A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF SCHOOL DIRECTORS' DIGITAL CITIZENSHIP IN TURKMENISTAN AND TRNC (TURKISH REPUBLIC OF NORTH CYPRUS)

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Abstract

This research aimed to determine the level of digital citizenship of the school directors in Turkmenistan, a developing country, and compare the level of digital citizenship of the school directors of the Ministry of National Education in TRNC. A causative comparison, one of quantitative designs, was conducted in this research. The participants were secondary school directors of the Ministry of National Education, TRNC in the 2017-2018 academic year. Convenience sampling method was used in this study. Due to time constraints and because it was easier, only 45 high school directors in Lefkosa, TRNC were involved. In Turkmenistan, 38 high school directors in the city of Dasoguz could be reached. The total number of the participants was 83. The "digital citizenship scale" and personal information form were used in this research. When the rate of Digital Citizenship, based on countries, is examined, the level of digital citizenship of the Turkish (TRNC) secondary education school directors is observed to be higher than of the Turkmeni secondary education school directors.

1. Introduction

Today, digital technology has become an essential part of our life in almost every field such as; technology, social, economical, political, and educational. The use of technology plays an important role in our life. At the same time, it is a causative factor in changing people's life-styles. From the past up today, technology is an effective tool in every field. Undoubtedly, education is one of the fields affected by technology intensively.

While facilitating people's daily lives, technology plays a great role in education and educational activities making the processes fast, practical, and reliable. Not only students, but teachers, even educational managers also should be involved in the rapidly changing educational systems (Aydin, 2015). The means in which informatics and technology are used, have become widespread in due course and thus every individual can easily communicate. As a result of all these developments, the "Digital Citizenship" concept has emerged.

The impact of the internet on individuals and communities has carried the concept of "digital citizenship" to a digital frame and as a result, the "digital citizenship" concept has emerged (Aydin, 2015). People who have adapted themselves to the digital world, can share their ideas and feelings freely, and can meet their daily needs (banking, shopping etc) on the internet. It can be observed that from State to private sectors all managers have integrated in the digital

world, because managerial issues can be dealt with faster through the internet. These facilities have made communities dependent on the internet and they have been considered as "digital citizens" (Mossberger, 2008).

Literature presents several studies done in the concept of "Good Digital Citizenship". Kılınç and Dere (2013) argue that the main aim of all political systems is to raise the new generation as" good citizens". Safran (2008) adds that educational systems have the most crucial responsibilities for the achievement of this aim. In such a process, educational managers should take the lead as they are in the top positions. "Digital Citizens" are the ones who use technology and technological tools properly, who are respective to individual rights and rules as well as ethical rules and most important of all the ones who are aware of the responsibilities for and safely use of these tools (Mossberger, Tolbert & McNeal, 2007).

In this information age, educationalists, who are considered as the most important actors in education systems, should inevitably adapt themselves to technological changes. "The International Society for Technology in Education" (ISTE) has set some educational standards, which draw attention to the importance of being digital literates, interacting technology in teaching, guiding students to the use of technology, helping them develop skills in reaching information and using it, and sharing professional experiences with colleagues in using the internet collaboratively (ISTE, 2000). These standards are also the requirements for digital citizenship.

Particularly school directors and all the educationalists should effectively use the digital platform and participate in education to do with digital citizenship. This will naturally reflect to their attitudes and behaviors in digital environments. In the broader sense, the basic aim of educational systems is to raise qualified generations and help students to become good literates of technology. At this point, teachers and school directors have the biggest responsibilities. Every school director whose staff and students use the digital platform effectively is a good digital citizen. They assume digital citizenship an alternative approach so as to integrate technology in the lives of new generations (Alberta, 2012).

With this in mind, this research aimed to raise the level of digital citizenship of the school directors in Turkmenistan, a developing country, and compare the level of digital citizenship of the school directors of the Ministry of National Education in TRNC. Answers to the sub-aims were sought through the following questions;

1. What are the levels of digital citizenship of the school directors in Turkmenistan and TRNC?

   a) At what level, in terms of sub-dimensions, is the distribution of digital citizenship behaviors of school directors in Turkmenistan and TRNC?

2. Is there a significant difference between the school directors in Turkmenistan and TRNC in terms of the level of their digital citizenship?

   a) Is there a difference between the school directors in Turkmenistan and TRNC in terms of the sub-dimensions of digital citizenship?

