**Play It Safe: Young Learner’s Safety in a Greater Cyberworld**

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**APPROVAL SHEET**



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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Title Page ....................................................................................................................................... 1

Endorsement .................................................................................................................................. 2

Approval Sheet ............................................................................................................................... 4

Acknowledgement ......................................................................................................................... 5

Dedication ...................................................................................................................................... 6

Table of Contents ........................................................................................................................... 7

List of Tables .................................................................................................................................. 8

Abstract .......................................................................................................................................... 9

**CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION**

Background of the Study .......................................................................................................... 10

Theoretical and Conceptual Framework ................................................................................... 17

Research Paradigm .................................................................................................................... 22

Statement of Objectives ............................................................................................................ 23

**CHAPTER II: METHODOLOGY**

Research Design ........................................................................................................................ 24

Population and Locale of the Study .......................................................................................... 25

Data Gathering Tool .................................................................................................................. 26

Data Gathering Procedure and Ethical Considerations ............................................................. 27

Data Management ..................................................................................................................... 29

**CHAPTER III: RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

Results and Discussions ............................................................................................................ 31

Major Theme 1: Applications Used By Children ............................................................ 35

Major Theme 2: Dangers Children Face While Using the Internet ................................. 38

Major Theme 3: Parents’ Solutions to Dangers Posed By the Internet ........................... 42

**IV. SOLUTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

Findings .................................................................................................................................... 49

Recommendations ..................................................................................................................... 52

**REFERENCES** ........................................................................................................................... 60

**LIST OF TABLES**

Table 1.1 ....................................................................................................................................... 31

# ABSTRACT

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# It is no surprise that the Internet changed everyone’s lives, including children. Yet, the word change doesn’t always mean it’s for the better, but potentially, for the worse. In this study entitled “Play It Safe: Young Learner’s Safety in a Greater Cyberworld,” which aims to identify the learner's cyberworld engagement, state the dangers of young learners when using the Internet, and determine some of the parent’s interventions to how they safeguard their children when using the Internet. This research is conducted in Lorma Colleges with 16 participants chosen through purposive sampling method. The researchers also used qualitative descriptive method and used thematic analysis to manage the data. After the interviews were conducted, it is discovered that the participants (the children) engaged in various Internet activities through various educational and entertainment applications. It was also found out that they faced numerous Internet dangers, such as screentime, Internet addiction, cyberbullying, pornography, and inappropriate content. And finally, they unraveled parent’s ‘solutions’ for these problems for the sake of their children. Several examples include monitoring child activities, blocking sites, confiscating, limiting screen time, talking to their child, and educating their child. Thus, with all of this information, the researchers highly suggest some solutions that solves issues regarding Internet safety for children while maintaining a healthy relationship between the child and the parent. For instance, instead of screaming at the child, they can just speak to them in a calm and friendly manner. The research also suggested some recommendations for children on what to do in order to achieve safety, as well as other netizens, who should be provided awareness of Internet hazards.

# Keywords: cyberworld, young learners, dark web, education, safety.

# **CHAPTER 1**

# **INTRODUCTION**

##

## **1.1 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY**

Back when technology was unknown, life was simply rough. In the olden days, people would go outdoors to socialize or purchase in nearby stores because applications like Zoom and online shopping do not exist. Encyclopedias and books were a thing if you wanted information before Wikipedia and Google were introduced. Letters (or simply mails) were meant for long-distance communications and not emails. Life was tremendously harsh with the boring technology of the past. However, that “struggle” shifted when the Internet was introduced in 1983. That vast system has been notable for its splendid uses. You name it—electronic mails (emails), online shopping, entertainment, researching a certain topic, file transferring, ranged communication, education, and many more (Sathyanarayanan, 2022).

According to Britannica (2021), the Internet dispenses a giant capacity that is very powerful and general that loads of us utilize for almost any purpose, and it is highly available by all who connect to one of its constituent networks. In today’s world, the newly discovered virtual computer world, also known as cyberworld, is public, cooperative, and self-sustaining accessible to hundreds of millions of people in the world as the primary source of information consumption. In addition, cyberworld provoked the imagination and innovation of its own “social ecosystem” through the famous social networking and content sharing. With the Internet and the cyberworld gradually gaining popularity, some found the importance of digital awareness.

