

Fostering Healthy Digital Practices: Exploring the Conceptual Relationship between Netiquette and Mental Well-being among Prospective Teachers

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Peer Review Information	Abstract
Type: Article Received: 17 July 2026 Revised: 20 Aug2026 Accepted: 10 Sept 2026 Published: 12 Oct 2026	Digital communication now sits at the centre of how prospective teachers learn, collaborate and prepare for the profession, yet the courtesy norms that govern those exchanges, commonly called netiquette, are seldom examined as a matter of psychological health. This conceptual paper examines how netiquette and mental well-being may be related among prospective teachers. It draws on a synthesis of seventeen sources on netiquette, digital citizenship, cyber incivility, digital well-being and teacher education. The paper first clarifies the key constructs and then reviews what is known about how online conduct shapes emotional experience in educational settings. The synthesis shows that the evidence connecting the two domains is indirect and unevenly distributed: studies of netiquette rarely measure well-being, and studies of well-being rarely isolate netiquette. To bridge this gap, the paper proposes a conceptual model in which netiquette knowledge, netiquette practice and the netiquette climate of a learning community influence well-being through psychological safety, communication competence and emotional regulation, with gender, digital confidence, cultural context and institutional policy as possible moderators. Five testable propositions and a research agenda follow, together with implications for teacher education programmes, including those operating under India's National Education Policy 2020. The paper argues that netiquette education should be reframed from an exercise in rule compliance into a well-being-oriented competence for future teachers. Keywords: Netiquette; Mental Well-Being; Digital Well-Being; Prospective Teachers; Digital Citizenship; Cyber Incivility; Teacher Education

How to Cite This Article

Kushwaha, H., & Jaiswal, S. (2026). Fostering healthy digital practices: Exploring the conceptual relationship between netiquette and mental well-being among prospective teachers. *International Journal of Research and Development-A Management Review*, 15(2), 630–638.

Introduction

Teacher education has moved a large share of its academic and social life onto screens. Prospective teachers attend lectures through video platforms, coordinate group assignments in messaging applications, submit coursework through learning management systems and arrange school placements by email. Every one of these exchanges is governed, whether explicitly or not, by expectations about tone, timing, respect and privacy. Such expectations are usually gathered under the term *netiquette*, a blend of “network” and “etiquette.” Although *netiquette* can look like a minor matter of manners, its effects on how people feel about their studies, their peers and themselves deserve closer attention than they typically receive. The scholarly treatment of *netiquette* has not kept pace with its everyday importance. In a systematic review of work indexed in Web of Science and Scopus, Soler-Costa et al. (2021) described *netiquette* as a poorly defined line of research and argued that its theoretical framework needs updating. A later review of student–professor communication in higher education reached a compatible conclusion, finding gaps in both the knowledge and the practice of *netiquette* norms and calling for more targeted research (Assad et al., 2024). At the same time, a separate body of work has documented the strain that digitalisation can place on mental health. Costa et al. (2024) examined how digitalisation affects the mental health and educational development of teachers and students, and Uslu (2025) concluded that the negative repercussions of technology use are widespread and multifaceted enough to threaten digital well-being over the long term.

These two strands, one concerned with conduct and the other with wellness, are rarely brought together. Prospective teachers make the omission particularly consequential. They are still learners, exposed to the academic pressure and practicum difficulties that Nayak (2020) identifies as shaping the emotional landscape of pre-service teachers. They are also future professionals whose digital habits will be carried into classrooms. Nayak (2020) goes further and argues that teaching depends not only on cognitive skill but also on the capacity to manage emotions and sustain relationships, and that emotional well-being is a significant predictor of teacher effectiveness. If online conduct affects emotional well-being, then the *netiquette* culture within which prospective teachers are trained is relevant to the quality of the profession they will enter. There is already evidence that online incivility can be costly for teachers. Demirbağ and Örs (2025) found that cyber incivility harms teachers' mental health, which in turn reduces their happiness at work. A review of *netiquette* in online education similarly associates inappropriate conduct by teachers and students with weaker cognitive engagement, greater academic anxiety and a diminished sense of social presence (*Consequences of Poor Netiquette*, 2025). What is missing is a coherent account of how, and through which mechanisms, *netiquette* and mental well-being are connected among those who are being prepared to teach. This paper offers such an account at the conceptual level. It does not report new empirical data. Instead, it synthesises existing literature, identifies where the evidence is strong and where it is thin, and proposes a model that can be tested in future research. The paper proceeds as follows. The next section states the purpose and guiding questions. The method of conceptual synthesis is then described, followed by a clarification of the core constructs. The review of literature that follows is organised thematically. Subsequent sections present the proposed model and propositions, discuss implications for teacher education, outline a research agenda and acknowledge limitations.

