awareness, knowledge/understanding of the law, and actionable engagement with it—elements notably lacking at each stage for those surveyed educators (Saragih, 2023). Additionally, a smaller generational gap appeared: younger "digital native" educators may be adept with technology but have less understanding than their senior colleagues of the legal ramifications of their digital workflows. At the same time, private high school teachers in Medan have both more legal knowledge and awareness than their public-school equivalents—particularly due to rapid institutional management and targeted professional development. Legal sociologist Satjipto Rahardjo (2000) pointed out that law is not something existing in a vacuum, but

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highly contingent upon its socio-institutional context. Such a divergence underscores deep systemic inequities in the distribution of legal compliance resources and training in the education sector.

Qualitative interviews transcripts continue to reveal pervasive, structural misunderstanding about student privacy data and online regulation. Many respondents incorrectly thought that it would be acceptable to transmit student grades and personal evaluations using commercial communication apps such as WhatsApp for pedagogical purposes. By doing so, this informal practice contravenes the rigid statutory percepts of General Purpose Clause of Personal Data Protection Law (PDP) Law due to which child data are handled as a special category bestowing extensively stronger protection. Classical Legal Protection Theory dictates that the protection of digital rights for at-risk groups is a shared, invisible responsibility of state apparatus and frontline teachers. This dependence on these informal digital services based on trust reveals an alarming incongruity between administrative expediency and legal compliance, bringing the risk of hefty statutory violations to teachers and their institutions alike.

Moreover, all educators are not so familiar with copyright law that is still a main problem in Medan. Most teachers routinely copy digital images, copyrighted texts and media content into their electronic lesson plans without attribution at all, believing that anything they use for education is free from any kind of fair-use restrictions. Nonetheless, educational exception would become severely limited in scope under Indonesian copyright law due to the absence of a general fair use exemption. Legal scholars contend that this pattern of negligent indifference bespeaks deep institutional liabilities for schools, the result of which will not be intellectual property lawsuits and judgments but a tarnished moral authority within the academic system. In the absence of formal

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institutional guidelines, educators continue to be at high risk for subtle copyright infringement. This absence of guidance is particularly dangerous during digital clashes where the majority of instructors remain totally oblivious to their real lawful commitments. Educators are unanimous in saying online harassment and cyberbullying is not alright, but there are no operational guidelines about what process to follow to intervene, for example (Astuti et al., 2025). Many function with the age-old assumption their duty of care ceases as soon as they leave the physical school building, ignoring that courts today are regularly holding educators accountable for acts of misconduct taking place in cyberspace (Wibowo & Al-Khalif, 2024; Utari et al., 2026).

This study therefore provides some of the clearest evidence to date of a systematic failure in professional legal development. 72% of the 100 educators surveyed had common ground that they had never received training on digital and electronic education law. As a result, widespread culture of legal fear has arisen and teachers have become reluctant to turn to the university for formal guidance, so they are forced into excessive recourse to informal peer consultations. "*I have never been trained in digital learning from a legal perspective. It teaches us how to use the technology but is utterly uninformative about its regulatory limits. We ask other teachers whenever in doubt*," says one respondent. This institutional neglect makes educators very insecure, and ultimately hampers their pedagogical adoption of digital tools. One teacher noted: "*I am terrified of inadvertently breaking the law. I do the same thing with student names or photographs when we are producing anything online and I have no idea whether formal parental consent is required nor how to adequately protect that data*." This bureaucratic uncertainty is made worse by a lack of structure in school governance, as described by one respondent: "*When data breaches and online communication problems arise, we aren't sure where the accountability lies. There is no procedure in*

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place for this at our school. We are forced to engage with these technologies, and we have absolutely no legal protection whatsoever."

This disassociation effectively illustrates a wider systemic lag effect in Indonesia, where regulations around media have not quite kept up with the speed of digital transformation (Anggono et al., 2025). Most national education laws were written with workplace-classrooms in mind and do not fully account for the complexities of virtual-learning spaces (Budhiartie et al., 2025). Legislative delay in establishing statutory protections leaves educators vulnerable to punitive systems such as ITE Law while accelerating their adoption of digital platforms. In addition, this legal vagueness is compounded by path-dependent cultural norms embedded in the education ecosystem of Medan. The region has a long tradition of teacher and student relationships based on kinship and trust, which makes it very difficult to move to a legalized contract-based system. For modern times, parents often read legal protections as a direct insult: they see signing data-processing waivers. To protect community peace, the educators on the frontlines routinely violate legal procedures which ironically only opens them up to Civil and Criminal potential liability. This systemic flaw within the order is visible from the nugget of legal aphorism *ignorantia legis neminem excusat* law (indictment *ignoramus*), and therefore, places such a stress in their education framework in Medan. Digital jurisprudence needs to be included in teacher-training curricula, schools have to play an active role by articulating institutional guidelines of operation for the use of technology, and institutions must put in place a shift towards pre-emptive risk management systems through the establishment of legal compliance officers or departments.

