A Proposed Framework For Improving The Role Of School Leaders In Promoting Digital Citizenship Among Public Education Students In The Kingdom Of Saudi Arabia

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to propose a framework to improve the role of school leaders in promoting digital citizenship among students at public education schools in Saudi Arabia. The descriptive approach was used to address the purpose of the study. Twenty-six educational leadership scholars have participated in this study to identify their perceptions regarding the role of school leaders in promoting digital citizenship among students. The results of the study emphasized the importance of school leaders' role in promoting digital citizenship among students at general education schools as the study sample degree of appreciation of their role importance in the three main areas (setting direction, developing people, and developing schools) was high. The study also proposed framework aiming at improving the role of school leaders in promoting digital citizenship among public education students. It consists of three areas: determining the direction of promoting digital citizenship among students, developing school personnel in a way that contributes to enhancing digital citizenship for students, and developing the school in a way that contributes to promoting digital citizenship among students. Each of these areas includes a set of roles that school leaders should play in promoting digital citizenship among students.

Keywords: Digital citizenship, school leaders, a proposed framework.

Introduction:

One of the most important changes of the current era was the unprecedented technological developments that have emerged, and with it, priorities changed. The approach became more focused on the importance of human capital with a new perspectives that corresponds to these developments and capable of updating knowledge, employing and sharing it.

The digital lifestyles of students have posed a set of challenges for school leaders; it has become imperative to develop new skills, knowledge, insight, and a deeper understanding that complement their new professional roles (Gibson, 2002, Williams, 2008). Additionally, **5825** | Obaid bin Abdullah Al-Subaie A Proposed Framework For Improving The Role Of School Leaders In Promoting Digital Citizenship Among Public Education Students In The Kingdom Of Saudi Arabia

it has become necessary to effectively employ technology and have new policies and guidelines as appropriately, while simultaneously working on eliminating digital illiteracy (Ribble & Miller, 2013, p173).

This highlights the significance of digital citizenship, which was first defined by Ribble, as the rules of appropriate behavior regarding technology usage (Ribble, Bailey, & Ross, 2004). In 2019, he updated this definition to: "the criteria for the continuous development of appropriate, responsible and effective use of technology" (Ribble & Park, 2019, pp.11, 10). He further elaborated to the definition by stating that continuous development refers to growth, and that the individual should be more mature, as new technologies emerge quickly and continuously. Moreover, criterion mean the desired interaction, whether individual or collective, while the words "appropriate and responsible" relate to demonstrating the existence of a conscious, appropriate, and proper commitment. Finally, effective means having the power and ownership to do something.

Digital citizenship is an expression of the set of rules, controls, standards, norms, ideas, and principles followed in the optimal and correct use of it, which citizens need while using technologies in order to use them in a safe, appropriate, and smart way (Al-Dahshan & Al-Fuwaihi, 2015).

Al-Hamdani (2015) believes that digital citizenship is a modern concept in education that expresses appropriate and responsible rules of behavior related to the use of technology and aims to find optimal methods and systems to guide and protect all technology users, especially children and adolescents." (P. 207). Additionally, Ribble (2015) emphasized that the basic elements of citizenship are: digital access, digital commerce, digital communication, digital literacy, digital etiquette, digital law, digital rights and responsibilities, digital health and safety, and digital security.

Recently, digital citizenship has become a priority for schools that adopt technological integration as a "key strategy" to prepare students to live and work in the twenty-first century. Digital citizenship seeks to teach everyone, and not just children, what technology users should do to use digital technologies effectively and appropriately (Ribble, 2015, p.15). The inculcation of a technical and ethical foundation in students is important in developing quality citizens, as students can be taughtsoftware and hardware at any level of education but without good moral foundations, they may form lifelong bad habits and spread and cause harm to others (Baumann, 2016, p. 472).

Thus, the Saudi Ministry of Education (MoE) has tended to prepare the students to find their positions in a today's changing, intertwining and connected world. Therefore, plans and programs designed to help students meet the requirements of modern life by promoting values and developing skills, including critical thinking skills and social skills. (MoE, 2018).

The rapid and unprecedented incursion of technology mandated rearrangement of priorities and burdened many organizations to be in a marathon of improvement; leaving

them with no choice but to progress, so the approach is more focused on the importance of the human capital as a driver of innovation. This is what was included in the Kingdom's vision (2030), an "ambitious nation," as it believes in the capabilities and potential of its children.