Review of the Literature

The evidence on how well prospective and practising teachers understand *netiquette* is mixed, and the mixture is informative. Meylina and Jufri (2023) reported that the majority of the primary school teachers they studied had a good grasp of *netiquette*, and the authors stressed the need for awareness and prevention of cyberbullying. In contrast, Abdigapbarova et al. (2025), working with prospective teachers in Kazakhstan, observed that participants initially lacked knowledge of digital etiquette. Using a mixed-methods design, they concluded that structured training significantly contributed to the development of a digital communication culture, and they recommended a tailored programme for the course. Assad et al. (2024), reviewing eight peer-reviewed articles on student–professor communication, reported gaps in both knowledge and practice, and noted that the shift to digital platforms during the COVID-19 pandemic heightened the importance of the topic. Two points follow. First, *netiquette* knowledge appears to vary across groups and contexts, so it should not be assumed. Second, understanding a norm and acting on it are different matters. That teachers can articulate good *netiquette* (Meylina & Jufri, 2023) does not by itself ensure that incivility is absent from online interactions, and the same study's emphasis on cyberbullying prevention suggests that understanding alone is not enough. This distinction between knowing and doing is central to the model proposed later in this paper.

The most direct evidence connecting online conduct with psychological outcomes comes from research on incivility. Demirbağ and Örs (2025) examined cyber incivility among teachers and found that it has a significant negative effect on mental health, which in turn lowers happiness at work. Mental health problems therefore operate as a mediating link between incivility and a work-related outcome. The authors also found that gender moderated the relationship, with female teachers experiencing more mental health difficulties as a result of cyber incivility than male teachers, a pattern that the abstract describes as particularly evident among those in distance education. They concluded that policies supporting teachers' well-being are urgently needed as education becomes more digital.

A review of the consequences of poor *netiquette* in online education extends this concern to learners and to the classroom relationship (*Consequences of Poor Netiquette*, 2025). Its authors conclude that inappropriate *netiquette* by teachers and students undermines cognitive

engagement, heightens academic anxiety and weakens social presence. They also note that behaviours such as dismissive tones and disruptive actions can damage learner motivation, peer relations and the credibility of instructors. The review advocates a multi-pronged response comprising institutional policies, adaptive feedback systems, teacher modelling of appropriate behaviour and instruction in digital citizenship, with the aim of creating an inclusive and psychologically safe digital learning space. Taken together, these sources suggest that incivility is not merely unpleasant but is associated with measurable costs to emotional experience, engagement and professional satisfaction. Their populations are, however, different from the one that concerns this paper. Demirbağ and Örs (2025) studied practising teachers, and the review of poor netiquette addresses online education in general. No source in the corpus directly measures how netiquette and incivility affect the mental well-being of prospective teachers specifically, which is the gap that the present paper seeks to address conceptually.

