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Cultivating Global Citizenship among Secondary School Students: Pre-Service Teachers' Beliefs

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Abstract: *Global citizenship entails individuals having an immaculate sense of duty towards the benefit of all societies and just not to their own. This qualitative study explored the beliefs of 16 pre-service teachers about global citizenship, its impact on secondary school students, the framework of action they intend to use in cultivating global citizenship, and the strategic involvement of stakeholders in cultivating global citizenship among secondary school students. The findings revealed that pre-service teachers, though they had a limited understanding of the concept, believed that global citizenship education might foster critical thinking, decision making, and problem-solving skills among the students, thus making it crucial for teachers, policymakers, and curriculum developers to harness curriculum and skills for publicising the concept. We argue that pre-service teachers should be provided in-depth awareness about global citizenship and understanding of the strategies to cultivate global citizenship so that they can effectively encourage this among secondary school students.*

Key Words: Citizenship education; Global Citizenship; Pre-service teachers; Phenomenological case study

Introduction

Bygone is the neolithic era of geographically confined isolated societies desist from progress owing to physical and communication barriers. The 21st-century world is becoming more accessible every day. Interconnectedness whereof embraces togetherness, which brings pertinence to the fourth-century term 'cosmopolitan-citizen of the

world' as coined by Greeks or a more contemporary 'global citizenship', like never before. With this increasing interconnectedness, human rights violations, inequality, injustice, racism, and poverty still haunt the civilised world to an enormous extent. To curb the prevailing challenges and mitigate their aftermaths for coming generations, UNESCO has introduced Global Citizenship Education (GCE) by empowering learners of all ages to become the flag

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bearers of peaceful, tolerant, inclusive, and secure societies across the globe. It brings forth an understanding that all these issues are meant to be dealt with globally and not locally by instilling values, attitudes, and behaviour that promotes responsible global citizenship through cultivating "...creativity, innovation, and commitment to human rights, peace, and sustainable development" (UNO, n.d). Global citizenship education thereby intends to provide an understanding and skills to resolve the challenges of the 21st century, including climate change, conflict, poverty, and equity issues. Moreover, these outcomes are highly likely to prepare students to succeed in 21st-century workplaces. However, the struggle to learn how to live together is phenomenally challenging for societies (Pigozzi, 2006), probably because not adequate time is given to reflection and interpretation of abundant information available to the masses in this fast-changing and information-laden world. Thus, underscoring the need for GCE.

Developed countries across the globe have already initiated GCE in schools (Lim, 2008). GCE provides students with an opportunity to develop an understanding of the challenges the world is facing beyond geographic boundaries while restraining within their classroom premises (OXFAM, 2006). Since children are said to have a stronger bond with their surroundings and consider themselves significantly related to others within a range of locations, introducing them to GCE may bring eminent results while appreciating the interconnectedness (Woolley, Hyde, & Adams, 2008). Nonetheless, teachers' incompetency in initiating GCE in schools is only augmenting the prevailing challenges (Braskamp, 2010). Therefore, to begin with, this clamant task, educating student-teachers can be an absolute game changer. Thus, this anticipated transformation is likely to bring up a generation that will have future-oriented, global mindsets (Dimpfl & Smith, 2019).

The need to fill the gap of extremely inadequate literature on global citizenship education in Pakistan calls for exploring the beliefs of pre-service teachers in cultivating global citizenship among secondary school students in

Pakistan. This research thence will void the gap by adding to the existing findings. The study's main contribution has to do with pre-school teachers and the cultivation of GCE. Nevertheless, the structured comparison of commonalities and differences found during the examination of different research studies offers new insights into the cultivation of global citizenship. Therefore, it is hoped that its practical implication will not only help policymakers in making informed decisions but will enhance teachers' understanding and methods to cultivate global citizenship among the students.

Literature Review

Global citizenship finds its roots back in the fourth century. However, the strong dichotomy between what we believe and what we practice has created a divide that we can truly call the 'connectivity paradox'—liberal about digital connectivity yet orthodox about geographical boundaries. There goes an Amharic adage that says, 'He who eats alone, dies alone.' This ancient proverb is based on a story of a man who visited hell. There in hell, he finds a table full of souls suffering in pain, people starving to agony while they sit around the table filled with all sorts of scrumptious food. The reason for which they suffer is the spoons that are too long to feed themselves. The same man then happens to visit the heavens where the people are provided with the same conditions as hell, but they are contented and ecstatic contrary to their fellowmen in hell. No one is hungry, and everyone is rejoicing. Besides, the same long spoons were used to feed each other.