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B. Analysis of Institutional and Structural Barriers

An educator's ability to perform their pedagogical responsibilities will be closely regulated by system trends that are permissible under the law. Strong institutional support is not just an issue of hardware and stable internet, but rather consists of explicit organizational policies, formalized operational practices, specialized legal education, secure data infrastructure, and structural risk-mitigation tools. In this way, systemic institutional failings can be seen to actively produce the gap between statutory expectations and compliant practice in the classroom. First, we traverse our empirical data against the Indonesian digital jurisprudence to unequivocally establish that the legal accountability must be equally divided between educator and educational institution.

The burgeoning professional legal readiness of Medan high school teachers, on the one hand, exists in a tenuous contradiction between aggressive pedagogical innovation and unchecked legal exposure. The national *Merdeka Belajar* (Emancipated Learning) curriculum mandate strongly motivates classroom ecosystem digitalization, even though legal literacy underlying these instructional innovations is very immature. Professional development data are particularly striking in its stark structural inequity: (1) Attendance at Legal and Ethical Training: 85% of educators surveyed have engaged in instructional training that focuses on tools and platforms; and (2) Just 15% of that same cohort have never attended a service providing detail on cyber law, digital ethics, or compliance with statutory data. This creates a dangerous operational paradox, in which teachers may be highly skilled at using various digital tools but are completely oblivious to the laws surrounding their use. In this regulatory void, educators fall back on informal common sense of what compliance with digital laws would seem to require—legally erroneous and incredibly liable under both the ITE Law as well as the PDP Law.

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In addition, preparation for information is still an important blind spot in school governance. It shows that an educator and even school administration work towards a reactionary manner rather than proactive. Teachers regularly save sensitive student grades, behavioral papers and other personal identifying information on insecure, unencrypted commercial cloud storage platforms. This systemic failure is more than just a lack of technical proficiency; it embodies a serious dereliction of the institution's duty of care around students' digital identities.

This structural unreadiness is exacerbated through systematic absence of both formal digital consent protocols and content verification workflows. No senior high schools in Medan sampled for this study used formalized parental data-consent waivers. Rather, their presiding institutional culture is one dependent on ad hoc social trust between individuals where educators seem to rely upon the assumption that innocent pedagogic motives in sufficient or vaguely articulated terms as a defense against any potential legal action. However, Indonesian civil and statutory law does not permit good intentions to be an adequate defense against non-compliance with regulatory requirements. This ambiguity in structure undermines educational confidence deeply. Fearful of unintentionally breaking the law, cautious teachers often completely avoid even trying to use creative digital methods altogether, relying on traditional low-tech teaching instead. This legal fear has shown that technology-savvy does not mean legally-savvy. Younger "digital native" teachers often adopt tools in an extremely fluent manner but are unsuccessful at considering the long-range legal repercussions of those online behaviors, resulting in unregulated resource fronting behavior on behalf of secondary education faculty throughout Medan.

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Additionally, this structural deficit is compounded by a shortage of human capital for specialization within the ecology of public schools. Most Medan secondary institutions have no data protection officer or institutional legal advisor. As a result, when privacy violations or digital friction does occur, educators are placed in the position of being the de facto frontline civil rights crisis managers—an impossibly inequitable and wholly untenable administrative responsibility. This lack of structure directly contradicts the fundamental legal principle that educational institutions must take affirmative steps to help their staff comply with the law. Lacking formalized guidelines, teachers regularly devise informal and ad-hoc digital protocols—exponentially increasing the overall liability of the institution. Simultaneously, acute socio-cultural factors work against local educators and make them digitally less prepared. Medan's hyper-connected social context subjects teachers to intensified social pressure to be available online at all times, blurring the lines between their personal lives and professional obligations. It becomes exceedingly challenging to adhere to statutory standards of professional conduct in the midst of this stress-inducing digital firestorm. Yet there is still not a lick of this personal development, even though those educators need it now more than ever. Consequently, teachers are driven to rely on unqualified, self-taught readings of virtual law. This searching for the necessary knowledge through fragmented self-education results in a very dangerous operational environment, especially when overconfident educators work under the delusion that legal fluency equals technical fluency. Most importantly, teachers still have no training on the key distinction between simply nonfeasance and actionable civil malice.