A third group of studies approaches the topic from the side of communication. Muliana et al. (2025) examined interpersonal communication among students in higher education in relation to mental well-being and digital challenges. They report a strong correlation between communication competence and mental health, and they find that high-quality relationships, marked by empathy and clarity, contribute positively to learning motivation and academic satisfaction. They also report that psychoeducational training enhanced students' resilience and emotional regulation, which in turn improved interpersonal communication. Importantly for the argument developed here, the authors note that digital technology and artificial intelligence accelerate communication but may reduce its perceived authenticity, and they recommend integrating interpersonal communication training with critical digital literacy. Although Muliana et al. (2025) do not use the term netiquette, their findings bear directly on it. Courteous, clear and empathetic online communication is precisely what netiquette seeks to promote. If communication competence is associated with better mental health, then the habits that constitute good netiquette are plausible contributors to that association. The finding that resilience and emotional regulation improve communication also suggests that the relationship may be reciprocal: students who are emotionally steadier may find it easier to respond respectfully online, while respectful exchanges may in turn support emotional steadiness. Cowling et al. (2025) reinforce the link between communication and well-being from a different angle. Their review of twenty-four studies on digital safety, literacy and well-being among children aged ten to thirteen found that online engagement is affected by digital literacy, communication, well-being and habits, and that more holistic and longitudinal research on digital safety is needed. The age group differs from prospective teachers, so the findings should be applied with caution, but the review supports the general view that conduct, skill and well-being are interdependent in school-related digital activity.

Several sources emphasise that educators do more than deliver content. Omkar et al. (2023) argue that educators shape the mental health and worldviews of students in digital education, and that their behaviours and techniques have substantial psychological effects. They suggest that addressing the challenges of digital education helps to create a secure and nurturing learning environment. In a qualitative study of Indonesian secondary schools, Gastiadirrijal et al. (2025) similarly conclude that teachers play a crucial part in reducing the psychological risks of digital transformation while using its advantages. They highlight the strengthening of digital literacy, the regulation of screen time, collaborative interventions involving counsellors and parents, and teacher training in digital emotional intelligence and culturally adaptive pedagogy. These findings have a direct bearing on prospective teachers. If practising teachers shape the psychological climate of digital learning, then the preparation of future teachers must include the skills needed to do so. The review of poor netiquette makes the same point by advocating teacher behaviour modelling (*Consequences of Poor Netiquette*, 2025), and *Digital Citizenship in Teacher Education* (2025) argues that a value-based digital pedagogy will equip educators to lead and model responsible digital behaviour. The Digital Wellbeing Educators project adds a cautionary note. It highlights a gap between how educators understand the importance of digital literacy and what they do in their teaching, and it reports that only 20–25% of students were taught by digitally confident educators (Royo et al., 2019). A well-intentioned but insufficiently confident teaching workforce is unlikely to model healthy digital practices consistently.

The wider literature on digital well-being frames the problem as one of shared responsibility. Uslu (2025) argues that individuals, organisations and policymakers must jointly shape environments in which technology empowers rather than stresses users, and recommends a range of strategies and tools together with continuing research that takes demographic factors into account. Costa et al. (2024) call for balance between technology integration and emotional well-being, along with strategies that promote social interaction, and they stress that innovation and mental health support require collective effort. Royo et al. (2019) assemble a compendium of good practices so that educators can find transferable solutions to the challenges of the digital era. For the present topic, this literature contributes the principle that healthy digital practice is not merely an individual achievement. It depends on the norms, tools and policies of the communities in which people learn and work. That principle makes it appropriate to treat the netiquette climate of a cohort or programme, and not just the netiquette skill of individual students, as a determinant of well-being.

Synthesis and Identified Gaps

The literature supports four general observations. Netiquette is acknowledged as important but is imperfectly defined. Incivility and poor online conduct are associated with distress, anxiety and reduced engagement. Communication competence and emotional capacities are associated with better mental health and may reinforce one another. Educators are expected to model healthy digital behaviour, although many may not be equipped to do so. Against these observations, three gaps stand out. First, almost no study examines netiquette and mental well-being together in the same sample. Second, the evidence on prospective teachers concerns netiquette skill development and not psychological outcomes. Third, the mechanisms that might connect conduct to well-being remain largely implicit. The next section addresses the third gap by making the mechanisms explicit.