2. Methodology

This research aimed at comparing school directors' digital citizenship behaviors in schools in Turkmenistan and in TRNC. A causative comparison, one of quantitative designs, was

conducted in this research. Causative comparison methods examine the cause-effect results among variable differences (Buyukozturk, 2007).

The participants were secondary school directors of the Ministry of National Education, TRNC in the 2017-2018 academic year. Due to time constraints and because it was easier, only 45 high school directors in Lefkosa, TRNC were involved. In Turkmenistan, 38 high school directors in the city of Dasoguz could be reached. The total number of the participants was 83. A convenience sampling method, one of random sampling methods, was used in this research. Due to time, money, and workforce constraints, this method is preferred because it is easier to reach the samplings and the procedure is applicable (Buyukozturk, Çakmak, Aygun, Karadeniz & Demirel, 2017).

A Digital Citizenship Scale and a Personal Information Form were used to collect data. The Scale, developed by Akcil (2015), consists of 10 sub-dimensions, with 39 items. The reliability coefficiency (Cronbach's Alpha) calculated by the researcher, was found as 0.87. The sub-dimensions of the Scale, developed by Akcil (2015) were specified as digital literacy, digital rights and responsibilities, digital commmication, digital security, digital trade, digital access, digital ethics, digital health, the use of digital tools and digital storage. The scale is a 5-likert type and the sequencing of resposes are as, "*I always agree*" (5), "*I mostly agree*" (4), "*I partly agree*" (3), "*I don't agree*" (2), and "*I disagree*" (1). The reliability coefficiency of this study was calculated as 0.94.

3. Findings and Discussions

3.1. The Demographic Distribution of the Participants is as in Table 1

Table 1. Demographic Information about the Participants

		Turkmenistan		TRNC	
		f	%	f	%
	26-36	16	42.1	0	0
	32-37	8	21,1	2	4,4
	37-43	2	5,3	2	4,4
Age	44-49	6	15,8	13	28,9
	50 and over	6	15,8	28	62,2
	Total	38	100,0	45	100,0
	Director	15	39,5	8	17,8
Task type	Assistant director	23	60,5	37	82,2
	Total	38	100,0	45	100,0
	0-7 Year	10	26,3	3	6,7
	8-15 Year	21	55,3	19	42,2
PC usage year	16 and over	7	18,4	23	51,1
	Total	38	100,0	45	100,0
	Less than 1 hour	2	5,3	7	15,6
	1-3hour	24	63,2	20	44,4

PC usage duration	4-6 hour	8	21,1	13	28,9
	7-9 hour	4	10,5	5	11,1
	Total	38	100,0	45	100,0
	0-7Year	21	55,3	7	15,6
	8-15 Year	15	39,5	25	55,6
Internet usage year	16 and over	2	5,3	13	28,9
	Total	38	100,0	45	100,0
	Less than 1 hour	11	28,9	11	24,4
Internet usage duration	1-3hour	19	50,0	22	48,9
	4-6 hour	8	21,1	7	15,6
	7-9 hour	0	0	5	11,1
	Total	38	100,0	45	100,0
	Smart Phone	3	7,9	6	13,3
	Laptop	16	42,1	8	17,8
Device	Mobile & Laptop	12	31,6	15	33,3
	Mobile & Taplet	7	18,4	0	0
	All of them	0	0	16	35,6
	Total	38	100,0	144	100,0
Smart device usage duration	Less than 1 hour	11	28,9	20	44,4
	1-3hour	25	65,8	16	35,6
	4-6 hour	2	5,3	6	13,3
	7-9 hour	0	0	3	6,7
	Total	38	100,0	45	100,0

3.2. Digital Citizenship Levels of School Directors in Turkmenistan and TRNC

Table 2. Digital Citizenship Average Scores of Managers in Some Countries

	N	$\overline{X}$	SS	Min Point	Max Point
Turkmenistan	38	128.02	16.99	89.00	176.00
TRNC	45	142.35	28.48	67.00	192.00

When the rate of digital citizenship is examined on country bases, school directors in TRNC have a higher level ($\overline{X}$=142.35) than of school directors in Turkmeni. Kemp (2016) studied the number of internet users in Turkic Republics and found out that the lowest rate of users (%12) were in Turkmenistan in terms of population.

