



## OPEN ACCESS

EDITED AND REVIEWED BY  
Mary Frances Rice,  
University of New Mexico, United States

\*CORRESPONDENCE  
Arumugam Raman  
✉ arumugam@uum.edu.my

RECEIVED 10 November 2025  
ACCEPTED 12 November 2025  
PUBLISHED 10 December 2025

CITATION  
Raman A, Thangavelu AP, S. A. R, Priya MG,  
Indu H, Gayathridevi S and Thiyagu K (2025)  
Editorial: Navigating trends and challenges in  
educational professionalism.  
*Front. Educ.* 10:1743218.  
doi: 10.3389/feduc.2025.1743218

COPYRIGHT  
© 2025 Raman, Thangavelu, S. A., Priya, Indu,  
Gayathridevi and Thiyagu. This is an  
open-access article distributed under the  
terms of the [Creative Commons Attribution  
License \(CC BY\)](#). The use, distribution or  
reproduction in other forums is permitted,  
provided the original author(s) and the  
copyright owner(s) are credited and that the  
original publication in this journal is cited, in  
accordance with accepted academic practice.  
No use, distribution or reproduction is  
permitted which does not comply with these  
terms.

# Editorial: Navigating trends and challenges in educational professionalism

Arumugam Raman<sup>1\*</sup>, Asha Priya Thangavelu<sup>2</sup>, Rajalakshmi S. A.<sup>2</sup>,  
M. G. Priya<sup>2</sup>, H. Indu<sup>3</sup>, Sundaresan Gayathridevi<sup>3</sup> and K. Thiyagu<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Universiti Utara Malaysia, Sintok, Malaysia, <sup>2</sup>Amrita Vishwa Vidyapeetham, Coimbatore, India,

<sup>3</sup>Avinashilingam Institute for Home Science and Higher Education for Women, Coimbatore, India,

<sup>4</sup>Central University of Karnataka, Kalaburagi, India

## KEYWORDS

educational professionalism, professional identity, teacher wellbeing, institutional and cultural contexts, pedagogical innovation, professional development and reform

## Editorial on the Research Topic

### Navigating trends and challenges in educational professionalism

In recent years, educational professionalism—characterized by educators' ethical, adaptive, and reflective enactment of their roles—has gained prominence in research and practice. The COVID-19 pandemic, technological advancements, and evolving societal expectations have further complicated this landscape, compelling educators to reconcile traditional professional norms with emerging demands. Given the prospective impact of teacher professionalism on job satisfaction, retention, and student outcomes, it is essential to examine what we mean by professionalism and how it can best be supported. Teachers today must navigate their professional identity amid shifting expectations from parents, students, and policymakers, within increasingly diverse and technology-driven societies, and, for many, a persistent mismatch between the narrowly defined outcomes of accountability systems and their own understanding of what truly matters in education.

This Research Topic, “*Navigating trends and challenges in educational professionalism*,” was thus initiated to consolidate empirical and theoretical work examining how educators across various contexts negotiate professionalism amid these changing conditions. The contributions compiled herein document existing tensions and best practices and propose directions for rethinking educator professionalism during these dynamic times.

The main goals of this topic were to (1) explore how teachers understand and express their professional identity amidst modern challenges, (2) identify systemic, institutional, and personal elements that either facilitate or hinder professionalism, and (3) suggest frameworks or strategies to enhance professional skills in various environments. By encouraging contributions from different educational levels, cultural backgrounds, and research methods, we intended to gather comprehensive, cross-contextual insights rather than focusing narrowly on a single discipline.

The articles published under this topic can be clustered into three thematic strands.

### 1. Professional identity, researcher engagement, and educator wellbeing

Several studies on this topic have delved into how teachers conceptualize themselves as professionals and researchers in complex environments. For example, [Ni](#) examined how English teachers in a regional Chinese university articulated their research engagement amid institutional constraints, shedding light on the internal tensions between aspiration and action. Similarly, [Ghiasvand et al.](#) explored educator resilience in higher education during the COVID-19 pandemic, revealing how stressors strain professional commitment yet prompt adaptive strategies. [Lunina and Jurgile](#) reported on teachers working with refugee children, highlighting loneliness, lack of support, and emotional challenges as realities that test professional resolve. Together, these contributions underscore that professionalism is not static but is continually negotiated concerning institutional constraints, wellbeing pressures, and identity tensions.