Objectives and Guiding Questions

The purpose of this paper is to explore, conceptually, the relationship between netiquette and mental well-being among prospective teachers, and to translate that exploration into a framework that can inform both research and teacher education practice. Four questions guide the work:

- How have netiquette, digital citizenship and digital well-being been conceptualised in the existing literature, and how do these constructs overlap?
- What does the literature indicate about the emotional and psychological consequences of online conduct in educational settings?
- Through which mechanisms might netiquette influence the mental well-being of prospective teachers, and might the influence also run in the opposite direction?
- What should teacher education programmes and future researchers do to foster healthier digital practices?

The focus on prospective teachers is deliberate. Much of the available evidence concerns school-age learners, higher education students in general or practising teachers. Prospective teachers share features of each group, yet their position as learners who are also professionals in formation gives them a distinctive stake in the issue.

Method of Conceptual Synthesis

The paper follows a narrative, concept-building approach rather than a systematic review protocol. The evidence base consists of seventeen distinct sources assembled in a prior literature review on netiquette, digital citizenship, educators' roles in digital education, and the psychological dimensions of digital life. The sources include peer-reviewed journal articles, systematic and narrative reviews, a book chapter, a project compendium and two repository-hosted papers. They span primary school teachers, secondary school students, higher education students, prospective teachers and practising teachers, and they originate from a range of national settings, among them Kazakhstan, Indonesia and India. The synthesis proceeded in three steps. First, the main claims, populations and conclusions of each source were recorded. Second, these claims were grouped under recurring themes: definitions and frameworks, knowledge and practice of netiquette, consequences of incivility, communication and emotional competence, the educator's role, and digital well-being. Third, the themes were compared to identify conceptual links that the individual sources do not state explicitly. Where the paper moves beyond what a source reports, for example by proposing a mediating mechanism, the move is presented as an interpretation or proposition and not as an established finding. Because the paper is conceptual, its propositions are offered for testing. They should not be read as conclusions already supported by data from prospective teachers. The Limitations section returns to the consequences of this approach.

Conceptual Foundations

Netiquette refers to the accepted norms of courteous and responsible behaviour in online communication. In educational contexts these norms cover matters such as the tone of written messages, respect for others' time and privacy, appropriate conduct in video sessions and the handling of shared digital material. The practical guidance developed for pedagogical university students illustrates this breadth. Panisheva and Loginov (2022) offer advice on managing personal social media accounts, using digital storage devices responsibly, communicating with students and delivering video classes. Netiquette in this sense is not a single rule set but a cluster of habits applied across platforms and relationships. The literature also shows that netiquette is partly cultural. Meylina and Jufri (2023) found that primary school teachers recognised that people from different cultural backgrounds interact and communicate in cyberspace, and they argued that netiquette should be taught to students from elementary through high school. Abdigapbarova et al. (2025) likewise link digital etiquette training to a culturally informed digital interaction. Netiquette therefore cannot be treated as a universal checklist; it needs to be interpreted in light of the community in which communication occurs. Definitional ambiguity remains an obstacle. Soler-Costa et al. (2021) concluded that research on netiquette is poorly defined, and Assad et al. (2024) identified gaps in how well netiquette is understood and followed. One response to this ambiguity is the systematic framework of netiquette rules for online learning proposed by Al-Khatib (2023), which builds on the classical core rules of netiquette and aligns them with a digital citizenship scale. Such frameworks are

valuable because they allow netiquette to be operationalised, a necessary precondition for examining its links with any psychological outcome.

Netiquette is increasingly understood as one component of a wider competence known as digital citizenship. Al-Khatib (2023) describes netiquette as an important element of effective digital citizenship. In the Indian context, Digital Citizenship in Teacher Education (2025) argues that digital citizenship is a civic and ethical imperative for twenty-first-century educators, and it proposes a three-pillar framework of awareness, application and action for embedding it in teacher preparation in line with the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020. Placing netiquette inside this larger frame has two advantages. It signals that courteous online conduct is an ethical stance toward others and not merely a social convenience, and it connects netiquette to institutional commitments, such as curriculum reform and professional development, that can sustain it.