Life in the 21st century is not much different from this old story. The human capacity to connect has become immeasurable, and digital communion is becoming commonplace. Our handheld digital tools all too often become long-handled spoons that are not much of use to anyone (Zheng & Walsham, 2021). The problem is not with the devices but with their usage. This is where global citizenship education draws a line between using this connectivity for evolving belongingness to the shared humanity extended to a wider community that discourages the boundaries and simply feeling responsible to a particular geographically bound nation (Noddings, 2005). GCE, therefore, facilitates

international cooperation by spreading awareness of global issues and deals with the development of knowledge and cognitive skills to shape values, soft skills, and attitudes among learners phenomenal to actively address these issues ([Fielden, 2006](#); [Ibrahim, 2005](#)). It is, therefore, imperative to conclude that GCE is not a mere concept but a systematic reform based on practical grounds required to be implemented in schools, adult education, and youth work.

As stated by [González-Valencia, Ballbé, and Ortega-Sánchez \(2020\)](#) in their study that citizenship can only be contextualised with the lens of nationalism and post-nationalism such as supranational, international, virtual, and glocal entities. Much of the reconceptualisation of the term is credited to the establishment of supranational bodies such as the European Union, which has blurred the geographic boundaries. Since the new forms are becoming as commonplace as bread, it urges academicians to ponder over the new forms of education, perhaps more globalised in nature ([Bromley, 2009](#)).

Teaching global citizenship is not as simple as it looks. Educators are required to carefully plan the curriculum with an interdisciplinary perspective to better deal with the academic dogmas. It is noteworthy that multiple studies studying pre-service teachers' perspectives on GCE report several challenges, including rapid change in students' perspectives from neutral to extremely critical are important to developing cognitive and emotional conflicts ([Barchuk & Harkins, 2010](#)). These conflicts harbour guilt, and hopelessness among teachers and students that barricade their ability to take positive action, thus adversely affecting their critical and analytical discourse ([Pashby, 2011](#); [Rapoport, Anatoli, 2009](#)). However, classroom discussions on such controversial issues, if conducted in an environment conducive to the inquiry, are likely to neutralise the severity by fostering democratic attitudes among the students. Also, fostering an inquisitive attitude among students usually reaps far-reaching benefits, including preparing students for pluralistic democracies, harnessing critical thinking abilities,

and honing the interpersonal skills of the students ([Barchuk & Harkins, 2010](#)).

Teaching has always been a stressful job, and teacher stress is a much-debated term in academic literature ([Fathi & Derakhshan, 2019](#); [MacIntyre, Gregersen, & Mercer, 2020](#)). However, current times demand teachers to satisfy a myriad of academic, social, and emotional needs of their students ([Saleem, Muhammad, & Masood, 2019](#)). A modern-day teacher has all the onus of instilling their students with knowledge, social and emotional skills, values, beliefs, and attitudes to ensure their success in this overwhelmingly globalised era ([Gallavan, 2008](#)). Outdated teaching curricula and insufficient training hours, however, are posing serious impediments to advancements in teaching at par with such demanding times ([Mundy & Manion, 2008](#)). Given the pressing times and the continuously evolving role of teachers, it is inevitable to carefully analyse the current issues to inform pre-service teachers' professional developmental courses.

Studies conducted in Canada and US highlighted that though these countries have already initiated the GCE in schools, they are unable to reap the desired benefits owing to a curriculum that is not at all compatible with globalisation ([DiCicco, 2016](#); [Schweisfurth, 2006](#)). A similar study conducted in Australia revealed identical results. However, it concluded that the Australian curriculum has been highly responsive to teachers' concerns regarding globalisation ([Reynolds, MacQueen, & Ferguson-Patrick, 2019](#)). Therefore, implementing teacher education curricula that address the challenges of GCE might transform universities into the breeding ground of global-minded teachers, ultimately leading to achieving the goal of a more globally harmonised and sustainable world ([Boni & Calabuig, 2017](#)).

However, nations bearing a strong sense of patriotism are least likely to embrace GCE. While exploring teachers' perception of GCE, it was found that teachers in Israel found globalisation and GCE differently related to their context and boundaries ([Goren & Yemini, 2017](#)). The same study stresses the need to develop a framework to better initiate GCE in the region. Moreover, integrated societies

are likely to immensely impact national, economic, and social integration at the individual educational level in an attempt to transform citizens into global citizens ([Smith et al., 2017](#)).

