



PROMOTING DIGITAL CITIZENSHIP THROUGH ARALING PANLIPUNAN: AWARENESS AND PRACTICES OF JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL LEARNERS

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ABSTRACT

The study explored the awareness and practices of digital citizenship among junior high school learners and examined how these concepts are integrated into Araling Panlipunan instruction as well as the challenges teachers face in promoting responsible online behavior. Using a descriptive-correlational research design, data were collected from learners and teachers through structured questionnaires measuring digital citizenship awareness, practices, integration, and challenges. Findings revealed that learners generally possess a high level of awareness of digital citizenship and frequently engage in responsible online practices. While the difference between awareness and practices was minimal and not statistically significant, a strong positive and significant relationship was observed, indicating that learners' understanding of digital citizenship concepts directly influences their online behavior. Teachers reported that digital citizenship is often integrated into Araling Panlipunan lessons, though challenges such as limited access to digital resources, unstable internet connections, and insufficient professional development hinder consistent implementation. These results suggest that learners are developing both the knowledge and skills necessary to engage in safe, ethical, and responsible digital behavior, and that teacher guidance and structured integration in the curriculum are key to sustaining these practices. The study emphasizes the importance of continuous digital citizenship education, collaborative support from stakeholders, and practical, project-based learning strategies to enhance responsible online behavior in junior high school learners.

Keywords: *Digital Citizenship, Learner Practices, Araling Panlipunan*

INTRODUCTION

In today's increasingly digital society, students are constantly exposed to various online environments where they interact, learn, and express themselves. Junior high school students, in particular, are among the most active age groups on social media platforms, online forums, and other digital spaces. This widespread digital engagement calls for the urgent need to develop and promote digital citizenship, which includes not only technical skills but also values, ethical behavior, and critical thinking in online contexts (Ribble, 2015).

Digital citizenship refers to the responsible and appropriate use of technology by individuals, especially in terms of online behavior, information literacy, digital etiquette, and civic participation. As young learners navigate the internet for educational and social purposes, they must be equipped with the knowledge and values that allow them to contribute positively and safely in the digital world. Without proper guidance, learners become vulnerable to issues such as cyberbullying, misinformation, online exploitation, and digital addiction (Jones & Mitchell, 2016).

In the Philippines, the Department of Education (DepEd), along with various private and non-government organizations, has initiated campaigns to promote digital responsibility among students. Programs such as Google's "Cyberpeace," Globe and Facebook's "Digital Discernment," and SEAMEO INNOTECH's webinars on youth cybersafety have all contributed to raising awareness. However, these efforts are often short-term, workshop-based interventions that are not fully embedded in the curriculum. There remains a gap in integrating digital citizenship into subject-specific instruction, particularly in Araling Panlipunan (DepEd, 2020).

Araling Panlipunan, as a subject that cultivates civic knowledge, national identity, social responsibility, and ethical decision-making, offers a natural and strategic platform to teach digital citizenship. The values already embedded in AP—such as respect for others, awareness of rights and responsibilities, and engagement in community affairs—align with the core principles of being a good digital citizen. Integrating digital citizenship into AP allows learners to connect societal values with modern digital realities (UNESCO, 2021).

Teaching digital citizenship through Araling Panlipunan helps bridge the gap between traditional civic instruction and the demands of 21st-century citizenship. While AP often focuses on historical, economic, and political concepts, incorporating lessons on digital literacy, cyber ethics, and online civic engagement ensures that students are not only prepared to participate in the physical world but also the digital one (ISTE, 2019).

A number of recent studies highlight the potential of Araling Panlipunan to support digital citizenship education. For instance, research in Southeast Asia indicates that integrating digital citizenship into social studies improves learners' critical thinking, digital literacy, and civic engagement. In the Philippine context, AP teachers and learners already deal with topics such as democracy, freedom of speech, human rights, and responsible

participation—all of which can be recontextualized in digital settings (Choi, 2016). Furthermore, a study published by *Frontiers in Communication* showed that digital citizenship, particularly digital respect and civic engagement, is closely associated with global competence among Filipino youth. This finding affirms the importance of developing responsible and ethical digital citizens who are capable of navigating both local and global digital environments (Cruz & Lee, 2022).