Mental well-being is used here in a broad sense to include emotional well-being, the capacity to regulate emotion, resilience and the relative absence of distress such as anxiety and stress. This usage is consistent with the sources reviewed, which discuss emotional well-being (Nayak, 2020), resilience and emotional regulation (Muliana et al., 2025), academic anxiety (*Consequences of Poor Netiquette*, 2025) and mental health problems resulting from cyber incivility (Demirbağ & Örs, 2025). Digital well-being is a related but narrower construct. Uslu (2025) treats it as a priority in technology-saturated environments, where the aim is to reduce harmful consequences while preserving the benefits of technology, and describes responsibility for it as shared among individuals, organisations and policymakers. The Digital Wellbeing Educators project makes a similar point from the standpoint of higher education, noting concern among educators about the digital well-being of students and highlighting digital overload, cyberbullying and misinformation as pressing challenges (Royo et al., 2019). In this paper, digital well-being is treated as a domain of mental well-being that concerns how a person feels about, and fares within, digital environments.

Prospective teachers occupy a dual position. As students they are exposed to the same digital communication pressures as other undergraduates. As future educators they are being prepared to take responsibility for the emotional climate of other people's learning. Nayak (2020) describes the emotional challenges of this stage, including academic stress and practicum difficulties, and calls on teacher education institutions to build supportive environments that promote emotional resilience. Studies in the corpus indicate that digital etiquette is also a recognised competence for this group: Abdigapbarova et al. (2025) examined digital etiquette training for prospective teachers in Kazakhstan, and Panisheva and Loginov (2022) addressed the development of digital etiquette skills among students of pedagogical universities. These studies treat netiquette as a professional skill. The present paper adds the proposition that it is also relevant to professional well-being.

A Conceptual Model of Netiquette and Mental Well-being

The proposed model distinguishes three aspects of netiquette. *Netiquette knowledge* refers to a person's awareness of the norms that apply to different digital settings. *Netiquette practice* refers to observable conduct, such as the tone of messages, responsiveness, respect for privacy and behaviour in virtual classrooms. *Netiquette climate* refers to the shared norms of a cohort or programme, including the modelling provided by teacher educators and the policies that govern online conduct. The separation matters because the literature suggests that knowledge, practice and climate need not coincide. Table 1 summarises these constructs together with the mediators, moderators and outcomes that the model includes, and the literature on which each is based.

Table 1. Constructs in the Proposed Model and Their Basis in the Reviewed Literature

Role model	Construct	Meaning in this paper	Principal supporting sources
Predictor	Netiquette knowledge	Awareness of online norms across platforms and cultures	Abdigapbarova et al. (2025); Assad et al. (2024); Meylina & Jufri (2023)
Predictor	Netiquette practice	Observable conduct: tone, privacy, conduct in video classes	Panisheva & Loginov (2022); Al-Khatib (2023)
Predictor	Netiquette climate	Shared norms, educator modelling and institutional policy	Omkar et al. (2023); <i>Consequences of Poor Netiquette</i> (2025); <i>Digital Citizenship in Teacher Education</i> (2025)
Mediator	Psychological safety	Feeling able to take part in	<i>Consequences of Poor Netiquette</i>

		digital spaces without hostility	(2025)
Mediator	Communication competence	Empathy and clarity in digital interaction	Muliana et al. (2025)
Mediator	Emotional regulation	Managing emotion and resilience under digital stress	Muliana et al. (2025); Nayak (2020)
Moderator	Gender, digital confidence, culture, policy	Factors expected to strengthen or weaken the pathways	Demirbağ & Örs (2025); Royo et al. (2019); Gastiadirrijal et al. (2025)
Outcome	Mental and digital well-being	Emotional well-being, anxiety, resilience and well-being in digital settings	Uslu (2025); Costa et al. (2024); Nayak (2020)

Note. The constructs and their arrangement are the author's synthesis; the sources indicate where related ideas appear in the literature and do not imply that those studies tested this model.