Since many parents are not experienced in teaching their children the concepts of digital citizenship, and yet they give them access to digital devices, the responsibility for teaching these basic concepts has fallen on the school (Domeny, 2017, p.43). Although schools may briefly demonstrate both moral and technological humanitarian issues at the beginning of each year through introductory directives or handouts, this approach rarely sufficiently acknowledge the risks of technology (Baumann, 2016, p. 48).

Ribble (2015)has recognized digital citizenship as a lens that helpschool leaders focusing on understanding digital citizenship issues, and he classified them into three general categories: respect, education, and protection (Ribble, 2015). These three categories developed by Ribble are a "cornerstone" in educational processes and including them in the curriculum is likely to enhance teachers and student's awareness and understanding of the appropriate use of technology(Alqahtani, Alqahtani, & Alqurashi, 2017, p. 97).

To improve school leaders' role in promoting digital citizenship among students, the authors have developed a model based on the elements of digital citizenship developed by Ribble and Leithwood and Rehl (2003). They have identified three areas of leadership practice at the school level. These areas are as follows:

- 1- **Setting directions**. This area includes the following practices: defining and clarifying vision, creating common meanings, and creating high performance expectations.
- 2- **Developing people**. This field includes the following practices: providing intellectual stimulation to individuals, providing individual support, and providing an appropriate model.
- 3- **Developing the organization**. This area includes the following practices: strengthening the school culture, modifying the organizational structure, building cooperative processes, and managing the environment.

One line of studies has examined the role of the school leaders in reinforcing digital citizenship. For example, Ribble &Miller (2013) pointed out the role of leaders in providing information about the use of technology for themselves, teachers, and students to ensure access to technology, and communication with all members of society, and to educate them about these skills and model these skills. Moreover, Berardi (2015) maintained that teachers are looking for school leaders who have a clear vision regarding digital citizenship education. Preddy (2016) also believed that the school leader should be initiative and forefront at helping his students avoid pitfalls and move successfully in the internet world. Beers (2017) argued that school leaders use to increase positive behavior, namely educating teachers about digital citizenship, training them, role orientation, integrating 5827 | Obaid bin Abdullah Al-Subaie A Proposed Framework For Improving The Role Of School Leaders In Promoting Digital Citizenship Among Public Education Students In The Kingdom Of Saudi Arabia

technology into lessons, and teaching students' lessons in the appropriate use of technology. Accordingly, the role of school leaders in promoting digital citizenship is dynamic, and requires the development of learning environments, and the practices of stakeholders and users of technology.

Statement of the problem

According to the latest General Authority for Statistics in the kingdom of Saudi Arabia (2019) survey on the use and accessibility of information and communication technology for families and individuals, the percentage of those using the Internet among students at the primary level (79.7%), intermediate school (90.9%), and secondary school (97. 2%). Moreover, the lack of knowledge or skills needed to use the Internet may be the most common reason for non-use (28.5%) for individuals of between the ages of 19 and 15 years.

Al-Saadi (2018) empahsized that the school has a role in promoting the values of digital citizenship among students, leaving students aware of technological variables and how to deal with them, and their awareness of fighting ideas serving society, and developing critical thinking skills that enable them to distinguish between bad and good. Al-Tuwaijri (2017) also found that the responsibility of promoting digital citizenship among students is not limited to teachers, and that it is the responsibility of the school administration to support them by providing what they need and overcoming the obstacles facing them. This study presented a clear-cut roadmap through which a proposed framework can be implemented to improve the role of school leaders in promoting digital citizenship among school students.

Research questions:

Q1: What is the degree of appreciation of educational leadership specialists in Saudi universities to the importance of school leaders' role in promoting digital citizenship among students at general education schools?

Q2: What is the proposed framework for improving the role of school leaders in promoting digital citizenship among students at general education schools in Saudi Arabia?

Methodologyand procedures:

The study employed the descriptive approach through reviewing the related literature, analyzing its results, and surveying the views of a group of specialists in educational leadership in several Saudi universities.

Participants

The study sample consisted 26scholars in educational leadership in Saudi universities who were deliberately chosen, to determine the degree of their appreciation for the importance of the role of school leaders in promoting digital citizenship among public education students in Saudi Arabia.

Instrument

0.05 level.

A questionnaire was developed which included the most important roles that school leaders can play in promoting digital citizenship among school students, by aligning whatRibble presented on digital citizenship elements and benefiting from the Leithwood and Riehl framework (Leithwood & Riehl, 2003) for successful school leadership to build the proposed framework to improve the role of school leaders in the field of promoting digital citizenship among students. Liekart five-point scale was used to measure the responses of study sample towards the degree of appreciation of the importance of school leaders' role in promoting digital citizenship among school students.