Despite the relevance of digital citizenship, Filipino educators—especially Araling Panlipunan teachers—face challenges in integrating it effectively into classroom instruction. Studies reveal that many Araling Panlipunan teachers lack sufficient digital competence or training on digital literacy pedagogy. This indicates the need for targeted professional development programs and curriculum support that can empower teachers to embed digital citizenship in their teaching practices (Tindowen et al., 2021).

At the learner level, digital habits and practices vary widely. Some students demonstrate positive online behavior and strong media literacy, while others struggle with responsible content sharing, respecting digital boundaries, and evaluating online information. By assessing students' current levels of awareness and practice in terms of digital citizenship, educators can better tailor interventions and lessons that meet their specific needs (Ribble & Bailey, 2007).

Moreover, students are more likely to engage meaningfully with lessons when the content reflects their lived experiences. Since learners already spend significant time online, integrating digital topics into Araling Panlipunan can increase student interest, relevance, and classroom participation. Discussing issues like misinformation, digital activism, online ethics, and privacy rights not only strengthens content learning but also cultivates values aligned with democratic and participatory citizenship (Banks, 2017).

In addition, digital citizenship supports the development of 21st-century skills such as media and information literacy, critical thinking, collaboration, and communication. These skills are essential not only for academic success but also for lifelong learning and responsible citizenship. Embedding these within Araling Panlipunan promotes a holistic approach to education (Partnership for 21st Century Skills, 2019).

Digital citizenship also directly addresses ongoing societal problems. For instance, the rise of fake news and online misinformation threatens democracy and public trust. Teaching students how to critically evaluate sources and verify information helps counteract these threats. As a civic-oriented subject, AP is well-positioned to address these concerns from a values-based perspective (Wineburg & McGrew, 2017).

Cyberbullying is another pressing issue that affects Filipino youth. Integrating discussions about empathy, digital responsibility, and online safety into AP helps develop more respectful and emotionally intelligent online communities. It also empowers students to intervene or seek help when they witness harmful online behavior (Kowalski et al., 2018).

Araling Panlipunan teachers can use a variety of teaching strategies to integrate digital citizenship. These include case studies, issue-based discussions, simulations, group projects, digital storytelling, and community engagement activities. These methods align well with existing Araling Panlipunan approaches and allow learners to apply lessons in real-life digital contexts (Heick, 2020).

This study is necessary because it will provide a comprehensive understanding of how junior high school learners perceive and practice digital citizenship within the framework of Araling Panlipunan. The findings can inform the development of an instructional framework or guide that helps teachers intentionally embed digital citizenship into their lesson planning and pedagogy (Creswell, 2018).

The study will also explore the specific challenges and barriers encountered by both students and teachers. These may include limited access to devices or internet, lack of teacher training, unclear curricular guidelines, or student attitudes and digital behaviors. Identifying these barriers will support better implementation strategies and resource allocation (UNICEF, 2021).

It is equally important to document the existing strengths and good practices already being used by AP teachers and students. These can serve as models or best practices for other schools or divisions aiming to implement digital citizenship more effectively (DepEd, 2021).

By focusing on junior high school students, the study targets a critical developmental stage where learners are forming their identity, values, and habits—both offline and online. Early intervention through formal education can ensure they carry ethical and responsible practices into adulthood (Erikson, 1968).

Furthermore, promoting digital citizenship through AP contributes to the goals of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) and Global Citizenship Education (GCED), as endorsed by UNESCO. It ensures that learners are equipped not just with academic knowledge but with the mindset and values to contribute positively to a digital society (UNESCO, 2020).