Apart from the global context of GCE, multiple studies reported that teachers in general have a flawed understanding of the concept ([Muhammad, 2015](#)). To ascertain that GCE is practised across the globe, it is imperative to produce globally competitive teacher candidates ([Bruce, North, & Fitz Patrick, 2019](#); [Idrissi, 2020](#); [Kopish, 2017](#)). It was also found that GCE cannot be nurtured in isolation. There is an ardent need for ideology, curriculum, teachers' preparation programs, and teaching approaches aligned with the concept of global citizenship education ([Larsen & Searle, 2017](#)).

To address the reforms at par with global standards, educational researchers in Pakistan are working to understand the ground realities by closely analysing the curriculum, teaching practices, and perception of Pakistani teachers and students regarding GCE. [Ahmad \(2004\)](#), in qualitative document analysis, found that the curriculum in Pakistan is reform resistant owing to the dominant political views. Contrary to that, [Bano, Hina, and Jumani \(2021\)](#), after conducting a content analysis of 39 subjects included in teachers' education curriculum, identified a rich presence of themes favouring GCE in Pakistan. Many studies comparing the concepts of citizenship in education revealed that the Pakistani concept of citizenship is closely knitted to the concept advocated in Islam and concluded no significant difference between the concept of global citizenship and citizenship in Islam ([Khokhar, & Muhammad, 2020](#); [Muhammad, & Brett, 2019, 2020](#)).

A careful synthesis of the previous studies ([Bano et al., 2021](#); [Dean, 2005](#); [Naseer, 2012](#); [Pasha, 2015](#); [Syeda, 2012](#); [Ahmad, 2004](#); [Dean, 2005](#); [Goren & Yemini, 2017](#); [Knight, 2012](#); [Naseer, 2012](#); [Pais & Costa, 2020](#); [Rapoport, 2009](#); [Schweisfurth, 2006](#); [Wang & Hoffman, 2016](#)) concludes that though citizenship education is a well-debated area of academic literature in Pakistan, global citizenship education is relatively uncharted territory ([Muhammad, & Brett, 2015](#); [Muhammad,](#)

[Masood, & Anis, 2019](#)). Previous research holds little evidence on cultivating global citizenship in student-teachers, let alone exploring their perceptions of the aforementioned.

Methods

Since the study sought to access participants' interpretation of global citizenship, this qualitative study adopted a semi-structured interview research design ([Henriksson & Friesen, 2012](#)). With perceptions of pre-service teachers being the nexus of the study, the researchers purposefully selected a public and a private sector university offering on-campus teacher education degree programs. However, the criterion sampling technique was used while recruiting 16 participants enrolled in these universities.

After conducting a comprehensive literature review, several areas were identified based on which a semi-structured interview guide was developed to acquire data from the participants ([Brinkmann & Kvale, 2018](#); [Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015](#)). The questions asked were intended to be open-ended, and participants were encouraged to express their opinion however they liked. Follow-up questions intended to further probe were asked wherever a deep insight was needed to be developed. Participants were assured of their privacy and comfort.

All interviews were virtually conducted on Zoom at the scheduled time. Participants were given the liberty to choose between English and Urdu as the basic medium of the interview. All interviews were recorded with the consent of the participants using the inbuilt recording feature of Zoom. All data were transcribed verbatim and translated into English. NVivo 12 was to thematically analyse the data. The data, after being sorted into codes and themes, were arranged to develop a coherent narration as in the findings.

Findings

Analysis of the participants' responses gathered in virtual interviews revealed that participants had different understandings of the term global citizenship, its role, benefits, and trade-offs. Since

pre-service teachers did not have a sophisticated understanding of the term global citizenship, they attempted to come up with definitions based merely on their beliefs and understanding of the term. "Since I haven't heard of the term before, I can barely explain it as holding a nationality of any other country alongside our birth country" (Participant 8). Some of the definitions of the term 'global citizenship' suggested by the participants are:

Global citizenship discourages segregation based on socio-political conditions of a particular geographic area. It rather encourages individuals to identify themselves as citizens of the world and not of a specific country. It is about holding ourselves accountable to a comparatively wider community. (Participant 2)

Citizenship requires us to abide by the country's rules and regulations and promote its culture and ethnic values. So, global citizenship basically erases the lines and urges us to develop a culture that is in the best interest of humanity. (Participant 1)

Global citizenship to me is nothing but possessing multiple citizenships alongside our country of birth and hence belonging to the world and not just to a country. A global citizen is responsible for upholding his sanity in the interest of the world. (Participant 8)

Despite their inadequate understanding of the intricacies involved in the concept of global citizenship, participants were able to draw a sketch regarding the basic concept of global citizenship. Furthermore, all the participants consistently emphasised developing a unified community which is one of the fundamental tenets of the global citizenship culture ([Green, 2012](#); [Schattle, 2010](#)). However, having a questionable framework of the term, teachers successfully elaborated on the significance of transforming the world into a more just and sustainable place for all.