The validity and reliability

1- The validity of the internal consistency of the instrument

Pearson correlation coefficients was used to measure the relationship between the items of the study tool, with the total degree of the dimension to which they belong and the relationship between items of the instrument and the overall score of the instrument (SeeTable 1 and 2).

Table 1 Correlation coefficients of the items of the instrument

Field		Correlation		Correlation		Correlation
rieiu		Coefficient		Coefficient		Coefficient
Setting	1	*0.4283	3	**0.7199	5	**0.7662
directions	2	**0.7704	4	**0.7964	6	**0.8150
Developing	1	**0.5350	3	**0.7381	5	**0.8035
people	2	**0.7429	4	**0.7689	6	**0.8996
Developing	1	**0.7588	3	**0.7624	5	**0.7975
the school	2	**0.8706	4	**0.6831	6	**0.6018

^{**} Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level; *correlation is significant at the

Table 2correlation coefficients of the teams and the overall score of the instrument

	Correlation		Correlation		Correlation
	Coefficient		Coefficient		Coefficient
1	*0.4844	7	*0.4838	13	**0.6393
2	**0.6949	8	**0.5963	14	**0.7128
3	**0.5975	9	**0.6206	15	**0.6882
4	**0.7243	10	**0.7852	16	**0.5849
5	**0.8049	11	**0.7690	17	**0.7386
6	**0.7869	12	**0.8169	18	**0.5760

^{**} Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level; *correlation is significant at the 0.05 level.

Pearson correlation coefficients was used to measure the relationship between the dimensions and the overall score of the instrument (see table 3)

Table 3 Correlation coefficients of the dimensions and the overall score of the instrument

Field	Correlation Coefficient
Setting directions	**0.9331
Developing people	**0.9015
Developing the school	**0.8809

^{**} Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level; *correlation is significant at the 0.05 level.

It is evident from tables 1, 2 and 3 that the Pearson Correlation coefficients between the scores of the items and the dimensions, as well as between the items and dimensions for the overall score of the proposed framework are all statistically significant values at the level of significance 0.01 and 0.05, which expresses good internal consistency of the proposed framework.

Table 4 Cronbach 'Alpha Stability Coefficients for the proposed framework domains

domains	Number of Items	Cronbach 'Alpha Stability Coefficient
Setting directions	6	0.82
Developing people	6	0.84
Developing the school	6	0.83
Total Stability of the Tool	18	0.92

It is evident from Table 4 that the three fields of the study instrument have high stability values, according to the values of Cronbach's Alpha (α).

Results

To facilitate the interpretation of the results of the study, the responses of the study sample individuals were classified according to the degree of appreciation of school leaders' role importance in promoting digital citizenship to students. They were classified into three levels of equal ranges through the following equation: Class length = (largest value - lowest value) $\div 3 = (5-1)\div 3 = 1.33$. Accordingly, the following criterion was adopted to judge the degree of appreciation of school leaders' role importance in promoting digital citizenship among students:

Table 6 The classification used in judging the degree of appreciation of the study sample of the importance of school leaders' role in promoting digital citizenship among students

Weighted average	Degree of Importance		
	Appreciation		
> = 1.00 and < =	Low		
2.33			
> 2.33 and< = 3.66	Medium		
>3.66 and < = 5	High		

The first question: What is the degree of appreciation of specialists in educational leadership in Saudi universities for the importance of the role of school leaders in promoting digital citizenship among students of general education schools?

Table 7 shows the degree of appreciation of the importance of the role of school leaders in promoting digital citizenship among school students according to the responses of the study sample:

Table 7 Arithmetic averages and their order in descending order according to the study sample answers about the degree of importance of open framework areas for the role of school leaders in promoting digital citizenship

Field	Average*	Standard Deviation	Order	Degree of Importance
Setting directions	4.69	0.36	1	High
Developing people	4.57	0.41	2	High
Developing the school	4.52	0.46	3	High
Total score of the proposed framework	4.59	0.37		High

^{*}Average out of 5

It is evident from Table 7 that the participants recognize the importance of the three areas (trend setting, personnel development, and school development) to a high degree. The authors note that the range between the highest arithmetic average (4.69) and the two-average arithmetic (4.52) amounted to (0.17), which is a very low range, which explains why the proposed framework obtained a high degree of appreciation in all three areas, according to the estimate of a sample studying. The following is a display of the results for each of these fields, according to their order:

The first field - Setting the direction:

Table 8 The arithmetic averages and arranged in a descending order according to the answers of the sample of experts on the degree of importance of the paragraphs in the field of setting the direction

