



Digital Citizenship and Ethics in Teacher Education

**¹Njoku Uchenna Gertrude, ¹Ogbodo Benedicta Chege & ²Njoku Chizoba
Scholarstica**

¹Department of Political Science, Alvan Ikoku Federal College of Education, Owerri

²Federal Polytechnic Nekede (part-time lecturer) Accountancy Department

Corresponding author: njokuonyetugo@gmail.com

Abstract

The way that technology is evolving is significant to everyone. Since more and more individuals in our society are using digital technology, it is crucial that we understand our obligations to manage our digital lives by using the internet and digital gadgets sensibly and effectively. Teaching kids about digital citizenship and ethics fosters critical thinking, responsible participation, and wellbeing in the digital world—much as we advocate for morality and ethics in our everyday lives. In order to help students and the next generation become better stewards of technology, this study use the educational theory of global citizenship and content analysis as the method use to examine literature in the areas of digital ethics and teacher education. The finding indicated that cultivating responsible, attentive, and professional behaviors in digital education and ethics for teachers is an enduring ability.

Keyword: Digital citizenship, Ethics in teacher education and the Impact of Digital citizenship on ethics in teacher education.

Introduction

The term "digital citizenship" has several connotations and is intricate. Numerous people are impacted by this problem. Since the early 1990s, as more technology entered classrooms, the concept of "digital citizenship" has taken on new meanings. Digital citizenship used to be primarily concerned with people's access to technology and their digital literacy. Researchers and decision-makers came to the conclusion that having internet connection was necessary for being an engaged member of your community. As mobile technology advanced, safety became a more pressing worry and access became a less emphasized topic in the context of digital citizenship. The phrase "digital citizenship" is a common unifier for the majority of stakeholders, international organizations, educators, and many others. With social media platforms, websites, and online forums being more widely accessible to the general public, rules and regulations are becoming a contentious issue. For example, how to avoid disinformation and filter upsetting content to create safe places while allowing for freedom of expression; how to bring ethical dynamics into the discussion; and how to help kids utilize digital platforms safely. As a result, teaching digital citizenship and ethics to teachers is essential to ensuring that our children are appropriately prepared and aware of the fundamentals of online safety, and to develop and execute curricula on these topics that will produce future generations of

tech-savvy citizens. Hence this study tries to examine the impact of digital citizenship on ethics in teacher education. It would further use historical method (content analysis) as its research methodology to analyze the study.

Concept of Digital Citizenship

Critical thinking, safe behavior, prudent contribution, and ethical and responsible participation in the digital environment are all aspects of digital citizenship. The proper use of digital media for communication and social engagement is emphasized. Knowing how to protect your information and the risks associated with accessing digital media. Digital citizenship is the act of utilizing digital technologies and interacting with others online in a way that is acceptable, responsible, and empowers oneself. The appropriate and responsible use of computers, the internet, and other digital devices is known as digital citizenship. In addition to requiring students to abide by rules, laws, and procedures, it also involves teaching them about digital citizenship. It guarantees that students will engage responsibly, think critically, act appropriately, and preserve their health and wellbeing when using digital devices. Digital citizens understand that in a digital world, the most effective format and resources depend on what has to be communicated, why, and with whom. It's OK, for example, to use textpeak or

acronyms while texting or instant messaging pals. However, when speaking with possible employers, the same format might not be suitable. (Power School 2021, Mike Ribble 2020, John Spencer 2020, Anesha Santhanam 2022, Goodwill Community Foundation 2018).

Most of the time, kids who are proficient in using technology also tend to utilize it unethically. For instance, abusing technology to commit other illegal and immoral activities on the internet, harassing people on social media, cheating on an assignment or test, and so forth. As stated by the Goodwill Community Foundation (2018), there are expectations for everyone who uses, learns, and works in the digital environment; these expectations serve as the foundation for the concept of a "digital citizen".