The demarcation of geographical boundaries looks better on maps. With this seemingly inexorable invasion of technology, it is important to have sentiments developed for other nations alongside our own in general and for humanity in specific. Individuals with vibrant yet considerate

personalities and acknowledging mindsets are inevitable for 21st-century societies. GCE might help in preparing students for such advanced and interlinked societies. (Participant 11)

Participants, while reckoning the importance of GCE, concluded that it is considered a more western term probably because the consideration of global issues is a drastically ignored aspect. They believed that, in Pakistan, unless the government realises the urgency of implementing GCE right from the very beginning, the concept will remain an alien concept for a majority of the Pakistani population. While there is little effort evident from the practices of private school systems, a majority of the population enrolled in public schools remain ignorant.

Impact of Global Citizenship Education

Reflecting on their limited understanding of such a common term, participants argued that it is highly likely for students to graduate from their schools without having a firm understanding of the concept. It is noteworthy that students, despite their age, are capable of developing a more humanistic view if the curriculum is integrated with the right values. For example, a participant emphasised this theme:

Global citizenship is taught as a subject and not as a value-laden discipline. Memorising the fundamentals and rote learning the agenda of the global bodies can be anything but learning. It is unfair to expect a change from our children when they are literally not taught about the current developments in the world. (Participant 11)

While factors such as age and IQ level can be significant determinants for the acceptance of the term among the students, a majority of the pre-service teachers agreed that developing a humanistic view can precede the two. Exposing students to diversity usually fosters contextual learning among students, which is considered a key factor for strengthening their cognitive abilities, improving critical thinking, and building problem-solving skills among the students ([Tari & Rosana, 2019](#)). The cognition developed, as a result, is highly likely to bring inclusiveness and acceptance among the

students, which are coherent to a more resilient and stable society.

A successful learner in a GCE class is open to new ideas and has intriguing instincts. Students who are exposed to multiple cultures with a more practical approach than have a focus on scoring grades are likely to have greater proximal activity and awareness of challenges faced by the world at a global level, and it is and solely is an awareness that brings change. (Participant 1)

Contextualising the global issues in relevance to their paradigms urges students to actively participate in resolving issues and providing support where needed. For example, a participant underscored this theme:

[...] after the realisation of the atrocities of the world comes empathy. Empathy brings value to humanity regardless of region, religion, and ethnicity. Global citizenship, therefore, can reap the benefits of developing respect for different belief systems, cultures, and lifestyles of other nations and countries while working together to address the major dilemmas posed by the 21st century. (Participant 5)

The irony is that Pakistani students are not provided with any such platform and hence have their potential compromised.

The framework of Action For Cultivating Global Citizenship Education

Most pre-service teachers shared that they could make students aware of global citizenship by discussing different topics of global issues in class: "[...] we need to bring the topic in casual discussions at first. Let the familiarisation developed and then bring in the activities complementing the topic" (Participant 8). They believed that since global citizenship cannot be instilled in students within a matter of years, it is rather a lifelong process that requires constant efforts and gradual exposure to global challenges that serve as the preamble of global citizenship education in Pakistan. Moreover, they believed that the knowledge provided to students in this regard should be globally acknowledged and conducive to developing rational human beings. Participants had a consensus

that co-curricular and academic activities go hand in hand in promoting global citizenship among the students. However, to summarise, projects and field trips can serve the purpose well; games are yet another tool helpful in shaping their beliefs about valuing others.

Participants also stressed that the untapped potential of global citizenship education could only be put to action by introducing the activities that complement the affective domain of Bloom's Taxonomy, given a dedicated curriculum is also provided to the teachers. For example, a participant stressed this theme:

It is more about breaking the barriers, getting an inclusive curriculum, unification of ideas from around the world, and equilibrium that we need to reach. And, at this level, every person, regardless of his nationality, regardless of his country, has to reach the specific set of knowledge that the global curricula are propagating. It is more about shedding the barriers than simply seeking knowledge because there are multiple types of knowledge that we can inculcate in our students. What we specifically want through this curriculum is that we want more global knowledge in the affective domain for our children. So, looking at this, we can enhance their knowledge. (Participant 1)

Most participants shared that they would share knowledge with students and assign topics and activities related to global citizenship. At the same time, some reported that they would discuss the history and global stories with them. One of the participants stated that she would work to change the perspectives of her students. Most participants shared that they would achieve this through different projects, activities, and giving knowledge to the students about the world's scenario and make them develop empathy for that. A participant reported:

Organising pen pals and arranging field trips can be helpful given the students are provided with ample experience and time to reflect on the world around them. Organise an international cultural week embedded with sustainable development goals to celebrate diversity. Teach culture through music, dramas, and other forms of art. Facilitate the

development of empathy, solidarity, and respect for differences and diversity so that learners respond effectively and responsibly at local, national, and global levels for a more peaceful and sustainable world. (Participant 12)

Strategic Involvement of Stakeholders in Cultivating Global Citizenship

Pre-service teachers stressed that usually, the students and their teachers co-construct the knowledge. Moreover, a teacher necessarily has to model what she expects of her students: "[...] it is very significant for a teacher that he/she should act as a global citizen instead of just endorsing fake beliefs" (Participant 1). Participants, however, stated that adopting grassroots approaches goes a long way as it empowers teachers to design programs exclusive to the learning needs of their students in a particular class. For instance, a participant stressed this theme:

Many developed countries have implemented the Hilda Taba Model of the grassroots approach. Why? Because teachers have a better understanding of their students than the person sitting in the offices. Look at the curriculum of developed countries. They use the grass-roots approach. Therefore, the role of administrators and curriculum developers should never precede that of the teacher. A similar approach should be considered while setting a curriculum for global citizenship. And for that, we need to train our teachers really, very well, or else chances are that the approach will backfire. (Participant 4)

Contrary to the opinion discussed above, a more prevalent theme found in pre-service teachers states that given the curriculum is equipped with the right philosophy and concept promoting GCE, a teacher can do nothing but upgrade her knowledge and skills to implement it successfully in their classroom thus endorsing the critical role of curriculum developers. For example, a participant underscored this theme:

The onus is on the curriculum developers. They should have first-hand knowledge of the development across the globe, skilled and updated about global politics, strong analytical skills, and

critical foresight in order to decide what global issues are to be included in the GCE curriculum. Furthermore, the curriculum should ensure a level of implementation at par with international standards. Only then the dream of implementing GCE can be realised to its full potential. (Participant 5)

Curriculum development is not done in isolation. It takes into consideration the belief systems and values as stated by the educational policy of the country. Anything that is contradictory to any of the stated clauses is likely to be discredited during the development of the curriculum, which is why policy documents should have clauses specifically addressing the aims of GCE.

Discussion

The current study brings forth implications for the policymaker and curriculum developers. It is henceforth inevitable to bring curriculum reforms in order to foster global citizenship ([Pais & Costa, 2020](#); [Reynolds et al., 2019](#); [Schweisfurth, 2006](#)). Moreover, teaching GCE as a subject is less likely to meet the desired goals. The curriculum should rather be value-laden, skill-oriented, and broadened enough to ensure the transformation of students into knowledgeable, responsible, and critical-minded global citizens ([Jamil, Muhammad, & Qureshi, 2021](#); [Muhammad, & Brett, 2017](#); [Rauf, Muhammad, & Saeed, 2021](#)). Moreover, it was found that understanding the concept of interdependence is critical and transcends national and geographical boundaries. Thus, validating the similar findings of prior studies ([Gaudelli & Fernekes, 2004](#)). A study found that teachers perceive global citizenship differently through the boundaries, practical aspects, and effects of GCE ([Goren & Yemini, 2016](#)). However, the current study reveals that teachers in Pakistan can't explicitly reflect on the phenomenon owing to a lack of understanding of the term. Additionally, the study stressed adopting alternative approaches to GCE addressing cultural exchange and collaborative learning ([Guimarães & Finardi, 2021](#)). There is a need to develop a more self-reflective and critical global citizenship education for pre-service

teachers. Teacher educators need to make sure that in the future world, their students should be responsible and informed global citizens. This study supports Rapoport's findings, which suggest the role of teachers is very crucial, and if they want their students to excel and become global citizens, then they must work at the classroom level.

Conclusion

This qualitative study has found that pre-service teachers had a shallow understanding of the term global citizenship. They, however, believed that the concept of GCE would remain an alien in Pakistan unless the government realised the urgency of implementing it right from the very beginning.

Pre-service teachers also shared some strategies to make students aware of global citizenship. They also shared their belief that grassroots approaches to designing GCE programs would be sustainable in the Pakistani content.

We argue that pre-service teachers should be provided awareness about global citizenship so that they can cultivate this in secondary school students. It is hoped that the participants' detailed descriptions in this study will provide guidance to curriculum developers, and policymakers should play their part in this case that will enhance the understanding of teachers and makes it easy for them to teach their students better and make them global citizens so that they can make this world a peaceful place.

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