Civics education in Malaysia: a clash between ethics, religion and cultural norms

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Abstract

Purpose
To showcase the importance of digital citizenship in the current era. This article compares the nine features of digital citizen provided by Ribble and Bailey (2007) with a case study conducted in a multicultural setting and identifies the tensions between ethics, religion and cultural norms in that environment.

Design/methodology/approach
A case study approach has been used in this research. Why case study? Because it is unique and provides in-depth, unique and invaluable findings. Case studies researchers have contributed to the development of case study research from diverse disciplines. Historical examples of case studies go back as far as the nineteenth century with the biography of Charles Darwin (Stewart, 2014). The dominance of positivism in science in the late 1940 and 1950s in social science sidelined qualitative approaches such as case studies. Although case study research was often criticized for its inability to support generalizations, and thus, provided limited validity and value as a research design (Merriam, 2009; Stewart, 2014), case study research provides intensive analysis of an issue. A Case study is intrinsic, instrumental and collective (Stake, 1995, 2006). Case study research encourages the detailed enquiry of a unit of analysis within its context.

Findings
Findings show that current society needs to be educated on the nine aspects of digital citizenship. In the current era, changes are so rapid that every now and then, there must be collaboration and cooperation between different agencies to ensure that the tension between religiosity, cultural norms and ethics would be able to find some common ground. With more knowledge and wisdom on human rights, sustainability education and project-based learning in Civics Education, teachers, students, parents and
community should often meet to decide on controversial issues and find ways to ensure that each one in society has the knowledge, skills and values for digital citizenship to grow and flourish.

Originality/value
The article is original in nature and has much social impact.

Keywords
- COVID-19
- Digital citizenship
- Think global
- Act local
- Ethics
- Religion
- Cultural norms

Citation
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