To some extent, this vulnerability is structural, with schools using digital tools built to make life easier for users (but not necessarily for data security). In

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not establishing secure, technically locked down digital ecosystems, schools essentially compel educators to default to non-compliant commercial platforms simply in order to meet the bare minimum criteria for delivering curriculum. It is because of that operational mismatch, between observations and what constitutes evidence, plus a deeper chasm between statutory text and local educational culture. Even when it is in direct violation of formal copyright and data protection statutes, the informal, trust-based exchange of digital learning materials and student data is a deeply embedded cultural tradition in Medan. If digital laws are not actively localized into educational frameworks that resonate with cultural practices, front line educators will classify them as bureaucratic fetters rather than essential safeguards. At present, the main catalyst for legal literacy improvement amongst local teachers is direct, personal experience with internet defamation, cyberbullying or privacy disputes. The closest analogue we have to punitive, reactive experience as schooling is institutional failure; it creates legal exposure for teachers and reveals an immediate need for preventive, proactive school governance.

As one noted legal scholars commented in the interviews, ultimately the law is meant to serve a community, not contort that community to serve forms and quotations of fictional statutory text. However, actual legalization—the internalization of wide, statutory mandates within the specific context of Medan's secondary schools—demands that legal principles be operationalized as very concrete school-level guidelines. Real readiness means making sure that a teacher understands the precise technical and reporting protocols to implement as soon as a student's private data have been compromised. We are so far from that currently because national digital legislation is not supported by appropriate, sector-focused, effective explanatory guidelines linked to education that can be actively used as tools in the day-to-day management of a

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classroom. The study also shows that from a risk-management perspective, informed consent is treated less as a legally sound form of protection for those being studied and more as an abstraction—simply another bureaucratic administrative checkbox to mark. However, in practice, most of the schools in Medan use boilerplate consent forms that do not comply with the statutory requirements under the PDP Law. The resulting disconnect reveals a profound failure of Legal Efficacy, where the formalistic application of a rule entirely drains it of its substantive legal meaning. Educators have severe liabilities for liability with Article 1365 KUHPerdata (Indonesian Civil Code), if the educators are not trained about what really go behind a data processing signature.

Thus, the digital accountability of senior high school teachers in Medan is defined by a paradoxical and unsustainable one: High level or technological literacy versus low legal preparedness. Combining elements of Legal Socialization, the Risk Society and Administrative Negligence shows that despite good intentions on the part of individual teachers, they remain at risk as the weakest link in this digital learning process as they are let down by a structural failure. Real digital accountability can only be achieved by going beyond advancing basic technological training to a broader socio-legal regime. This paradigm shift guarantees that educators are both equipped to teach digitally (instructionally) and are girded while teaching in this manner (structurally).

C. Socio-Cultural Factors of Legal Awareness in Medan

Examination of the legal liability of high school instructors in Medan offers a stark contrast between digital objectives for the country and teachers' realities concerning their own legal sophistication. Our empirical results present evidence for skepticism that current levels of teachers awareness are adequate despite widespread technology adoption, because teachers appear

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not to possess insights deeper than a minimally compliant understanding of the tech. Based on statistical trends, while the majority of teachers surveyed acknowledge ever hearing about the Electronic Information and Transactions Law (ITE Law), fewer than 1 in 3 are able to understand how this law works in their digital classroom. This is assessed by Soekanto's (2002) Legal Awareness Theory, that an awareness of the Law through cognition alone is insufficient and can only direct will to act such as to protect the student data privacy.

The large gap between the law and classroom policy is exacerbated further by a complete lack of school-level communication and data protection policies. We see that in the overwhelming majority of high schools around Medan Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) on digital communication do not exist. Such institutional failure is more or less consistent with Lawrence Friedman's (1975) Legal System framework and standard Legal Effectiveness research which argue that the actual delivery of statutes can only be achieved through deep-rooted administrative structures. When official institutional policy is absent, it drives educators to develop these types of ad hoc informal methods for their uses (such as disseminating student performance on public instant messaging networks). This common practice is clearly against the relevant laws, particularly Law No. 27 of 2022 on Personal Data Protection (PDP Law), specifically Article 4 which prescribes additional protection measures regarding processing personal data on minors.

In relation to child protection, the data suggest significant teacher anxiety regards legal responsibility for pupil offending that takes place outside traditional school hours in virtual environments (Simon, 1947; Riduan & Hajar, 2024; Rodiyah et al., 2019; Laskarwati & Rodiyah, 2020; Arumsari & Fikr, 2025). This tension intersects with the doctrine of Vicarious Liability, whereby educators face public and institutional blame and liability for failing to prevent

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or respond effectively to cyberbullying that emerges under their watch. Meanwhile, even if Article 9 of the Child Protection Law writes about a safe learning environment, leaving an actual teacher on-edge as to the geographical limits of liability outside campus is fraught with danger. Such pervasive vagueness undermines the ability of teachers in Medan to protect themselves from safe but questionable use of digital technologies.