Digital awareness is a vast body of information; it is more than merely knowing how to use a computer. The ability to understand and use technologies in an increasingly interconnected world, such as the cyberworld, is referred to as digital awareness. People will strive for digital awareness once they realize that they need to build a conscientious posture while using the Internet. People will also begin to have greater autonomy in digital decisions, a balance between connection and detachment and attention and critical thinking from the moment these elements are created (Dario, 2020). Actually, many aspects of our thoughts and desires are addressed by digital awareness. That is why understanding digital awareness will help understand online identities, protect privacy online, strengthen computer security, use social networking sites, protect digital assets, and monitor and promote business.

In addition, Computer Hope (2019) says there are a lot of advantages to utilizing the Internet. One benefit is its endless source of information that you can find about almost any topic or question you may have in mind. Virtually using any search engine like Google or Safari, you can settle your queries and even find a web page that gives complete details to your big question. YouTube can also assist you by further explaining that topic to satisfy your inquiries. That is not all. Online courses are also one of its examples of endless resources of information. Online courses are there to educate you effectively and can give you additional knowledge about that subject.

Another benefit is the improved way of communicating. Instead of waiting for a letter, you can now get an email from somebody in seconds. An alternative form of communication (also known as online messaging) allows people all over the world to connect, transact, and receive information in real-time. Many people have started using online communication to communicate. Online communication is rapidly replacing traditional communication methods. Every other physical activity is mirrored in the virtual world. While basic tech education is required for online activities, many people can get by with little or no knowledge (Bhasin, 2021).

One more upside is quick entertainment. It is difficult to become bored on the internet due to the abundance of entertainment options. The Internet provides a multitude of free options, provides instant access to a wide variety of content, and enables more people to create entertainment and art for others to enjoy. People use the internet for a variety of reasons, but the convenience of online entertainment has transformed the majority of the world (Gadsden, 2020).

In comparison to other countries, social media had such a massive effect on the Philippines. Over the years, its increasing functionalities have drawn more attention from its users. New apps in app stores have sparked the interest of many Filipinos, resulting in an increase in the number of netizens. The Philippines was recently ranked as one of Asia Pacific's top internet users. According to Statista Research Department (2021), the Philippines' economy has improved in recent years, with nearly 7% growth in the first quarter of this year, so it's no longer called 'the sick man of Asia'. More business opportunities are expected to underpin economic growth as internet use continues to grow at a rapid pace.

Education has been the most pertinent to the researcher’s study since, due to the current pandemic, it was genuinely relevant to the fact that students, especially children, are unable to attend classes normally and spread infection unless medicament has been discovered. The researchers defined children as the “young learners” of this study because nowadays, their mode of education has been reliant on the Internet to continue their learning. Young learners aged 5-12 across the globe are facing the “new normal” and it affected their way of learning unfamiliar topics that are mandatory in preparation for their everyday lives. Still, via online classes, you can practice flexibility, meaning that you can study at your own pace and can give them the authority on delegating their time in executing different tasks like assignments, projects, and performance tasks. In addition, you can continue caring for your family and friends while working full-time and earning education progress (Community College of Aurora, 2022). As everyone can see, the Internet has benefited the young learner’s lives significantly.

Yet, all of a sudden, these young learners were lured to the darkest corners of the wide web. Everyone knows that the Internet is so open that it can sometimes lead to mishaps. This crisis is a never-ending cycle since it occurs every single day. The literal meaning of “dark web” refers to sites that are not indexed and only accessible via specialized web browsers, therefore, keeping its anonymity and privacy to the naked eye in the Internet (Guccione, 2021). Significantly smaller than the tiny surface web, the dark web is considered a part of the deep web. Privacy and security breaches, fake news proliferation, cyberbullying, profanity, inappropriate images, internet addiction and predation, and many more disgraceful actions that may ruin a person’s reputation, most especially for influencing the young people. Speaking of “influencing,” of course the media can certainly impact these innocent lives.

Several researchers have discovered that binge social media use is linked to increased depression, anxiety, and low self-esteem in these children. It also obstructs the development of certain social, direct, and effective communication. Social media can indeed be addictive and distracting, resulting in poor academic performance. This reduced time spent on homework or school assignments may also have an impact on academic performance. Tobacco, alcohol, and other hazardous substances have been recognized all across the Internet. Tobacco and alcohol companies spent millions of dollars on advertising to appeal to people as young as children. Characters in movies and television shows frequently use tobacco and alcoholic beverages. That's not all. Violence in interactive media (such as online entertainment and computer), as opposed to passive media (such as television, movies, and videos), has become a focus of this new study (Lottes, 2018). Overall, we can see how the internet can damage children's reputations.