This research also supports the Department of Education's ongoing push toward inclusive, relevant, and future-ready education. By aligning AP with digital realities, schools fulfill DepEd's commitment to nurturing 21st-century Filipino learners (DepEd MATATAG Agenda, 2023).

With digital transformation rapidly reshaping society, education systems must evolve accordingly. Curriculum integration of digital citizenship ensures that schools remain responsive to the changing needs of learners, communities, and the nation (OECD, 2021).

In conclusion, promoting digital citizenship through Araling Panlipunan is both a timely and strategic educational endeavor. It leverages the strengths of the subject in cultivating

civic responsibility while responding to the digital challenges of today's learners. This study will not only assess current awareness and practices but will also provide practical recommendations to guide educators in creating digitally responsible and civically engaged students (Ribble, 2015).

Research Questions

This study sought to assess the awareness and practices of the select junior high school learners on digital citizenship in Sta. Barbara I & II Districts, Schools Division Office I Pangasinan during the school year 2025-2026.

Specifically, it sought to answer the following sub-problems:

1. What is the level of awareness of junior high school learners on digital citizenship?
2. What is the level of digital citizenship practices of junior high school learners?
3. Is there a significant difference between the awareness and practices of digital citizenship among junior high school learners?
4. Is there a significant relationship between learners' awareness of digital citizenship and their actual digital practices, and Araling Panlipunan plays a role in shaping this relationship?
5. How is digital citizenship integrated into Araling Panlipunan instruction?
6. What challenges do teachers and learners encounter in promoting or practicing digital citizenship through Araling Panlipunan?
7. What instructional framework can be proposed to enhance the integration of digital citizenship in Araling Panlipunan?

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study adopted a descriptive-correlational research paradigm supported by both quantitative and qualitative approaches (mixed-methods) to assess the awareness and practices of junior high school students on digital citizenship and to explore how Araling Panlipunan instruction contributes to this development. The paradigm is rooted in the constructivist worldview, which emphasizes that learners build knowledge through experiences and contextual understanding. It also aligns with the pragmatic research philosophy, which supports the use of multiple methods to gain a deeper and more practical understanding of complex educational phenomena (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018).

The research operates on the assumption that there is a relationship between learners' level of awareness and their actual digital practices, and that the instructional strategies used in Araling Panlipunan can serve as a platform for embedding digital citizenship education. The study begins by collecting quantitative data through structured survey questionnaires measuring digital citizenship awareness and practice based on Ribble's

(2007) nine elements. In parallel, qualitative data is gathered through teacher interviews, lesson observations, and document analysis to investigate the integration of digital citizenship concepts into Araling Panlipunan instruction.

The input of the research paradigm includes variables such as learner demographics, digital citizenship awareness, and classroom teaching strategies. The process involves the collection, analysis, and interpretation of data through statistical methods (for quantitative data) and thematic analysis (for qualitative insights). The output is a comprehensive understanding of learners' digital citizenship profiles, a set of instructional challenges and opportunities, and a proposed instructional framework for Araling Panlipunan teachers and policy makers.

This paradigm allows the study to fulfill both exploratory and confirmatory objectives. It not only measures the current state of digital citizenship among learners but also investigates how education—particularly through a civic-oriented subject like Araling Panlipunan—can contribute to shaping ethical and responsible digital behavior.

Instrumentation and Data Collection

To effectively gather data for this study, two primary instruments were employed. The first instrument is a structured questionnaire designed specifically for junior high school learners to assess their awareness and practices regarding digital citizenship. The questionnaire was divided into two parts: the first part measured learners' awareness of digital citizenship concepts such as online etiquette, privacy, cyberbullying, digital rights and responsibilities, and safe internet use. Learners responded to statements using a Likert scale. The second part focused on learners' actual digital citizenship practices, assessing how frequently they demonstrate responsible online behaviors through similar scaled responses. Prior to the main data collection, the questionnaire was pilot tested among a small group of learners outside the study area to ensure its validity and reliability. The second instrument is a semi-structured interview guide developed for Araling Panlipunan teachers. This guide explored how digital citizenship is integrated into their instruction, the challenges they and their learners encounter in promoting or practicing digital citizenship, and their suggestions for enhancing its integration. The open-ended questions allowed teachers to provide detailed insights into their instructional experiences and challenges.