Reasons for Digital Citizenship

Essentially, a digital citizen is someone who makes use of contemporary digital technologies. A good digital citizen is, of course, one who is aware of the amazing advantages of technology; this is why education on digital citizenship is necessary. Considering that almost everyone with an internet connection is a digital citizen, digital citizenship becomes a vital aspect of our daily existence. Understanding how to keep safe, treat people with respect, and engage meaningfully in our digital culture has become essential for everyone, regardless of age. Online and face-to-face communication frequently differs. Body language, voice intonation, and other nonverbal clues are not obvious. Once more, some people will behave less empathetically due to the physical distance, relative anonymity, and lack of repercussions. Therefore working on emotional intelligence can help with self awareness, self management, social awareness and relationship management, all of which can make us better at communicating in digital space. (Susan Halfpenny, 2023, Raspberry Pi foundation 2023).

Children of all ages should be taught the ethics of appropriate technology usage due to the rapid advancement of technology and the prevalence of social media in modern society. Information is widely disseminated through technology; students read news on their smartphones, professors utilize open-source software and applications in the classroom, and social media shapes young people's lives and status. Millions of pupils utilize digital entertainment platforms like TikTok, Instagram, and streaming services, among others, as a result of the COVID-19 epidemic, which has dramatically boosted adolescent (8–12) technology use. For homework, tasks, and learning at all educational levels, online

meetings using Zoom and Webex serve as the face of communication and internet connectivity requirements. Everyone should be sufficiently prepared for this in order to guarantee a positive digital imprint and raise awareness of safety. The ideal moment to incorporate internet and digital ethics into the curriculum is now, (Anesha Santhanam (2023).

Students and adults alike will gain an understanding of how their technology use impacts others via digital citizenship. They get ingrained with the idea that you should treat others on the internet the way you want to be treated. Not everyone has the same opportunities to employ digital technology, as Cyperwise (2015) elucidated. Regardless of a person's location, ability, or financial situation, digital citizens want to guarantee access for everyone. Students may choose to do this rather than recycling or selling their used computers or smartphones. It might entail pushing for the installation of mobile WiFi units or "hot spots" in locations that require them.

Digital citizens are aware of the risks involved with making purchases online. Digital citizenship fundamentals include preserving financial and personal information, verifying the legitimacy of e-commerce sites, and learning how to use them responsibly. Students and adults alike must recognize and assess the danger involved in purchasing and selling goods online, as well as understanding how much personal and financial information is appropriate to provide, (John Spencer, 2020).

Digital citizenship is the use of technology to promote a person's psychological and physical health. By guaranteeing the chance to spend meaningful time with loved ones in person, it places the onus of prioritizing time for preserving a balance between the real and virtual worlds on the individual. Everybody has rights and privileges in our day-to-day existence. This also applies to the digital realm, since all users have certain rights and privileges there. People need to understand that while the internet offers many fantastic benefits, there are risks involved as well. Pupils who practice digital citizenship are guaranteed the duty to report any concerns they may have about whatever they see online, including improper material uploading, cyberbullying, and fraudulent activity, to authorities such as teachers or the police. (2012) Josh Shipp; Google for Education, 2017).

The acquisition of citizenship, abilities, and knowledge does not occur spontaneously in the actual world. These are imparted via both the approved curriculum and the customs and expectations that have been built up in our societies. It is essential for educators and other adults to set a good example

when it comes to digital citizenship. They have to put in the work to include lessons on digital citizenship in their lesson plans. It's important to mentor pupils on responsible technology use and digital footprint awareness in order to empower them to make the best decisions possible when using the internet. Technology and online learning materials are now available to students in primary schools. Students may even be given gadgets by their schools to use both at home and in class. In order to gain further insight about an applicant during the interview process, businesses, institutions, and other organizations now routinely search social media platforms. Future-proofing kids can benefit from learning the dos and don'ts of sharing information, uploading content, and connecting with people online.

Methodology

Understanding many perspectives on the topics of digital citizenship and ethics in teacher education is crucial, therefore, this study uses historical approach (content analysis) to examine a variety of literature in an effort to xray the impact of digital citizenship on ethics in teacher education and to further contribute knowledge to the existing literature in this area.