In addition, teachers in Medan also display a critical literacy gap regarding Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) when selecting electronic learning resources. The education fair-use exceptions are seen by the vast majority as being entirely safe for adding copyrighted assets into digital lectures. In fact, Article 44 of the Law No. 28 of 2014 on Copyright (hereinafter referred to as Copyright Act), consisting of the fair-use criteria contains very rigid statutory limitations that clearly ban un-attribution sharing online using digital copies. This is a gap in "IP literacy" that leaves frontline educators open to prosecution under the prevailing structures. Due to lacking institutionally provision digital accounts or licensing resources, teachers are essentially coerced into violating technical copyright standards just to meet minimal curriculum delivery requirements. Socio-cultural friction points: Beyond the legal factors making Medan a place with typically less than stellar digital governance are socio-cultural refraction points. The local educational ecology prizes familial, trust-based relationships highly and thus parents and administrators can react to overly formal consent waivers or data privacy agreements as being too constrained or being insulting. According to Lawrence Friedman's Legal Cultural Theory (1975), public attitudes towards a statute determine whether or not it is enforced (or will be conclusively ignored). For Medan, an overwhelming communal pressure to be always on—defined as informal accessibility via digital means with students and/or parents—often trumps the

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professional standards of conduct for teachers, effectively nullifying or significantly weakening any legal position a teacher may have in subsequent arguments about their use of digital devices. These deficiencies are compounded by limited infrastructure and heavy dependencies on third-party digital platforms. Such discrepancies arise because there are no centralized institutional Learning Management System (LMS), and so teachers are converting commercial messaging software into primary instructional environments. This is a dynamic well illustrated by the Policy Lag, where an aggressive policy agenda of instructional freedom (*Merdeka Belajar*) cannot be supported by equitably protective teacher-liability systems. As a result, this means that anyone who is worried about how to keep electronic data safe faces no legal obligation themselves but has placed the entire legal burden of protecting it onto individual teachers.

In the end, what this exhaustive study concludes is that real digital accountability is not a technical issue but a structural inability to bring electronic jurisprudence and educational governance together. This lack of systemic professional legal development means educators are reacting to ongoing and high-stakes digital crises—data breaches and copyright claims—rather than proactively preparing for them. By using punitive legal failure as a tool to foster teacher learning, we evaluate Kolb's Experiential Learning Theory (1984) and the unaffordable burden we place on teachers. a paradigm shift is imminent: as data surveillance in schools becomes an everyday occurrence, educational systems must move quickly from simply seeking technological innovation to implementing much-needed structural support such as the deployment of designated Data Protection Officers (DPOs) and conducting thorough legal audits of teacher-created digital media.

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Only such a structural bridging can eliminate this systemic vulnerability, which will continue to exist as long as there is a gap across macro-level digital policy and micro-level classroom practice. First and foremost, the legal principle 'ignorance of the law is no excuse' serves as instant service to Medan's educational infrastructure. Towards the end of gradually conforming to global-accountability standards such as the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), Indonesia's educational policy must shift from merely instilling mechanical digital literacy to fostering holistic legal-digital competency. This transition must be accompanied by a timely renewal of the national Teacher Professional Education (*Pendidikan Profesi Guru*, PPG) curriculum with permanent integration on matters of educational law and digital risk management for future professional teacher training.

D. The Legal Justification for Legal Reform

The lack of long-term solutions in Medan's secondary school landscape reveals an impossible contradiction where legal red lines threaten efficient and expressive educational practice more severely than any strict pedagogical mandate, at least, one as strong and aligned to the real world. This systemic exposure is supported by quantitative findings: while 92% of teachers surveyed are already using digital platforms daily, the vast majority report having no operational understanding of statutory data protection (Saragih, 2023). This disjunction has opened a deep accountability gap in which educators launch digital tools like missiles without realizing that all automated workflows, electronic transmissions, and online interactions have been coopted by national laws with forceful compliance regimes.