The outcomes of interest are mental well-being broadly understood, including emotional well-being, anxiety and stress, resilience, and digital well-being. Three mediating mechanisms are proposed. The first is psychological safety, meaning the sense that one can participate in digital learning spaces without fear of ridicule or hostility. The second is communication competence, including empathy and clarity. The third is emotional regulation. All three are grounded in the sources: psychologically safe digital learning spaces are the stated aim of the review on poor netiquette (*Consequences of Poor Netiquette*, 2025), while communication competence and emotional regulation are the central variables in Muliana et al. (2025).

Hypothesised pathways

Figure 1 depicts the proposed relationships. The primary pathway runs from netiquette knowledge, practice and climate to the mediating mechanisms and from there to well-being. Knowledge is expected to influence well-being mainly by informing practice, whereas climate is expected to exert both a direct influence, by shaping how safe the environment feels, and an indirect one, by encouraging or discouraging respectful practice. A feedback pathway runs from well-being back to practice, reflecting the reciprocal relationship between emotional regulation and communication suggested by Muliana et al. (2025). Several moderators are expected to shape the strength of these pathways.

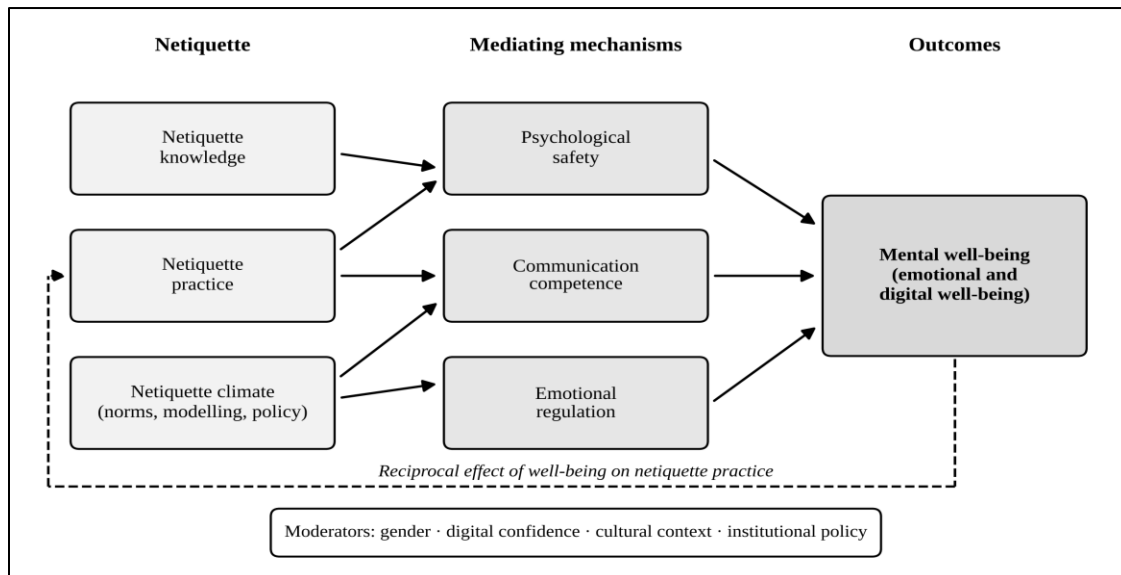


Fig. 1. Proposed Conceptual Model Linking Netiquette and Mental Well-being among Prospective Teachers

Note. Solid arrows indicate hypothesised effects; the dashed arrow indicates the proposed reciprocal effect of well-being on netiquette practice.

Five propositions follow from the model. They are offered as hypotheses to be tested, not as established findings.

Proposition 1: Climate matters more than knowledge. The netiquette climate that a prospective teacher perceives in their programme will be a stronger predictor of well-being than their individual knowledge of netiquette. The reasoning is that knowledge was found to vary yet

also to be insufficient on its own: teachers may understand netiquette well while cyberbullying prevention still remains a concern (Meylina & Jufri, 2023), and educators may value digital literacy without teaching it confidently (Royo et al., 2019). Experiences of how others actually behave online are more likely to shape feelings of safety than what a person has learned in principle.