Data collection began with securing the necessary permissions from the Schools Division Superintendent of SDO1 Pangasinan, as well as from school principals, teachers, and learners involved in the study. Coordination was made to schedule convenient times for administering the questionnaires and conducting interviews. The questionnaire was distributed to the select junior high school learners during their Araling Panlipunan classes, with clear explanations of the study's purpose and assurances of confidentiality to encourage honest responses. Learners were given sufficient time to complete the questionnaire independently. Meanwhile, interviews with Araling Panlipunan teachers were conducted individually at mutually agreed-upon times. These interviews were audio-recorded with the consent of the participants and later transcribed for analysis. Upon

completion, the quantitative data from the questionnaires were tabulated and analyzed using descriptive statistics to determine the levels of awareness and practices, as well as inferential statistics to assess significant differences between these variables. The qualitative data from the teacher interviews were thematically analyzed to identify patterns related to the integration of digital citizenship and the challenges faced by both teachers and learners.

Tools for Data Analysis

The collected quantitative data from the questionnaires will be processed and analyzed using appropriate statistical software, such as SPSS or Excel, following standard operating procedures to ensure accuracy and reliability.

Descriptive statistics, including frequency counts, percentages, means, and standard deviations, were used to summarize the levels of awareness and digital citizenship practices among junior high school learners. To determine whether there is a significant difference between learners' awareness and practices, inferential statistical tests such as the paired sample t-test or independent sample t-test was employed, depending on the data structure and assumptions.

For the qualitative data gathered from teacher interviews, thematic analysis was conducted manually or with the assistance of qualitative data analysis software like NVivo. This involves organizing the data, coding responses, and identifying recurring themes or patterns related to the integration of digital citizenship in Araling Panlipunan instruction and the challenges faced.

Throughout the analysis process, all data handling and interpretation were strictly adhere to ethical standards and research protocols to maintain data integrity and confidentiality.

RESULTS

Table 1
Digital Citizenship Awareness (for Learners)

Indicators	Mean	Descriptive Equivalent
I am aware of proper online etiquette when interacting with others.	4.20	Aware
I know how to adjust privacy settings on social media to protect my personal information.	3.60	Moderately Aware
I am aware of what cyberbullying means and how to identify it.	4.80	Very Aware
I understand that I have digital rights and responsibilities when using the internet.	4.10	Aware
I know the importance of using strong passwords to keep my accounts secure.	4.00	Aware

I am aware that my online activities leave a digital footprint.	4.30	Aware
I know that it is important to respect others' intellectual property online.	3.70	Moderately Aware
I understand the risks of sharing personal information on public websites or forums.	4.10	Aware
I am aware of the potential dangers of interacting with strangers online.	4.70	Very Aware
I know how to identify and avoid phishing scams or suspicious links.	3.50	Moderately Aware
I am aware of laws or rules regarding online behavior and cybercrime.	2.90	Slightly Aware
I understand the importance of reporting inappropriate or harmful online content.	3.60	Moderately Aware
I know that online bullying can have serious consequences for both victims and perpetrators.	4.80	Very Aware
I am aware that digital citizenship includes being responsible and ethical online users	4.20	Aware
I know how to seek help or support if I encounter problems online.	3.70	Moderately Aware
WM	4.00	Aware

Table 2
Digital Citizenship Practices (for Learners)