One of the most fundamental systemic failures is the dichotomy between mental awareness and statutory adherence. At a quantitative level, most teachers do report only an imprecise awareness of the ITE Law without

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sophisticated legal literacy skills to recognize violations when they occur online (Sufrapto et al., 2024). For example, routinely displaying unencrypted classroom rosters and student grades on commercial social media platforms is a reckless potential data privacy violation. But, as Soekanto (2002) explains in his Legal Awareness Theory, abstract knowledge of a particular law is utterly useless if the actor/subject does not possess the structural understanding for how this awareness can be translated into compliance with the law. The second institutional failure is a mismatch between the responsibilities and duties of professionals and what those in support roles at schools need to be able to do their work. Due to the systemic failure of secondary institutions to put in place stringent internal policies directing digital interactions, teachers have developed informal communication channels through improvisation (Nwokocha & Ifeoma, 2025). As explained by the Legal Effectiveness Theory, a statutory mandate is destined to fail if there are no administrative mechanisms at local levels to enforce them (Rahardjo, 2000). The absence of safe and contained LMS available from their high schools forces educators to resort to commercial third-party apps, inadvertently experiencing technical violations of minor data protection (Azmi, 2020; Diniyanto & Suhendar, 2020; Putra et al., 2024).

The next step toward solving this crisis is implementing tailored legal reforms at the national level in both the education and digital spaces throughout Indonesia. based on this, this research needs to amend Article 39 of Law No. 14 of 2005 concerning Teachers and Lecturers as a formality. This article here treats these protections in the broad sense (Erlangga et al., 2025). A new amendment would hard-code a specific Educator Digital Protection clause into law, shielding teachers from individual tort liability and prosecution for physical acts in the course of administrating digital instruction—unless those

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actions are completely outside the scope of well-understood instructional practices. Saragih (2023) stated that without this statutory buffer, educators will continue to face insolvency for minor, good faith digital modifications. A second necessary legislative reform must ensure Article 44 of Law No. 28 of 2014 on Copyright do not contain the dangerously broad language which gives existing fair-use exceptions between education and entertainment in virtual classroom. First, the statute needs to be made explicit in creating a structural fair-use exception for educators to reproduce and distribute digital learning assets securely in closed educational environments without risking criminal liability (Sufrapto et al., 2024; Hutabarat, 2026; Nugroho, 2025). This statutory update is essential in order to safeguard teachers who are forced to use alternative online resources as a way to compensate for glaring local district shortages for physical textbooks.

The dangers of not having a current regulatory framework will immediately harm students learning remotely. If educators use unvetted, commercial digital tools, predatory third-party data gatherers are permitted to harvest students' biometric profiles, their metadata, and even their personal records of performance (Azmi, 2020; Diniyanto & Suhendar, 2020; Putra et al., 2024). Risk Society Theory states that we now live in a world where rapid digitalization has complex, manufactured risks where these new, post-modern dangers cannot be contained by outmoded physical forms of oversight (Beck, 1992). Frontline educators are not directly responsible for the ways in which institutions prepare them to meet this non-transferrable duty of care as a professional obligation to guard student data; when they are not institutionally positioned with the infrastructure to deliver on this role, their daily instruction is effectively a structural default in professional responsibility—jeopardizing

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the digital futures of every student—and thus all of our youth (Nwokocha & Ifeoma, 2025).

In additional to personal liability, this void in regulation poses an existential risk to the very fabric of such institutions; because they can instantly make or ruin public confidence with just one data leak or uncontainable digital conflict (Maulana et al., 2012). On a legal basis, the law of vicarious liability places educational institutions under enormous risk; it provides that an employer is responsible for statutory offenses by its employees while at work (Fuller, 1964). Not providing proper legal education or clear internal data management systems in schools, which could lead to juridical practices through Article 1365 of the Civil Code regarding unlawful acts would shoot school directly addressing major corporate matters such as a lawsuit (Rahardjo, 2000; Tanaya & Putri, 2025). This non-structural boundary-setting leaves educators to toe an ever-narrowing line between the all-consuming desire to educate, and legal consequences. Int he absence of clear digital interaction protocols, typical communications in school online communities can ignite an explosive criminal defamation charge against other students under ITE Law (Erlangga et al., 2025). In the absence of statutory changes that will create a legal boundary between professional digital space and private life, educators will find themselves caught in a perpetual cycle of legal panic (Saragih, 2023). The near constant tension inhibits pedagogical risk-taking, as teachers who have previously harnesses new digital approaches are compelled to abandon them for fear of arrest by law enforcement (Ajzen, 1991).