Fortunately, avoiding these attacks ensures the safety of all Internet users. Individuals should protect themselves and others in the virtual world from harms and risks that may jeopardize personal information, lead to unsafe communications, or even affect their mental wellbeing. E-safety has never been more important in our ever-changing world. It's a broad responsibility that every teacher and parent should be aware of. Knowing about someone's Internet privacy and how someone's behaviors can support a healthy interaction with the use of the Internet, which are important aspects of Internet safety. This is vital for users who have access to online banking and shopping services. Global computer networks provide us with a variety of communication and information exchange facilities, which large and small internet users have already taken advantage of (Common Sense Education, 2022).

The researchers also acknowledge the existence of cyberbullying. Many young learners have recently been victimized by online bullying. Low self-esteem, agony, and to be more specific, suicidal thoughts are all possible scenarios for these victims. Many children struggle to accept themselves for who they are as a result of the media, which forces many of them to change themselves physically and mentally in order to fit into the social norm that social media has created. Cyber-violence affects nearly half of children aged 13-17 in the Philippines, according to the most recent national data. Males (44%) have nearly the same rate of cyberviolence as females (43%) do. As shown in a UNICEF U-Report poll conducted in June 2019, nearly three-quarters of young people from 30 countries believe that social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter are the most common platforms for online bullying, and that 32% believe that the government is primarily responsible for addressing online bullying, 31% believe that young people are responsible, and 29% believe that internet companies are responsible. Twenty-nine percent of tweens (9 to 12 years old) have either engaged in, witnessed, or been the victim of cyberbullying and they rather not able to go into this cyber world in the case of cyber bullying. Also, 14.5% of tweens reported experiencing bullying online, and 49.8% of tweens reported experiencing bullying at school (Pachin & Hinduja, 2020).

Another is the fight against addictive behavior. Internet addiction can have numerous negative emotional and mental consequences. Emotional effects include depression, deception, anxiety, social isolation, aggression, and mood swings. Mental disorders, such as schizophrenia, anxiety, mood, or impulse-control disorders. Excessive internet use can prevent 21st-century learners from achieving their long-term goals (Torbet, 2020).

All mentioned are just some online issues. There are and maybe still many of them that are revolving around the children’s lives. According to a report from UNICEF (2020), there are mainly more than 1.5 billion children worldwide who were impacted by school closures, so they would rely on online learning to help children attain their academic careers. Lack of physical contact with teachers and friends can promote risks of cyberbullying and expose young learners to brutal content.

Another report says that Kaspersky Lab, a cybersecurity company, constantly informed parents from the Philippines about how their children were at risk of cyber threats. Apparently, the data collected from the company revealed the famous activities among Filipino children. They include software, audio, and video; communication sites including social media, chatrooms, and online forums; online shopping; online news; and video games (Pateña, 2019).

The COSI (Child Online Safety Index) of each country can explain to us how "safe" children are online (DQ Institute, 2022). Even though online issues are prevalent in the cyberworld, data such as COSI exists to provide statistics on children's online status. Spain has the highest COSI score of 76 (above average) in 2020, followed by Australia with a score of 75. (above average). Meanwhile, the Philippines has a COSI score of 28. (below average). This means that there are numerous instances of Internet-related issues, particularly among many young learners across the country.

The researchers would not hesitate to slowly get the Internet governing everyone. This is why this study is established to set limitations for children and to spread awareness to the parents and other elders. The limits keep kids safe while exploring the online universe and when they begin doing activities independently. By setting limits, parents teach kids crucial skills that will help them succeed in all areas of life. These limitations teach children self-discipline and help them learn how to make healthy choices. In that way, they can grow mature and healthy with their expanded knowledge online.

The researchers saw possibilities for those who would benefit from this study. This study is primarily focused on children keeping them safe from the dangers of the Internet. They will always be safe from the dark parts of the Internet with the help of their parents, and they will have a brighter future ahead of them thanks to the Internet's educational purposes. Rules and regulations are also implemented for parents and guardians, such as teachers, to set limits for their children when using the Internet to ensure that their children are protected from the dangers of the Internet. To elaborate, other netizens are open to digital awareness. They will now understand that good netizens treat others with respect, protect their privacy and online reputations, and participate in online communities in a respectful and courteous manner.