Proposition 2: Experienced incivility lowers well-being through reduced psychological safety. Prospective teachers who experience or witness uncivil online conduct will report poorer well-being, and this association will be mediated by a lowered sense of psychological safety. The proposition extends the mediation reported by Demirbağ and Örs (2025) for practising teachers and the associations between poor netiquette and anxiety, engagement and social presence described in the review of poor netiquette (*Consequences of Poor Netiquette*, 2025).

Proposition 3: Netiquette practice and emotional regulation reinforce each other. Higher levels of emotional regulation will be associated with more respectful online practice, and respectful practice will in turn predict better emotional regulation over time. This follows the finding that resilience and emotional regulation improved interpersonal communication (Muliana et al., 2025), together with the strong link they report between communication competence and mental health. Testing the proposition requires longitudinal data.

Proposition 4: Structured netiquette education improves well-being indirectly. Programmes that teach netiquette within a broader framework of digital citizenship and interpersonal communication will improve communication competence and, through it, well-being. Evidence that structured training improves digital communication culture among prospective teachers (Abdigapbarova et al., 2025), and that interpersonal communication training is recommended for students (Muliana et al., 2025), makes the first half of this pathway plausible. The second half, from competence to well-being, remains to be examined with the population of interest.

Proposition 5: The relationships are conditioned by gender, digital confidence and context. The negative association between incivility and well-being will be stronger for female prospective teachers, as Demirbağ and Örs (2025) found for female teachers, and weaker for those with high digital confidence. Cultural and institutional context is also expected to matter, consistent with the emphasis on culturally adaptive practice (Gastiadirrijal et al., 2025) and on the cultural dimension of online communication (Meylina & Jufri, 2023).

The model differs from two common approaches. A compliance approach treats netiquette as a set of rules to be learned and enforced, which risks reducing it to a matter of discipline. The model proposed here shifts the emphasis toward the lived experience of communicating online. A pure well-being approach, by contrast, addresses stress and screen use in general without attending to the interpersonal conduct that gives digital life its emotional character. By connecting the two, the model suggests that some of the distress attributed to “digital life” may originate in the quality of interaction within it, and that interaction quality is something educational institutions can influence.

Implications for Teacher Education

The first implication is that netiquette should be embedded in the curriculum as a component of digital citizenship and professional preparation. The three-pillar framework suggested for Indian teacher education, comprising awareness, application and action, offers a convenient structure (*Digital Citizenship in Teacher Education*, 2025). Under awareness, prospective teachers would learn the norms of different platforms, including their cultural variations. Under application, they would practise skills such as composing respectful messages, managing social media accounts and conducting video classes, drawing on the practical guidance given by Panisheva and Loginov (2022). Under action, they would take part in shaping the norms of their own programme, for example by co-writing community guidelines. Adding explicit attention to well-being at each stage would turn the framework into a vehicle for the model proposed here. Interpersonal communication training deserves a place alongside this work. Muliana et al. (2025) recommend integrating such training into the curriculum and promoting critical digital literacy so that authentic relationships can be built despite the acceleration of digital communication. For prospective teachers, this could include exercises in empathic written feedback, strategies for de-escalating online disagreements and reflection on how tone is perceived in text-based exchanges. The literature repeatedly emphasises that educators function as models. If prospective teachers are to experience a healthy netiquette climate, the conduct of the teacher educators who train them is decisive. The review of poor netiquette advocates teacher behaviour modelling (*Consequences of Poor Netiquette*, 2025), and Omkar et al. (2023) stress the psychological influence of educators' behaviour and techniques. Teacher education institutions might therefore consider expectations for faculty communication, such as response times, tone in feedback and boundaries for contact outside working hours, and provide professional development to support them. The gap between valuing digital literacy and teaching it with confidence (Royo et al., 2019) indicates that faculty development, and not only student training, should be part of the response.