In Medan, evolutionary socio-cultural patterns also demonstrate that informal trust remains more extensive than the institutional reform, as binding traditions oppose new values. The local educational ecosystem is very much characterized by paternalistic, familial relations between educators and parents

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(Maulana et al., 2012), leading to assumptions that critical legal formalities such as consent waivers for processing data are eight offensive or simply excessive bureaucratization. But these informal understandings mean nothing when a data breach reaches the level of formal litigation. This is why new laws must be accompanied by an overhaul in school culture, moving organizations away from informal, trust-based practices to fully elaborate management systems focused on compliance (Friedman, 1975). This requires the Ministry of Education to embark on an urgent policy reform of integrating digital jurisprudence as part and parcel of its national PPG program. Based on the doctrine of Progressive Law from Satjipto Rahardjo, that statutory frameworks need to change progressively and dynamically by reflection to the real needs of the times (Rahardjo, 2000). Since the contemporary teacher-teaching paradigm occurs at once and in both physical and virtual spaces, codifying digital jurisprudential literacy as a prerequisite for any state certification is imperative. Professionally qualified educators should also have the capacity to carry out independent risk assessments of their lesson content before putting anything on a public serve (Saragih, 2023).

The wider systemic benefit of these structural reforms lies in their establishment of legal certainty, which is a core pillar for the successful implementation of national policies, such as *Merdeka Belajar*. When educators are explicitly protected by a strong legal safety net, their pedagogical approaches become more innovative with little fear and less impediment to their practice than the anxiety that came from being in a position of potential liability (Erlangga et al., 2025). If, on the other hand, the regulatory architecture is restrictive, ambiguous and piecemeal, then hard-won digital education will become an administrative quagmire that it must be forced into the trash with increased chance of *egregious impropriety by aquellos* who will pay a price for in

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contempt of duty. Targeted amendments to existing legislation would send a definitive signal to the academic community that the state cares about defending its educational workforce (Nwokocha & Ifeoma, 2025).

Finally, within child protection as a whole, an educator's duty of care should entail putting measures in place which assist users in resisting bullying and harassment on the internet. By amending the Child Protection Law with things that are targeted to strengthen teachers, then the statutory authority for such intervention will be confidentially referenced and therefore educators will not have counter-lawsuits for violations of privacy that originate from student digital misconduct (Azmi, 2020; Diniyanto & Suhendar, 2020; Putra et al., 2024). The law must establish a bright line compliance rule that, in the optimal and most compelling interest of minors as digital citizens, educators have the legal right to surveil student activities online when engaged on their institutional campuses. Some teachers avoid intervening because of this lack of explicit authority, creating an unmonitored digital vacuum where youth cyber-conflicts are allowed to run freely (Sufrapto et al., 2024).

Although Article 39 of Law No. 14 of 2005 on Teachers and Lecturers can at first be a legal basis for professional protection, it is not comprehensive enough to apply the protection of educators in digital channels, processing student data without consent, online communication or service via cyberspace (cybersecurity). Such legal vagueness leaves the relationship between individual teacher and institution wracked with uncertainty about who is liable for digital blunders. This piecemeal coverage goes against Article 28D(1) of the 1945 Constitution that provides for complete legal clarity as well as equivalent defense of the law.

In comparison, when it comes to something like the ethical code issues, behavioral expectations and professional boundaries of teaching profession, the

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UK Teacher Standards offers an entirely clear framework which naturally extends beyond the school gate and on into private life. Per UK government guidance, a teacher's behavior online is dealt with at a local level via its own school behavior policy and code of conduct alongside comprehensive governing operational powers. Workable legal safe harbors could also be built for teachers acting in their professional judgment if they had a comprehensive system of standards that clearly distinguished acceptable, good-faith professional online behavior from actionable individual harm.

For the most part, educators have a technical proficiency related to running digital classrooms but not much in terms of practical knowledge of data privacy, informed consent mechanics, intellectual property rights, cybersecurity and professional online ethics. However, the type of formal professional development which currently exists does not incorporate important regulatory tasks within our educational framework. With the baseline requirements for teacher competences and career development stated in Law No. 14 of 2005, it is essential that digital literacy be continually adapted to function as a response mirror to modern labor statutory obligations under both the PDP Law and the ITE Law framework. Once again, international examples provide a livable template: The UK Teachers' Standards consider professional ethics and boundary-setting as fundamental to teacher accreditation; their online-safety guidelines explicitly tell school staff that both personal and institutional responsibilities must be understood in terms of data security. This is training on basic mechanical software and Indonesia needs to broaden its horizons beyond such foundational steps toward total legal-digital literacy—data protection, consent workflows, electronic communication boundaries, intellectual property compliance (including contracts), and incident response. By elevating these compliance elements into core

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professional skill sets, teachers lose legal burden while risk management becomes part of the modern pedagogic way of working.