Indicators	Mean	Descriptive Equivalent
I use strong and unique passwords to protect my online accounts.	4.10	Often Practiced
I adjust my privacy settings on social media to control who can see my posts.	3.80	Often Practiced
I avoid sharing personal information (e.g., address, phone number) on public platforms.	4.20	Often Practiced
I treat others respectfully and politely when communicating online.	4.50	Always Practiced
I report any inappropriate or harmful content that I come across online.	3.70	Often Practiced
I refrain from posting or sharing false information or rumors on social media.	4.30	Always Practiced
I avoid engaging in or responding to cyberbullying.	4.60	Always Practiced
I give proper credit when using or sharing someone else's work or content online.	3.90	Often Practiced
I log out of my accounts after using shared or public computers.	3.50	Often Practiced
I seek help from trusted adults when I face problems online.	3.60	Often Practiced

I think carefully before posting anything online that could affect my reputation.	4.40	Always Practiced
I avoid clicking on suspicious links or downloading unknown files.	4.00	Often Practiced
I encourage others to use the internet responsibly and safely.	4.20	Often Practiced
I follow school or community rules about acceptable internet use.	4.30	Always Practiced
I regularly update my devices and software to protect against security risks.	3.80	Often Practiced
WM	4.10	Often Practiced

Table 3
Significant Difference Between the Awareness and Practices of digital citizenship Among Junior High School Learners

Variables	Weighted Mean	Mean Difference	Interpretation
Digital Citizenship Awareness	4.00	0.10	Not Significant
Digital Citizenship Practices	4.10		

Table 4
Significant Relationship between Learners' Awareness of Digital Citizenship and their Actual Digital Practices

Variables	Mean	r-value	p-value	Decision	Interpretation
Digital Citizenship Awareness	4.00	0.78	0.000	Reject Ho	Significant Relationship
Digital Citizenship Practices	4.10				

Table 5
Integration of Digital Citizenship in Araling Panlipunan Instruction (for Teachers)

Indicators	Mean	Descriptive Equivalent
Digital citizenship topics (e.g., online safety, privacy) are regularly included in Araling Panlipunan lessons	3.70	Often Integrated
I use real-life examples related to digital citizenship during instruction in Araling Panlipunan.	3.50	Often Integrated
Students are encouraged to practice responsible online behavior during class activities.	4.00	Often Integrated

Discussions about ethical use of technology and the internet are part of the curriculum.	3.80	Often Integrated
Digital tools and resources are used to teach and reinforce digital citizenship concepts.	3.60	Often Integrated
Students are assigned projects or tasks that involve applying digital citizenship principles.	3.40	Sometimes Integrated
I assess students' understanding and application of digital citizenship in Araling Panlipunan.	3.30	Sometimes Integrated
Collaboration and communication through digital platforms are integrated into lessons.	3.90	Often Integrated
I provide guidance on safe and responsible use of social media related to Araling Panlipunan topics.	3.50	Often Integrated
Digital citizenship integration aligns with the learning objectives of Araling Panlipunan.	3.80	Often Integrated
WM	3.65	Often Integrated

Table 6
Challenges in Promoting or Practicing Digital Citizenship through Araling Panlipunan (for Teachers)

Indicators	Mean	Descriptive Equivalent
Limited access to digital devices (computers, tablets, smartphones) in the classroom	4.30	Always Experienced
Poor or unstable internet connection that hinders digital activities	4.50	Always Experienced
Lack of training or resources for teachers to effectively teach digital citizenship	4.00	Often Experienced
Learners have limited knowledge or understanding of digital citizenship concepts	3.70	Often Experienced
Insufficient integration of digital citizenship in the Araling Panlipunan curriculum	3.80	Often Experienced
Time constraints during lessons prevent discussion of digital citizenship topics	3.90	Often Experienced
Students exhibit irresponsible behavior online (e.g., cyberbullying, plagiarism)	3.60	Often Experienced
Teachers find it challenging to monitor students' digital behavior during online tasks or projects	3.70	Often Experienced
Lack of support from parents or guardians in reinforcing digital responsibility at home	3.50	Often Experienced
Language or technical terms related to digital citizenship are difficult for students to understand	3.40	Sometimes Experienced
WM	3.84	Often Experienced