The instrument for data collection is secondary sources as the study used academic journal, textbooks, newspaper publication, online library materials, magazines etc, which, will enable the review of literature for this research work.

The validity and reliability of literature sources will be ensured by systematic review of renowned scholarly research works that relates to this study and by considering the consistency and reproducibility of their study. Giving credence to the authors.

Theoretical Framework

It is true that different theories may not adequately address and share perspectives on the dynamic educational transition required to build a more informed, cooperative, and peaceful global community. However, in order to investigate digital citizenship and ethics in teacher education, this study will concentrate on the educational philosophy of global citizenship theory. The flaws in our current political reality must be weighed against the educational paradigm of global citizenship as articulated by Joyce Pittman (2017). As a means of education, the prounders contend that global citizens need to actively and critically engage with a range of intricate historical issues that have been left over from colonialism and the brutal globalization that has

resulted in many new and unequal power dynamics. According to this idea, global citizenship education takes a similar stance, emphasizing the necessity for the development of new values. Theorists of global education supports the opposing theoretical perspectives on global citizenship by fostering discussions on the language and themes of global citizenship that are endorsed by international organizations that aim to provide a platform for international social justice movements and citizen participation in global governance. According to proponents of this approach, teaching global citizenship might help advance diversity and human rights by creating a more inclusive model of global citizens. The researchers believe that the educational theory of global citizenship is appropriate for this study because it addresses the goals of digital citizenship, which are centered more on navigating our digital environments in a way that is responsible and safe to actively and respectfully engage or interact in digital space.

Ethics in Teacher Education

Teachers have a significant impact on students' development of academic integrity. The idea of ethics is crucial to teacher education because it instills in teachers a sense of morality and professionalism. It entails putting into practice the rules, conventions, and ideals that uphold the teaching profession's obligations, integrity, and respect. It supports teachers in making morally sound judgments by assisting them in resolving moral and ethical dilemmas that they would undoubtedly face while carrying out their responsibilities. Professional behavior, respect for diversity, academic integrity, student welfare, professional growth, confidentiality, and privacy are a few examples of ethics in teacher education. Explaining this further, Strike and Soltis (2009) states that ethics in teacher education refers to the moral principles and standards that guide the behavior and decision-making of educators during their training process. It involves preparing teachers to uphold professional conduct, maintain integrity, respect diversity, and prioritize the well-being of students. Ethical considerations in teacher education encompass areas such as relationships with students, colleagues, and communities, confidentiality, academic integrity, and equitable treatment.

A comprehensive insight into the ethical dimensions of teacher education offers valuable guidance for educators and teacher preparation programs. To this end, some scholars envisaged that Teacher education programs often incorporate professional standards and codes of ethics. Also Teacher education curricula may include modules or

courses on ethical decision-making, helping future educators develop the skills to navigate complex moral dilemmas they may encounter in their teaching careers. Ethical teacher education emphasizes principles of social justice and equity, preparing educators to address systemic inequalities in education and promote inclusive learning environments. Teacher educators themselves serve as models of ethical behavior, demonstrating integrity, fairness, and a commitment to students' welfare. (Zeichner, & Payne, 2018, Cochran-Smith, & Fries, 2005, Shapiro, & Stefkovich, 2016).

The significance of equipping educators to be capable, discerning, and accountable users of technology is underscored by ethics in teacher education. Teachers may utilize the information and skills that are imparted to them to help students become responsible digital citizens who know how to explore the digital world in a way that is ethical, safe, and productive. The world is a global village, thus teaching digital citizenship in schools and other educational settings requires a strong ethical component in teacher education. As a result, ethics' significance in teacher preparation becomes enormous. They are informed about the regulations and their justifications by the instructor. They discover how to be kind and honest with one another. Because of this, the introduction of technology into the classroom has complicated classroom ethics. Before starting primary school, a lot of kids start using technology for play. The way that each student uses technology and the internet varies. Technology raises ethical questions long before children learn how to approach problems in real life with an ethical mindset. Youngsters are not well-prepared for difficulties with copyright and cyberbullying. Not only do students bring gadgets to class, but teachers also have to deal with the different proficiency levels of their users on the internet. (Colin McGilgvery, 2018). Invariably, digital citizenship impacts teacher education by emphasizing the importance of preparing educators to integrate technology responsibly, promote online safety, foster critical thinking, and address digital equity issues in educational settings.