## **THEORETICAL AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK**

## **Deindividuation Theory** (Douglas, 2017)

The term deindividuation was coined by American social psychologist Leon Festinger in the 1950s to describe situations in which people cannot be individuated or isolated from others. According to deindividuation theory, anonymity contributes to an individual’s loss of self-awareness and responsibility of the individual’s actions within a group setting, enabling the individual to participate in anti-normative behavior without the feeling of guilt. According to Psychological Science (2018), there have been several studies that show that anonymity causes human nature to become cruel and self-centered. In 1981, social psychologist Leon Mann conducted a study that showed how being in a crowd can cause people to act not only offensively, but violently. Mann looked at reports of apparent suicide attempts in newspapers from 1964 to 1979. He whittled down the reports to 21 incidents involving crowds and discovered that in ten of the cases, people encouraged the suicidal person to jump, and in three of the cases, people jeered when rescuers prevented the death. Mann discovered one incident in which the crowd yelled obscenities and hurled stones and debris at the rescue crew. Factors like the crowd's physical distance from the potential jumper (allowing their jeers to be heard but making faces impossible to identify) and the darkness made the onlookers feel anonymous in ways that wouldn't be the case in other types of crowds.

Knowing that they are anonymous anywhere, particularly online, gives them the freedom to do whatever they desire. Although it did mention that recent research has shown that anonymity does not always imply negative outcomes, this would still explain why people can be ruthless online such as cyberbullying. This theory will be used to know what types of dangerous Internet strangers there are and how many are lurking on the internet. This theory will also be used to explain the ruthless behaviors of internet strangers that seem to have no reason why they do such things. In addition, this will also be used as a guide to specifically know what that "group setting" is that influences young netizens to participate in aggressive behavior.

## **Social Cognitive Theory** (Bandura, 1986)

The Social Cognitive Theory (SCT) proposed by Albert Bandura describes the impact of individual experiences, the deeds of others, and environmental factors on individual health behaviors. This theory also points out how people are influenced by their own surroundings, but also how they influence others in their environment. It all started with the so-called “Bobo doll experiments,” where several pre-school children are being revealed to an aggressive and non-aggressive adult model. The surveyors found out that when it came to verbal and physical aggressiveness, including aggression against the Bobo doll and other forms of aggression, the children in the aggressive condition were far more likely to do so. Additionally, males were more likely than girls to be aggressive, particularly if they had been around an aggressive male role model (Vinney, 2019). The SCT is a theoretical framework that can be used in a variety of settings and populations. It's frequently used to help people change their habits. It could be especially useful in rural areas for studying how people interact with their surroundings. The SCT can be used to determine how social determinants of health and a person's prior experiences influence behavior change. Instilling expectations, self-efficacy, and using observational learning and other reinforcements to achieve behavior change, SCT provides opportunities for social support.

In short, Social Cognitive Theory shows that the surroundings of the person influence the person’s actions. If the Internet surroundings of children are full of inappropriate content, chances are they will follow what they see and become like them. That said, this theory will be used to explain the influence of inappropriate internet content on the behaviors of children in both the cyber world and the real world. Those changes in behaviors can be swearing, perverted actions, or even mood swings. In addition, knowing the inappropriate internet content children consume, parents can use this same theory to block those inappropriate content and replace them with age-appropriate content. Those age-appropriate content can then be absorbed by children instead, allowing them to minimize the terrible behaviors that were once absorbed.

## **Aggression Theory** (Philips, 1983, 1986)

Aggression theory insists the act of aggression as a normal human emotion, but it is also a profoundly social deed. People learn it from their own families, classmates, other people, and the media. They would be more prone to be aggressive if they believe it would enhance their social position. It increases when certain actions trigger them, like being abused (either physically or emotionally), being exposed to violence from surroundings, or being treated unfairly by people around them (Gabbey & Raypole, 2022).

We may also perceive how the Internet influences not only adults but also children's attitudes about media violence. It's feasible that they'll be tempted by the harsh content available on the Internet, which can enrage their thoughts, apply the same aggression they have seen, and quickly impact others around them. In this study, the researchers will tackle more about the media violence and harsh content that influences children to become more aggressive. With that said, this theory will be used to enlighten parents, guardians, and netizens about the media violence that encourages young children to become more aggressive. In addition, this theory can also be used to explain the more aggressive behavior of children not only in the cyberworld but also in real life.