DISCUSSION

Table 1 shows that learners generally demonstrated a good level of digital citizenship awareness, especially in areas related to online etiquette, cyberbullying, and recognizing online risks. The highest-rated indicators were understanding cyberbullying (mean = 4.8), awareness of the dangers of interacting with strangers online (mean = 4.7), and knowledge of the consequences of online bullying (mean = 4.8). These findings suggest that learners have a strong understanding of responsible online behavior, which supports the ideas presented by Ribble (2015).

However, learners obtained moderate scores (mean = 3.5–3.7) in areas such as privacy management, intellectual property, phishing awareness, reporting harmful content, and seeking help online. This indicates that while learners may understand these concepts, they are not yet fully applying digital safety skills in practice. The lowest score was recorded in awareness of online laws and cybercrime (mean = 2.9), revealing a gap in digital legal literacy. Similar findings were discussed by Livingstone et al. (2017), who explained that students are often aware of online risks but have limited understanding of their legal responsibilities online.

Overall, learners were described as “Aware” in terms of digital citizenship. Although they already show responsible online behavior, there is still a need to strengthen their technical and legal competencies through interactive lessons, scenario-based activities, and digital literacy programs, as supported by Choi et al. (2020).

Table 2 reveals that learners often practice responsible and safe digital behaviors, with an overall weighted mean of 4.1 interpreted as “Often.” This suggests that learners are generally able to apply their understanding of online safety and ethics in their actual online activities. The highest-rated behaviors included avoiding cyberbullying (4.6), treating others respectfully online (4.5), and thinking carefully before posting online (4.4). These findings highlight that learners value respectful and ethical online interactions, consistent with the ideas presented by Ribble (2015).

Moderate ratings were observed in practices related to privacy management, logging out of shared devices, giving proper credit to online content, and seeking help for online problems (3.5–3.9). This indicates that although learners are aware of these responsible behaviors, they do not consistently practice them. Similar findings were reported by Livingstone et al. (2017), who noted that learners often recognize online risks but struggle with the consistent application of safe digital practices.

Cybersecurity-related practices, such as using strong passwords, avoiding suspicious links, and updating devices, also received moderately high ratings (3.8–4.1). This suggests that learners possess basic cybersecurity awareness, but these practices have not yet become consistent habits. Choi et al. (2020) emphasized that structured digital citizenship programs can help strengthen both ethical online behavior and cybersecurity practices among learners.

Overall, learners showed positive digital citizenship practices, particularly in respectful communication and ethical online behavior. However, further support is still needed to strengthen their privacy protection, cybersecurity awareness, and responsible content-sharing skills through interactive activities, scenario-based learning, and online safety workshops.

Table 3 shows that digital citizenship awareness obtained a weighted mean of 4.00, while digital citizenship practices had a weighted mean of 4.10, resulting in a very small mean difference of 0.10. This suggests that learners' awareness of digital citizenship is closely reflected in their actual online practices, indicating that the difference between the two variables is minimal.

The findings imply that learners who understand responsible online behavior, privacy protection, ethical technology use, and respect for others are generally able to apply these principles in their everyday digital activities. This supports the idea that awareness influences responsible online behavior. Ribble (2015) explained that digital citizenship education helps learners develop the values and skills necessary for ethical technology use. Likewise, Choi et al. (2020) found that students with greater digital citizenship awareness are more likely to practice responsible online behavior.

Overall, the close relationship between awareness and practice suggests that junior high school learners are gradually developing the skills needed to navigate digital environments safely and responsibly. Nevertheless, continuous guidance from teachers and parents remains important.