3.3. An Examination of Sub-Dimension Levels of Digital Citizenship of School Directors in Turkmenistan and TRNC

Table 3. The Distribution of Average Scores in Digital Citizenship Sub-Dimensions by School Directors in Terms of Countries

	Digital citizenship sub-dimensions	N	$\overline{X}$	SS	Min Point	Max Point
	Literacy	38	17,18	3,178	12,00	25,00
	Rights and responsibilities	38	28,60	6,096	16,00	40,00
	Contact	38	9,84	2,212	4,00	15,00
	Security	38	8,63	2,603	3,00	15,00
	Trade	38	7,73	3,151	,00	14,00
Turkmenistan	Access	38	10,92	2,173	6,00	15,00
	Ethic	38	14,42	2,872	4,00	20,00
	Health	38	10,71	1,575	7,00	15,00
	Portable device use	38	15,78	2,682	11,00	20,00
	Use of storage areas	38	11,28	5,119	,00	20,00
	Literacy	45	18,80	4,418	9,00	25,00
	Rights and responsibilities	45	31,20	7,168	13,00	40,00
	Contact	45	11,73	3,143	4,00	15,00
	Security	45	11,35	3,038	3,00	15,00
TRNC	Trade	45	12,37	4,080	4,00	20,00
	Access	45	11,08	2,626	6,00	15,00
	Ethic	45	15,64	3,234	5,00	20,00
	Health	45	10,84	2,836	3,00	15,00
	Portable device use	45	16,02	3,427	7,00	20,00
	Use of storage areas	45	12,75	4,508	,00	20,00

As it can be observed in Table 3, the examination of the average scores in digital trade sub-dimensions, it can be noted that Turkmen school directors have the lowest average scores ($\overline{X}$=7.73), whereas the lowest average scores in the sub-dimensions of digital security by school directors in TRNC is ($\overline{X}$=11.35). As for the digital rights and responsibilities sub-dimension average scores, it can be observed that both the Turkmen ($\overline{X}$=28.60) and Turkish (TRNC) ($\overline{X}$=31.20) school directors have the highest level. In a study with Social Sciences Teachers in Digital Citizenship, Aslan (2016) found out that almost all the participants were very well aware of digital rights and responsibilities. However, at times, they seemed to be ignoring moral rights unintentionally. In previous studies, it was found out that internet was strictly censured in Asian countries disunited from the SSSR. The most strict limitations are observed in Turkmenistan and Ozbekistan, the north bordering countries of Iran. Kose and Ozen (2011) specified that access to Facebook, Twitter, and Youtube is strictly prohibited in Turkmenistan.

3.4. A Comparative Examination of the Sub-Dimensions of Digital Citizenship Levels of School Directors in Turkmenistan and TRNC

Table 4. A Comparative T-Test Analysis of Digital Literacy Levels

	Countries	N	$\bar{X}$	SS	t	df	p	Explanation
	Turkmenistan	38	17.18	3.17				
Digital literacy					5.372	81	.057	p>.05
	TRNC	45	18.80	4.41				

As it can be observed in Table 4, a significant difference was not observed between the digital literacy levels of the school directors in Turkmenistan and TRNC (p=.057, p>.05). Although not much, the digital literacy level ($\bar{X}$= 18.80) of the school directors in TRNC is higher compared to Turkmeni school directors. When the correlation in the use of ICT in school administration processes, in terms of Digital Citizenship, is overviewed, a positive and meaningful relationship is noted in all dimensions (Canturk, 2016). Therefore, more practice in the use of ICT in administrative issues in any dimension will add to its use in other issues.

Table 5. A Comparative T-Test Analysis of the Levels of Digital Rights and Responsibilities

	Countries	N	$\bar{X}$	SS	t	df	p	Explanation
	Turkmenistan	38	28.60	6.09				
Digital rights and responsibilities					1.615	81	.078	p>.05
	TRNC	45	31.20	7.16				

Table 5 reveals that, a significant meaningful difference is not noted between the levels of digital rights and responsibilities of school directors in Turkmenistan and TRNC (p=.078, p>.05). Their average shows that school directors in TRNC ($\bar{X}$=31.20) are more committed to their digital rights and responsibilities compared to Turkmeni school directors. Akcil (2015) found out that school directors in TRNC exhibited digital citizenship behaviors at a rate of %73.25.