	Questions	Average	Standard Deviation	Order	Degree of importance
1	Existence of a plan to promote digital citizenship	4.92	0.27	1	High
2	Building a work team to promote digital citizenship	4.81	0.40	2	High
5	Measuring the impact of digital citizenship promotion processes on the actual practices of male and female students	4.65	0.56	3	High
4	Continuous evaluation of the moment of digital citizenship promotion	4.62	0.50	4	High
3	Existence of collective agreement on the importance of integrating the promotion of digital citizenship into educational practices	4.58	0.58	5	High
6	Effective communication with parents and the local community, to actively participate in the plan to strengthen citizenship in it	4.54	0.58	6	High
	Overall Domain Average	4.69	0.36		High

^{*}Average out of 5

It is evident from Table 8 that the participants agree on the importance of **Setting the direction**as one of the areas of the proposed framework to improve the role of schools' benefit in promoting digital citizenship among students at public education schools with a high degree of appreciation. The existence of a clear plan to promote digital citizenship comes first, according to their estimation, with an average of 4.92, and it seems that they approve the importance of planning in the work of leaders. Some studies have described the absence of clear plans in some schools, where that they remain immersed in an ocean of ideas, where randomness fills the place and dominates the work of employees, which ultimately causes waste of valuable time (Larson, Miller, & Ribble, 2009, p.13).

The second field- Individual Development:

Table 9 Arithmetic averages and arranged in a descending order according to the answers of the study sample on the degree of importance of the statements in the field of individual development

	Statement	Average	Standard Deviation	Order	Degree of Importance
1	Inclusion of digital citizenship enhancement skills within the professional development programs for teachers.	4.65	0.49	1	High
3	Raising the awareness of students about the importance of assessing information on the Internet by enhancing their critical thinking skills.	4.65	0.49	1	High
4	Provide encouragement and motivation for positive students' practices related to digital citizenship.	4.62	0.50	3	High
5	Provide support for teachers' practices and positive initiatives related to digital citizenship.	4.58	0.50	4	High
6	School leaders have been keen to model digital citizenship in their practices.	4.58	0.58	4	High
2	Incorporate elements of digital citizenship into curriculums.	4.35	0.69	6	High
Overall Domain Average		4.57	0.41		High

*Average out of 5

It is evident from Table 9 that the study sample sees the importance of developing individuals with a high degree of appreciation. The equal value of the arithmetic means in the two statements (1,2) in the first order of the paragraphs reflects their importance from the viewpoint of the study sample; indicating the necessity that the promotion of digital citizenship among students should stem from deep knowledge and awareness of teachers. This is consistent with what Riel and Miller (Ribble & Miller,2013) pointed out in their study of the importance of integrating digital citizenship training as part of school improvement.

Additionally, the agreement in statements 6, 5 and 4 also shows the importance of motivation and encouragement in supporting and sustaining behavior, and that leaders' modeling of digital citizenship behavior may be a form of motivation and encouragement, which the school leader should embody. Ribble (2015) shows that students need many good technological role models to gain a comprehensive understanding of these complex

concepts. Also, he emphasized their need to see their teachers follow the digital citizenship behaviors taught to them, so that they can emulate them. He called for adults to be a positive role model for good digital citizenship.

The third field-School Development:

Table 10 The arithmetic averages arranged in a descending order according to the answers of the study sample about the degree of importance of the items in the field of school development

	Statement	Average	Standard Deviation	Order	Degree of Importance
3	Providing technical support by usingtechnology/programs/applications.	4.73	0.45	1	High
1	Facilitating the use of information and communication technology devices to carry out activities promoting digital citizenship with students.	4.58	0.58	2	High
4	Inculcating digital citizenship practices in all school activities (such as referring to references in morning posts, etc.).	4.50	0.58	3	High
2	Providing information and communication technology devices for students who do not have digital access, to be used in fulfilling the required tasks.	4.50	0.71	3	High
5	Effective recruitment of student committees and peer groups in disseminating positive practices and good experiences.	4.46	0.65	5	High
6	Existence of initiatives to educate students' families that support digital citizenship.	4.35	0.75	6	High
	Overall Domain Average	4.52	0.46		High

^{*}Average out of 5

It is evident from Table 10 that the participants recognize the importance of school development with a high degree of appreciation, and this emphasizes the role of school leaders in providing an attractive and supportive environment. This makes it easier for employees to play their roles in harmony with the drawn plans. Some scholars believe that school leaders have a responsibility to create a culture and learning environment that improves and supports student learning opportunities for appropriate technology uses for all (Schrum & levin, 2013, p.397).

The third question: What is the proposed framework for improving the role of school leaders in promoting digital citizenship among public school students in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia?