Table 4 presents the results of the Pearson Product–Moment Correlation used to determine the relationship between learners' digital citizenship awareness and practices. The computed correlation coefficient ($r = 0.78$) indicates a strong positive relationship between the two variables. In addition, the p-value of 0.000 is lower than the 0.05 level of significance, leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis. This means that there is a statistically significant relationship between learners' awareness of digital citizenship and their actual digital practices.

The findings suggest that learners who are more aware of online safety, ethical behavior, privacy protection, and respectful communication are also more likely to demonstrate responsible digital practices. This indicates that learners are capable of applying their digital citizenship knowledge in their daily online interactions.

The results support the work of Ribble (2015), who emphasized that digital citizenship education promotes ethical and responsible technology use. Similarly, Choi et al. (2020) found that students with greater digital citizenship knowledge tend to practice safer and more responsible online behavior. Livingstone et al. (2017) also explained that awareness of digital risks helps learners develop better self-regulation in using technology.

Overall, the findings show that digital citizenship awareness significantly influences learners' digital practices, highlighting the importance of continuously integrating digital citizenship education into classroom instruction.

Table 5 shows that teachers often integrate digital citizenship into Araling Panlipunan instruction, with an overall weighted mean of 3.65. High ratings were observed in encouraging responsible online behavior (4.0), discussing ethical technology use (3.8), and aligning digital citizenship concepts with lesson objectives (3.8). These findings suggest that teachers recognize the importance of integrating digital responsibility into civic and social learning.

However, moderate ratings in assigning projects and assessing students' application of digital citizenship (3.3–3.4) indicate that practical application and assessment strategies are not yet fully embedded in classroom instruction. Ribble (2015) explained that digital citizenship education becomes more effective when reinforced through continuous practice and assessment.

The findings also support the study of Choi et al. (2020), which emphasized that students develop stronger digital responsibility when digital citizenship is consistently integrated into classroom activities and assessments. Likewise, Livingstone et al. (2017) highlighted the value of cross-curricular integration in helping students apply digital citizenship concepts in real-life situations.

Overall, the results suggest that Araling Panlipunan teachers are successfully integrating digital citizenship into instruction, although more application-based activities and assessment strategies are still needed to strengthen learners' responsible digital behavior.

Table 6 shows that teachers often experience challenges in promoting digital citizenship in Araling Panlipunan classes, with an overall weighted mean of 3.84. The highest-rated challenges were limited access to digital devices (4.3) and poor or unstable internet connection (4.5), indicating that lack of technological resources remains a major barrier to effective digital citizenship instruction. These findings support the work of Livingstone et al. (2017), who emphasized that resource limitations affect the integration of digital literacy and citizenship in schools.

Teachers also identified lack of training and resources (4.0) and insufficient curriculum integration (3.8) as common challenges. These findings suggest that although teachers recognize the importance of digital citizenship, they may still lack sufficient preparation and support for teaching it effectively. Ribble (2015) emphasized that teacher preparedness plays a significant role in the successful integration of digital citizenship education.

Moderate challenges were also observed in areas related to student behavior, parental support, monitoring online activities, and understanding technical concepts (3.4–3.7).

This indicates that learners may still struggle to consistently apply ethical online behavior, while teachers face difficulties in supervising students' digital activities.

Overall, the findings suggest that while teachers are making efforts to integrate digital citizenship into instruction, challenges related to technology access, teacher training, curriculum support, and student supervision still need to be addressed to improve the effectiveness of digital citizenship education.

Conclusions

The study revealed that learners demonstrate a good level of awareness and understanding of digital citizenship, particularly in ethical online behavior, cyberbullying prevention, and online respect. Learners frequently practice responsible digital behaviors, showing that their awareness positively influences how they interact in digital environments. However, there are still areas that require improvement, especially in privacy protection, cybersecurity practices, and seeking help when encountering online problems. The findings also showed that learners' awareness of digital citizenship is closely reflected in their actual digital practices, indicating that they are generally able to apply responsible and ethical behavior in their daily online interactions.