Impacts of Digital Citizenship on Ethics in Teacher Education

Several academics have raised excellent issues like; Integrating digital citizenship into teacher education. This has numerous important effects on ethics. Teacher education programs often incorporate training on how to effectively integrate technology into teaching practices while emphasizing the importance of modeling responsible digital behavior

for students. Ribble (2011), stated that teachers who incorporate digital citizenship into their curricula are better able to serve as role models for their pupils, encouraging moral behavior and safe online habits.

Responsible Technology Use: Teachers gain the ability to interact with students, parents, and colleagues more effectively by using digital technologies, which promotes engagement and cooperation. Again, forming responsible digital citizens and equipping students for the possibilities and difficulties of the digital era may be greatly aided by including digital citizenship into teacher education. Educators play a vital role in fostering responsible digital behavior among students by promoting positive online interactions, respectful communication, and digital empathy. (Ohler, 2012)

Privacy and Security Awareness: Digitally literate educators are more likely to preserve their own and their students' digital privacy because they recognize how important it is to keep personal information private online (Greenhow, 2018). Teaching pupils about internet hazards, privacy issues, and online self-defense is a major focus of teacher education.

Social Media And Professional Boundaries: Teachers can negotiate the difficulties of social media use and uphold proper professional boundaries with students by participating in digital citizenship education (Crook, 2019). Teachers are encouraged by digital citizenship education to include student opinions and include students in creating the rules and conventions on the internet. According to Ribble (2015), giving kids the freedom to make digital decisions encourages a feeling of accountability and ownership for their online behavior.

Information Literacy: Teachers are better equipped to incorporate technology into their lesson plans as they become more adept at using digital tools and technology. As stated by Hobbs (2010), educators who have received training in digital citizenship may assist their pupils in recognizing reliable sources and critically analyzing material found online, so assisting in the fight against false information.

Cyberbullying Prevention: Teachers who possess an understanding of digital citizenship are more equipped to deal with cyberbullying and provide a welcoming and safe online learning environment for their pupils (Patching and Hinduja, 2018). In addition, educators acquire techniques for recognizing and resolving instances of cyberbullying and guaranteeing a secure and encouraging virtual environment for every pupil.

Building Digital Citizenship Curriculum: Teacher education programs place a strong emphasis on creating curricula that integrate digital citizenship

across a range of topic areas. This strategy is consistent with research that supports an organized and comprehensive approach to teaching students about digital citizenship. (Ohler, 2012).

Addressing Digital Footprint: The need of educating teachers about students' digital footprints and the potential consequences of their online behavior is emphasized. (Livingston, Olafsson, Veltri, and Helsper Lupianez-Villanueva 2011).

Conclusion

The concept of ethics is crucial to teacher education because it helps educators make morally sound decisions by addressing the moral conundrums and challenges they may face in their work. This changes society by fostering morally sound habits among students and the general public, who are then better prepared to be digital citizens.

The impact of digital citizenship on ethics in teacher education helps Incorporating digital citizenship into teacher education programs, foster ethical behavior among educators by promoting responsible use of technology, teaching students how to navigate digital spaces safely and ethically, and modeling positive online conduct. It is necessary to integrate modules on digital citizenship into teacher training curricula, emphasizing topics like online privacy, cyberbullying prevention, intellectual property rights, and critical media literacy. Consequently, providing opportunities for hands-on practice and reflection on ethical dilemmas in digital environments can help future teachers develop the skills and mindset needed to be ethical digital citizens and role models for their students

Recommendations

As such, the concept of digital citizenship has to be supported, encouraged, and advocated for. Because, it guarantees promotion of responsible technology Use, teaching safe and ethical online behavior, modeling positive online conduct, Integrating digital citizenship into curriculum and hands -on practice and refection, which endows the future generation ethical behavior.

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