To answer this question, several studies that dealt with promoting digital citizenship and school leadership roles were examined. Then, analysis and integration of their results was conducted to develop a proposed model based on the elements presented by Ribble, in light of the framework of Leithwood and Riehl (2003), which includes three areas of leadership practices at the school level, namely: setting directions, developing people, and developing the organization, as they represent areas of leadership success in school and in nearly all settings.

The suitability of the proposed framework for improving the role of school leaders in the field of promoting digital citizenship among public education students in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia was also confirmed through a survey of the opinion of a sample of specialists in educational leadership in Saudi universities. The results of the field study showed the importance of all roles that should be practiced by school leaders to promote digital citizenship among students. In light of the theoretical literature and the results of the field study, the study proposed a framework aimed at improving the role of school leaders in promoting digital citizenship among public school students. The framework consists of three areas, as follows:

The first field: Determining the school's direction towards promoting digital citizenship among students.

This area includes a set of roles that school leaders should play, the most important of which are:

- 1. Having a clear plan to promote digital citizenship.
- 2. Building a team to promote digital citizenship.
- 3. Measuring the impact of digital enhancement measures on effective practices of students.
- 4. Continuous evaluation of digital citizenship promotion plan.
- 5. The presence of unanimous agreement on the importance of integrating the promotion of digital citizenship in educational practices.
- 6. Effective communication with parents and the local community, to participate actively in the plan to promote digital citizenship.

The second field: The development of school personnel in a way that contributes to enhancing students' digital citizenship

This area includes a set of roles that school leaders should play, the most important of which are:

1. Inclusion of digital citizenship enhancement skills within the professional development programs for teachers.

- 2. Raising the students' awareness about the importance of assessing information on the internet by enhancing their critical thinking skills.
- 3. Providing encouragement and motivation for positive students' practices related to digital citizenship.
- 4. Providing support for teachers' positive practices and initiatives related to digital citizenship.
- 5. Determination of school leaders to model digital citizenship in their practices.
- 6. Incorporating elements of digital citizenship into curriculums.

The third field: Developing the school in a way that contributes to promoting digital citizenship among students.

This field includes a set of roles that school leaders should play, the most important of which are:

- 1. Providing technical support for using technology/programs/applications.
- 2. Facilitating the use of information and communication technology devices to implement activities that enhance digital citizenship with students.
- 3. Inculcating digital citizenship practices in all school activities (such as referring to references in morning posts, etc.).
- 4. Providing information and communication technology devices for students who do not have digital access, to be used in fulfilling the required tasks.
- 5. Effective recruitment of student committees and peer groups in disseminating positive practices and good experiences.
- 6. Develop initiatives to educate students' families that support digital citizenship.

Figure 1 is Illustration of the proposed framework for improving school leaders' role in promoting digital citizenship among students at public education schools in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

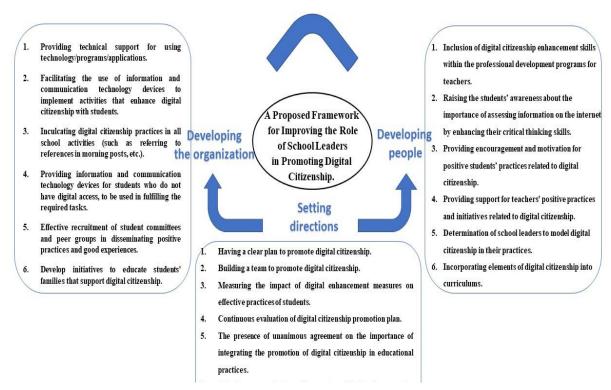


Figure 1: the proposed framework for improving school leaders' role in promoting digitalcitizenship among students at public education schools in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

Recommendations

Based on the results, the authors propose the following recommendation:

- 1. Adopt the proposed model by the Ministry of Education to improve the role of school leaders in the field of promoting digital citizenship, as it has become one of the urgent issues for the security and protection of school students.
- 2. Develop school leaders 'awareness of the necessity of working to promote digital citizenship among students, and that this requires them to develop their knowledge and skills in a way that guarantees them a deeper understanding of digital citizenship issues.
- 3. Work on finding clear evidence and policies to promote digital citizenship among students of public education schools, thus contributing to the development of new principles that ensure the effective employment and safe and appropriate use of technology.
- 4. Raise the efficiency of the educational environment in schools by meeting their technological needs and providing sustainable technical support.
- 5. Provide opportunities for continuous professional growth that enables users to acquire technological skills and pushes them to learn new skills in correct ways.

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