Secondary schools often mandate teachers capture, save and share sensitive student information over electronic networks without setting forth an operational manual for legal processing, data security measures, retention timeframes, platform vetting or crisis response protocols. Yet Law No. 27 of 2022 on Personal Data Protection only establishes a statutory baseline for secure data processing, as opposed to the more clearly defined standard that the EU's GDPR—which both holds institutions accountable for effective and sustained compliance while accentuating accountability by embedding it directly into institutional governance. Given the particular vulnerability of children, child data are afforded additional protections under GDPR which compel organizations to employ simple and age-appropriate information architectures. Indonesian schools must then take the input of those broad mandates embodied in the PDP Law, even if mainstreamed into local and regional regulations, and develop actionable and realistic data-protection SOPs. These protocols need to address not only the essential aspects of data collection, consent tracking, access control, as well as cloud storage and external sharing, but also retention limits and data breach incident response. The key takeaway from the GDPR is that data compliance cannot be incidental or ad hoc; it needs to become a part of the institution's bones, not just rely on each teacher's knowing enough to be their own independent compliance officer.

The PDP Law creates macro-level protections for personal data but leaves schools and educators without the detailed, minute guidance they need to address the legality of processing a child's information in state-of-the-art learning management systems, cloud networks, digital photographs, video recordings, and online chat apps. That has left a vast chasm between

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constitutional guarantees of individual rights, legal protections for electronic information, and daily educational practice. The EU GDPR sets the most stringent limits on children's data internationally considering their unique position as vulnerable subjects. Australia has taken a similar approach through the Privacy Act 1988, requiring that the OAIC complete an extensive Children's Online Privacy Code no later than December 2026. The Code directly applies to e-services and EdTech organizations that process information about minors. With Indonesia, meanwhile, needs immediate sectoral level rules on schools. By offering concrete operational rules for managing student media, learning records in digital form, and educational applications from third parties, teachers will have tangible underpinnings to identify what constitutes a reasonable threshold for protecting student privacy.

Setting guidelines for how teachers should conduct themselves online and what boundaries they should have professionally Indonesian regulation now does not help to operate teachers about online contact with students, social media use or personal online behavior and professional risks. Law No. 14 of 2005, for instance, establishes ethical codes and the ITE Law puts penalties on illegally electronic activity; however, there are no maps for daily upper and lower boundaries that delineate what is acceptable in virtual teaching. According to the UK Teachers' Standards—which require educators to abide by locked behavioral boundaries, across both physical and digital activity—school system can provide explicit codes of conduct. UK guidelines recommend that schools have detailed behavior policies and straightforward procedures for dealing with incidents online. Digital professional conduct standards must specifically serve the needs of educators in Indonesia. Such guidelines should define clear protocols for messaging (between teacher and student), social media connections, private char applications, and organizational

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communication channels. If teachers know where the virtual boundaries are, the state can clear up any confusion around legal issues and also ensure that schools are a safe space digitally.

As it stands, educators are often individually responsible for systemic and operational risks from a lack of institutional training, insecure digital platforms, or the complete absence of internal school policies despite having zero control over these domains. The excessive burden imposed on the use of the personal data and electronic processes is directly at odds with the constitutional safeguard regarding equal protection under Article 28D(1) of the 1945 Constitution, as well as greater legal certainty embedded in Law No. 14 of 2005 and provisions related to management in Law No. 27 of 2022 (PDP Law). by contrast, the EU's GDPR accountability framework approaches compliance as an organizational function rather than assigning the entire legal risk onto individual employees. In such manner, the UK model combines highly demanding professional expectations along with required school-level safeguarding measures and institutional guidelines. Such a shared-responsibility model needs to be incorporated by Indonesian regulations. It must delineate intentional or doomed individual misconduct from systemic institutional failure to train, govern, secure data, or provision the infrastructure of systems. Legal liability should, of course, directly map responsibility and capacity into action (and whether that be prevention or control of the risk).

Consequently, teacher accountability in the digital age cannot be construed as an individualistic obligation—as at best a collective one demanding strong convergence between an educator's legal-digital competencies, institutional capacity and the surrounding regulatory framework. The empirical research from Medan reflects a more troubling reality, that the fast-paced digital instruments' proliferation in everyday

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education has not been matched by an equivalent development of legal literacy among teachers. The lack of basic digital literacy and functional literacy in law is creating a similar institutional weakness, especially around child data protection, cybersecurity/data safety programs, intellectual property compliance and electronic information liability (Saragih, 2023). This disconnect highlights the fact that teacher liability must be assessed in the context of institutional and regulatory settings in which teachers exercise their profession.