Institutions can also reduce harm by establishing clear policies and accessible mechanisms for responding to incivility. Demirbağ and Örs (2025) call for policies that support teachers' well-being as digitalisation increases, and the review of poor netiquette recommends institutional policies together with adaptive feedback systems (*Consequences of Poor Netiquette*, 2025). The pattern of gender differences reported by Demirbağ and Örs (2025) implies that these mechanisms should be sensitive to the possibility that some groups bear a heavier

burden. Links with counselling and well-being services are equally important. Nayak (2020) argues that teacher education institutions should create supportive environments and apply evidence-based interventions to nurture emotional resilience, and Gastiadirrijal et al. (2025) point to the value of collaborative interventions involving counsellors and parents in school settings. A comparable partnership between faculty and student support services could address digital distress in teacher education.

Finally, programmes should be able to gauge the state of their own netiquette climate. The framework of netiquette rules proposed by Al-Khatib (2023) offers a starting point for developing assessment instruments, and the cultural emphasis in the literature indicates that any instrument should be adapted to the local context. Programme leaders could use such tools, alongside well-being measures, to monitor whether interventions are working and for whom.

Research Agenda and Limitations

The model suggests several priorities. The first is measurement. Valid instruments are needed that capture netiquette knowledge, practice and climate separately, building on the rule frameworks proposed in the literature (Al-Khatib, 2023) and responding to the definitional concerns raised by Soler-Costa et al. (2021). The second is design. Cross-sectional surveys can test Propositions 1, 2 and 5, but Proposition 3 requires longitudinal designs, a need that Cowling et al. (2025) also identify for the study of digital safety more broadly. Intervention studies are required for Proposition 4; they could compare netiquette education with and without a well-being component. Qualitative work could explore how prospective teachers themselves interpret uncivil encounters and what they consider helpful responses. Third, researchers should pay attention to context. Studies in different national and institutional settings, and attention to demographic factors as recommended by Uslu (2025), would show how far the proposed relationships generalise.

Several limitations should be acknowledged. The paper is conceptual and presents no primary data, so its propositions remain untested. The evidence base comprises seventeen sources and is not the product of an exhaustive systematic search; relevant studies outside the corpus may qualify or contradict the arguments made here. Some sources are reviews or project reports and some are repository-hosted papers that may not have undergone the same peer review as journal articles, which calls for caution in treating their conclusions as settled. The populations studied also differ considerably, from children aged ten to thirteen (Cowling et al., 2025) to secondary school students (Gastiadirrijal et al., 2025) and practising teachers (Demirbağ & Örs, 2025), so applying their findings to prospective teachers involves inference. Finally, the synthesis draws on the findings and summaries recorded for each source, which means that methodological details such as sample sizes and measurement instruments were not available for every study and could not be critically appraised.

Conclusion

This paper has argued that netiquette deserves to be treated as a concern of mental well-being as well as one of courtesy and professionalism, and that prospective teachers are a particularly important group in which to study the connection. The literature reviewed shows that netiquette is widely endorsed but unevenly understood and imperfectly defined, that incivility is associated with anxiety, reduced engagement and poorer mental health, and that communication competence and emotional capacities go together with well-being. It also shows that educators are expected to model healthy digital conduct, though many may lack the confidence to do so. What the literature does not yet provide is an explicit account of the pathways linking netiquette to well-being among those preparing to teach. The model proposed here distinguishes netiquette knowledge, practice and climate, identifies psychological safety, communication competence and emotional regulation as mediating mechanisms, and anticipates moderation by gender, digital confidence, culture and institutional policy. Its five propositions provide a concrete agenda for empirical work. For teacher education, the model points toward a shift in emphasis: from teaching netiquette as a list of rules to cultivating it as a shared practice that protects the well-being of everyone in a digital learning community. Prospective teachers who experience such a community during training will be better prepared to build one for their own students.

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