Table 6. A Comparative T-Test Analysis of the Levels of Digital Communication

	Countries	N	$\bar{X}$	SS	t	df	p	Explanation
	Turkmenistan	38	9.84	2.21				
Digital communication					6.740	81	.002	p<.05
	TRNC	45	11.73	3.14				

As it can be observed in Table 6, there is a significant difference in digital communication levels of Turkmenistan and Turkish (TRNC) school directors (p=.002, p>.05). The difference points at a higher level in the average score in the sub-dimensions of digital communication of Turkish (TRNC) school directors ($\bar{X}$=11.73) compared to Turkmenistan school directors. This finding reveals that Turkmenistan school directors have a low-level of technology use in communication. In their study, Kelly et al. (2015), specified big rates of differences in the use of the social media among Turkic Republics. The number of social media users in these

Republics, particularly in Turkmenistan, is at a very low level. This can be related to the limitation by the governments in such countries.

Table 7. A Comparative T-Test Analysis of the Levels of Digital Security

	Countries	N	$\bar{X}$	SS	t	df	p	Explanation
	Turkmenistan	38	6.63	2.60				
Digital security					1.889	81	.000	p<.05
	TRNC	45	11.35	3.03				

Table 7 reveals a significant difference in the levels of digital security between Tukmeni and Turkish (TRNC) school directors (p=.000, p<.05). This result shows that the average scores in the sub-dimensions of digital security by the Turkish (TRN) school directors are higher compared to Turkmeni school directors. This can be assumed as a failure in practicising digital security by the Turkmeni directors. On the other hand, as it is revealed in Table 2, the lowest average score in digital security in terms of digital citizenship, by the Turkish (TRNC) school directors is ($\bar{X}$=11.35). Akcil (2015), in a study, pointed out that school directors did not practise digital security behaviors as expected, in terms of digital citizenship.

Table 8. A Comparative T-Test Analysis of the Levels of Digital Trade

	Countries	N	$\bar{X}$	SS	t	df	p	Explanation
	Turkmenistan	38	7.73	3.15				
Digital trade					4.795	81	.000	p<.05
	TRNC	45	12.37	4.08				

Table 8 does not reflect a significant difference in the digital trade levels of Turkmeni and Turkish school directors (p=.000, p<.05). When the difference is overviewed, the average score of Turkish school directors in the sub-dimensions of digital trade are noted as ($\bar{X}$=12.37), which is higher than the score by Turkmeni school directors. This result indicates that the Turkmeni directors' inclination in using digital trade is at a low level compared to Turkish school directors. According to Kose and Ozen (2011), some States, Official institutions, private sectors or educational institutions have either limited or banned access to internet for several reasons. Prohibitions, particularly by States are at serious dimensions, which means banning access to several websites under the control of the States.

Table 9. A Comparative T-Test Analysis of the Levels of Digital Access

	Countries	N	$\bar{X}$	SS	t	df	p	Explanation
	Turkmenistan	38	10.92	2.17				
Digital Access					1.544	81	.751	p>.05
	TRNC	45	11.08	2.62				

In Table 9 a significant difference is not observed in terms of access to digital sites by the Turkmeni and Turkish school directors (p=.751, p>.05). The score ($\bar{X}$=11.08) indicates that the average Turkish school directors' score in the sub-dimensions of digital access is higher than school directors in the other country. Bakir (2016) in a study in Digital Citizenship, in classroom observations, teachers can have access to technological environments through the

criterion specified by ISTE standards, are able to overcome problems faced, can make use of the necessary tools to have access to digital environments and exhibit their skills.

Table 10. A Comparative T-Test Analysis of the Levels of Digital Ethics

	Countries	N	$\bar{X}$	SS	t	df	p	Explanation
	Turkmenistan	38	14.42	2.87				
Digital ethics					1.170	81	.072	p>.05
	TRNC	45	15.64	3.23				

A significant difference in ethical levels in digital environments among Turkmenistan and Turkish school directors is not observed (p=.072, p>.05). Bakir (2016) investigated, in a study titled "Digital Citizenship", candidate teachers' behaviors in sub-dimensions of digital ethics and observed no any big differences in the paricipants' scores.

Table 11. A Comparative T-Test Analysis of the Levels of Digital Health

	Countries	N	$\bar{X}$	SS	t	df	p	Explanation
	Turkmenistan	38	10.71	1.57				
Digital health					8.853	81	.787	p>.05
	TRNC	45	10.84	2.83				

Table 11 does not show a significant difference in the levels of health in digital environments between Turkmeni and Turhish school directors (p=.787, p>.05).