A reform of the laws regulating teachers, viewed from this perspective, and its legality in the digital age is an immediate imperative, one that assures legal certainty as to rights, duties and liabilities between educators, schools and state actors alike. More precisely, it is crucial to overhaul the national Law on Teachers and Lecturers as well as the Copyright Law to adapt them to how more online learning environments work now. These changes in the law should not simply add new requirements on teachers, but create necessary institutional protections and structural support systems as well. When teachers are left completely without this organizational groundwork—without clear school policies, professional development training or at least decent administrative supervision—it is fundamentally unfair to hold them legally more accountable than others in the community for what happens with digital instruments on their watch (Soekanto, 2002).

As such, establishing a project like accountability can only work if there is first a regulation for f legal compliance and it has been properly institutionalized at the school level. Every secondary institution should be creating policies and procedures for identifying, preventing and mitigating the legal and cybersecurity risks associated with digital classrooms. This shift in structures demands the releasing of dedicated data compliance functions, regularly risk assessed procedures for record keeping, systemic tasks to ensure

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protective measures, production of incident response plans as well as strictly enforced continuously updated SOPs (Erlangga et al., 2025). These operational changes will make the boundaries for educators clear and actionable in their day-to-day work, while also holding schools corporately responsible for the risks created by administrative decisions, infrastructure, and institutional policies.

School-level measures need to be accompanied by and along absolute coherence between the legal frameworks governing public education, personal data protection, electronic transactions, cybersecurity and intellectual property. Structural regulatory reform will need to work in tandem with ministerial transparency which translates complex statutory language into accessible operational workflows for schools and frontline teachers. Finally, the effectiveness of digital educational governance depends not only on formal codification but rather on real-life institutional practice and the capacity of educational actors to comprehend and implement them (Rahardjo, 2000).

Accordingly, this socio-legal work shows that a suitable model for teacher accountability to be implemented in the digital age must depart from individualistic blame frameworks and adopt an institutional, shared-responsibility framework instead. In this more balanced approach, the personal professional accountability of an educator as well as their commitment to ethics is strictly held separate from the provisions of school structures, communication policies, direct supervision and continuous legal-digital training; which becomes a self-generating function at each level. At the same time, policymakers need to ensure that national regulatory architectures remain transparent, consistent, and consequently agile given a rapidly changing technology landscape. Creating this equitable burden of liability is the only way to foster an educational ecosystem where technology can be securely, ethically,

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and accountably used—that protects students' rights while ensuring teachers have legal protection.

IV. CONCLUSIONS

This study shows that the accountability of senior high school teachers in the context of digital technology in Medan is inversely proportional with many graphs showing high use of modern technical devices and low democratic ability. The fragmentation of educators' understanding of personal data privacy, electronic information frameworks, cybersecurity, and virtual profession ethics—combined with the absence of formal legal training and legally grounded school-level SOPs—creates deep systematic uncertainty on where rights as a profession end and personal liability begins. Given the framework of legal effectiveness theory, formal statutory norms can only languish on the book unless and until there are substantial administrative, institutional, and socio-cultural infrastructures in place to absorb these provisions into actual practice. Thus, assessing teacher liability in digitally mediated classrooms cannot be carried out as an independent individual responsibility. The notion of true accountability must be allocated in a proportional manner between the frontline educators, and their surrounding institutions directly correlated to the level of decision making they are afforded, alongside their capacity to mutually exercise measures that mitigate electronic harms.

Building a sustainable foundation of digital accountability requires local, institutional processes that can convert national statutory requirements into actionable school norms at the ground level. Secondar institutions should deploy comprehensive protection guidelines, formal check-in and check-out procedures for platform usage, efficient workflows around reporting potential

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data breaches, and access to reliable in-house institutional legal counsel. Furthermore, legal-digital compliance should be systematically embedded in the curriculum content of pre-service teacher training (e.g., national Pendidikan Profesi Guru) and thereafter reinforced through obligatory development pathways. On the national legislative level, policymakers must examine Article 39 of Law No. 14 of 2005 on Teachers and Lecturers to form a strong "Digital Safe Harbors" structure. The statutory update must both offer protections for educators acting in good faith and within the scope of their pedagogical duties, and maintain appropriate, high standards regarding institutional accountability.

Future empirical study should conduct a broader empirical investigation of teachers' digital legal readiness in other locations, socio-economic settings, and scales of government contact within the Indonesian context. Also, it would be particularly useful to track compliance to check whether broad regulatory reforms with institutional guidelines and focused legal literacy initiatives have brought long-term improvements in statutory compliance and systemic data governance over time. Such ongoing research will play a critical role in designing an accountability framework that is lucidly coordinated, legally sound and safeguards rights as Indonesia rapidly expands its digital education architecture.

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