### 2. Professionalism through institutional, cultural, and contextual lenses

The second set of studies demonstrates how school climate, institutional structures, and cultural context mediate professional practices. [Alshuhumi et al.](#) use structural equation modeling to examine how Omani primary school climate and teacher self-efficacy influence innovative teaching practices—offering empirical evidence on how external milieu shapes professional enactment. [Matulaitiene et al.](#) considered teacher- and student-level factors that support primary school students' self-regulated learning, implying a relational and distributed view of professionalism in practice. [Lawrent](#) presents reflective narratives on how teacher identity is constructed through educational sector developments, shedding light on how professional self-understanding shifts with policy change. These studies emphasize that professionalism is co-shaped by relational, institutional, and cultural conditions—not individual intentions.

### 3. Professionalism in practice: Pedagogical approaches and educator attitudes

The third cluster foregrounds how professional commitments translate into pedagogical choices and educators' mindsets. [Alvarado's](#) systematic review of design thinking as a teaching methodology highlights how educators' agency and innovative pedagogies can reflect a professional commitment to learner-centered practice. [AlAli and Al-Barakat](#) explored how science teachers' formative assessment practices contribute to children's learning, implicitly framing such practices as expressions of professional responsibility. [Rafiq et al.](#) investigated how prospective teachers' research attitudes and knowledge relate to their academic achievement, offering insight into how early professional sensibilities may develop in teacher education. [Prahars et al.](#) examine educational experiences in single-parent contexts to call for deeper educational professionalism that is socially responsive and equitable.

While each article brings a distinct lens, they sketch a multifaceted portrait of educational professionalism: identity in tension, contextually mediated, and practice grounded in pedagogical commitment.

From a broader perspective, these contributions advance this field in several ways. First, they reinforce that professionalism is not a monolithic, static set of norms but a dynamic, contested space in which identity, context, and practice intersect. Second, they signal that future professionalism research must attend to wellbeing, institutional constraints, and pedagogical innovation in tandem—not in isolation. Third, methodologically, they exemplify diverse designs (systematic reviews, quantitative modeling, narrative inquiry) that can be leveraged to triangulate the understanding of professionalism.

We suggest a few promising pathways for future research. One is the integration of longitudinal designs to trace how professional identity evolves over time and in the face of change (e.g., policy shifts, digital disruptions). Another focus is on intervention studies: How might professional development programs or institutional reforms promote sustainable professionalism? Also crucial is comparative and cross-cultural work to discern universal vs. context-bound professional norms. Finally, more attention to power relations, equity, and social justice is merited; professionalism should not merely maintain the system but critically transform it in an inclusive direction.

We sincerely thank the authors whose rigorous work has enriched this Research Topic. Your insights will help us better understand how educators negotiate professionalism in complex, shifting environments. We hope this Research Topic stimulates further dialogue, empirical inquiry, and institutional innovation in educational professionalism.

## Author contributions

AR: Writing – original draft, Writing – review & editing. AT: Writing – review & editing. RS: Writing – review & editing. MP: Writing – review & editing. HI: Writing – review & editing. SG: Writing – review & editing. KT: Writing – review & editing.

## Conflict of interest

The authors declare that the research was conducted in the absence of any commercial or financial relationships that could be construed as a potential conflict of interest.

## Generative AI statement

The author(s) declare that Gen AI was used in the creation of this manuscript. Gen AI was used to limit the spelling errors.

Any alternative text (alt text) provided alongside figures in this article has been generated by Frontiers with the support of artificial intelligence and reasonable efforts have been made to ensure accuracy, including review by the authors wherever possible. If you identify any issues, please contact us.

## Publisher's note

All claims expressed in this article are solely those of the authors and do not necessarily represent those of their affiliated

organizations, or those of the publisher, the editors and the reviewers. Any product that may be evaluated in this article, or claim that may be made by its manufacturer, is not guaranteed or endorsed by the publisher.