Furthermore, the study found a strong and significant positive relationship between digital citizenship awareness and digital citizenship practices. This suggests that learners who possess greater knowledge and understanding of responsible technology use are more likely to demonstrate ethical and safe online behavior. The findings highlight the importance of continuous digital citizenship education, guidance, and support in strengthening responsible digital practices among learners.

The study also revealed that teachers integrate digital citizenship concepts in Araling Panlipunan instruction through discussions and classroom activities. However, integration remains inconsistent in areas such as project-based activities, assessment, and reinforcement of digital citizenship concepts. In addition, teachers often encounter challenges related to limited digital devices, unstable internet connection, lack of training and curriculum support, and learner-related issues such as limited understanding and irresponsible online behavior.

Overall, the study concludes that while the school community recognizes the importance of digital citizenship and actively promotes it, there is still a need for additional support, resources, and more structured integration of digital citizenship in classroom instruction to further strengthen learners' responsible and ethical use of technology.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions of the study, several recommendations are proposed to strengthen digital citizenship awareness and practices among learners. Schools and teachers should enhance learners' practical digital citizenship skills by conducting hands-on workshops, scenario-based activities, and role-playing exercises

focused on privacy management, phishing detection, proper attribution of digital content, and seeking help online. These activities may help bridge the gap between learners' awareness and their actual application of responsible digital behavior.

Teachers are also encouraged to strengthen the integration of digital citizenship in Araling Panlipunan by incorporating project-based activities, performance tasks, and assessment strategies that reinforce responsible technology use. Using real-life and culturally relevant examples within AP lessons may help learners better understand and relate digital citizenship concepts to their everyday experiences.

To address structural and resource-related challenges, schools should improve access to digital devices, reliable internet connectivity, and updated software to support effective digital learning activities. School administrators may also implement school-wide digital citizenship initiatives that provide adequate resources, technical support, and clear policies for responsible technology use.

In addition, capacity-building programs should be provided for teachers to enhance their knowledge and skills in integrating digital citizenship effectively in classroom instruction. Professional development activities, training workshops, and the development of lesson guides or instructional frameworks may help teachers consistently incorporate digital citizenship concepts across subjects, particularly in Araling Panlipunan.

The study also recommends strengthening the involvement of parents and the community by conducting information sessions and awareness programs that encourage responsible online behavior at home. Partnerships with local stakeholders and community organizations may further support digital literacy and digital citizenship initiatives within the school.

Lastly, continuous monitoring and evaluation should be implemented to assess learners' progress in both digital citizenship awareness and practices. Feedback from learners, teachers, and parents may be used to improve instructional strategies, support systems, and digital citizenship programs to ensure that learners consistently demonstrate safe, ethical, and responsible behavior in digital environments.

Compliance with Ethical Standards

As with any plan in education, the individual school's culture and climate were considered when implementing the research project. The data collected in this study were used to determine the effectiveness of the contextualized teaching and learning approach integrated with Araling Panlipunan as a basis for implications in enhancing the teaching-learning process. The results gathered from the survey questionnaire were handled with utmost care in order to protect the privacy of the teacher-respondents. Thus, the names of the respondents were withheld in the attached documents, and the respondents were assigned code numbers instead.

Prior to answering the questionnaire, the respondents were assured of the confidentiality of their responses and informed that the results obtained would be used solely for the purpose of the research to ensure valid and reliable data. No identifying codes or links connecting the participants to the results of the questionnaire were utilized in the study.

Furthermore, it was one of the guiding principles of the study not to copy the work of other researchers without proper citation of references. The researcher also assured the respondents that all information gathered would be used exclusively for the purposes of the research and that the collected data were handled in accordance with Republic Act No. 10173, or the Data Privacy Act of 2012, to ensure the validity, reliability, and confidentiality of the data.

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