Table 12. A comparative analysis of the levels of using mobile-digital equipment

	Countries	N	$\bar{X}$	SS	t	df	p	Explanation
	Turkmenistan	38	15.78	2.68				
Using mobile-digital equipment					2.242	81	.730	p>.05
	TRNC	45	16.02	3.42				

As it can be observed in Table 12, there is not a meaningful difference in using mobile-digital equipment between Turkmeni and Turkish school directors (p=.730, p.05). Kemp (2016) in a study investigating the number of mobile-phone users in the Turkic Republics found out that the big majority of the people used smart-phones. In the same study, it was observed that the number of mobile phone is higher than the total population; %161 in Kazakistan, %144 in Kırgizistan, and %128 in Turkmenistan. This finding indicates that mobile tools, particularly mobile phones are used efectively among the Turkish people in the world.

Table 13. A Comparative T-Test Analysis of the Levels of Using Digital Storing Areas

	Countries	N	$\overline{X}$	SS	t	df	p	Explanation
	Turkmenistan	38	11.28	5.11				
Using digital storing areas					.320	81	.174	p>.05
	TRNC	45	12.75	4.50				

As in Table 13, a significant difference was not observed in the levels of using storing areas between Turkmeni and Turkish school directors (p=.174, p>.05). In a study by Akcil (2015) it was determined that, according to digital storing sub-dimensions, one of digital citizenship sub-dimensions, there was not a meaningful difference between the supervisors and the directors of the Ministry of National Education, TRNC. However, when the average scores are overviewed, it was noted that the digital storing areas were used to a great extend.

4. Conclusion

Conclusion: The aim of this research was to compare the levels of school directors' Digital Citizenship in the light of the views by Turkmeni and Turkish school directors. The results obtained are as follows;

1. When the rate of Digital Citizenship, based on countries, is examined, the level of digital citizenship of the Turkish (TRNC) secondary education school directors is obserevd to be higher than of the Turkmeni secondary education school directors.
2. The sub-dimensions of Digital Citizenship indicate that the Turkmeni school directors have the lowest level in "digital trade" and the Turkish school directors have the lowest level in "digital security". Both the Turkmeni and Turkish school directors have the highest level in "digital rights and responsibilities".
3. As for the "Digital Citizenship" levels, the Turkish school directors have a higher level ($\overline{X}$=143.95) than the Turkmeni directors ($\overline{X}$=128.02).
4. A menaingful difference was not observed in "digital literacy" levels of both groups of directors.
5. A meaningful difference in "digital rights and responsibilities" was not noted between the two groups of directors.
6. The Turkish school directors had a higher level in the sub-dimensions of "digital communication" compared to Turkmeni school directors. It was also observed that the Turkmeni school directors had a lower level in communicating through digital technologies.
7. The Turkish school directors' level in the sub-dimensions of "digital security" was noted as higher compared to the Turkmeni school directors.
8. The Turkish school directors had a higher level in "digital trade" compared to the Turkmeni school directors.
9. The Turkmeni school directors had a lower level in the sub-dimension of access to digital environments compared to the level of the Tukish school directors.
10. A meaningful difference in ethical levels in digital environments was not observed between the two groups of directors.
11. A meaningful difference was not observed in the levels of "health in digital environments" between the two groups of directors.

12. A meaningful difference was not noted in using "mobile digital tools" between the two groups of directors.

13. A meaningful difference was not observed in the levels of using "digital storage areas" between the two groups of directors

5. Recommendations

Seminars in in-service training sessions can be organized to improve Turkmeni school directors' perception of Digital Citizenship and its benefits in education.

Workshops, seminars, and presentations can be organized to improve outcome in school environments, inform teachers and students in technology, guide them in how to behave in digital environments, and make them aware of the importance of "Digital Citizenship".

The school directors with a low level of "Digital Citizenship" can be provided with opportunities to develop their behavioral levels.

Turkmeni secondary education school directors make less use of the internet, which has a direct impact on" Digital Citizenship", compared to secondary education school directors in TRNC. Therefore, new laws can be made to end limitations in the use of the internet in Turkmenistan.

It is of utmost importance that, in both Turkmenistan and TRNC, school directors in secondary education should develop themselves in the sub-dimensions of "Digital Citizenship" to be more effective in this digital era.

The sub-dimensions of "Digital Citizenship" showed that the Turkmeni school directors had the lowest level in the sub-dimensions of "digital trade" and the Turkish school directors had the lowest level in the sub-dimensions of "digital security". In this respect, the school directors of both countries should specify their deficiencies in the related sub-dimensions and develop themselves.

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