## **Self-determination** T**heory** (Deci & Ryan, 2000)

The concept of this theory is relatively simple; it determines if a person is being motivated or just being controlled. Again, the factors of inspiration depends on the type of surrounding they’re at. For instance, if the child is in an environment of people who use the Internet as a part of their daily activities, they would be ‘determined’ to act lke them to blend in (Cherry, 2022). Also, according to self-determination theory, everybody has a fundamental desire for autonomy, competency, and connectedness. It has been demonstrated that this explains the motivating factors behind pathological Internet use. This study hypothesizes wherein basic needs predict pathological Internet use, fully influenced by psychological distress, and hypothesizes that individuals who are mentally and emotionally disturbed since their basic needs are not fulfilled are much more vulnerable to becoming dependent on the internet when seeking such requires satisfaction from online activities. In a sample of 229 Hong Kong University students, problematic Internet use, psychological distress, and satisfaction with basic needs were psychometrically measured, and structural equation modeling was used to test the hypothesized model. The model has a good fit across all indices. Furthermore, statistical testing revealed a psychological distress mediation effect between fulfillment and problematic Internet usage. Based on the framework of self-determination theory, the findings add to our understanding of the development and prevention of problematic Internet use. While preventing and treating problematic Internet use, the fulfillment of unmet needs should be emphasized.

With this theory in mind, the relationship between the theory and this study is that this theory describes perfectly why children, especially unsupervised ones, are addicted to the Internet to the point where people are stuck with the net that they feel that they cannot survive without it. Unbeknownst to them, this can only provide temporary satisfaction leading them to crave more. In addition, some people, who get their needs and pleasures from the Internet, have only gotten pain and displeasure.

Unearthing why some are glued deeply to the Internet is a major milestone for this research. Using this theory, we can uncover the reason why netizens are addicted to their gadgets and provide them with better alternatives that can not only result in them living a better lifestyle but also fill their needs permanently instead of temporarily like the Internet does.

**RESEARCH PARADIGM**

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## Figure 1: Research Paradigm

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## **STATEMENT OF OBJECTIVES**

These interrogative statements served as foundations to the research paper regarding the topics about the Internet, digital awareness, the dark web, and children’s safety whilst exploring more in the cyberworld. Hence, the researchers provided these objectives to themselves:

1.) To identify the learner's cyberworld engagement.

2.) To state the dangers of young learners when using the internet.

3.) To determine the parent’s interventions to how they safeguard their children when using the internet.

# CHAPTER 2

**METHODOLOGY**

##

## **RESEARCH DESIGN**

Since this study requires gathering data from the young learner’s experiences and knowledge about the Internet, the researchers therefore utilized the qualitative research mode. Qualitative research relies on collecting and analyzing non-numerical data to understand the concepts, opinions, or experiences. It can be used to gather in-depth insights into a problem or generate new ideas for research. They tend to be flexible and focus on retaining rich meaning when interpreting data (Bhandari, 2020). Furthermore, the framework of this study is descriptive design. Descriptive research, according to McCombes (2019), attempts to accurately and methodically identify citizens, scenarios, or occurrences. A descriptive research design can investigate one or more variables using a variety of research methods. Unlike experimental research, the researcher does not regulate or modify the variables; instead, they are observed and measured.

All in all, this qualitative descriptive design is the most suitable for this research study because this helped uncover the impact of the Internet on the lives of young netizens. In addition, this research design is appropriate not only for acquiring the experiences of children; it can also help answer the questions of what, when, where, and how in the researchers' research problem.

## **POPULATION AND LOCALE OF THE STUDY**

The study population are the individuals required for a study (Stöppler, 2021). Meanwhile, the locale of the study refers to the territory, province, or country where the study is conducted. The researchers dived into the dangers of the Internet that children ages 5 to 12 face and the problems and fears parents face when their young children use different media platforms along the Internet. Furthermore, with the gathered information with the help of several questions, they guided the researchers in finding solutions to avoid foreign dangers whilst exploring the cyber world.

The key characteristics of the target population that the researchers used to answer their research questions are known as inclusion criteria. The characteristics of potential study participants who meet the inclusion criteria but have additional characteristics that may alter the study's results or put them at risk for an unexpected outcome on the other hand are known as Exclusion criteria. When designing a study, it is critical for researchers to not only describe the adequate inclusion and exclusion criteria, but also to assess how those decisions affected the external validity of the study's results (Patino & Ferreira, 2018).

The young learners (who are 5 to 12 years old) cannot handle specific questions. This meant that the participants included the parents/guardians of the young learners (from preschool to elementary levels). Not only that, but the young learners were Internet users who had experiences with the web as the researchers can extract more information, whether positive or negative results, regarding the dangers revolving around the Internet. All answers were based on what the parents/guardians have monitored. There are 16 participants interviewed via limited face-to-face amidst this current pandemic. The interviews took place within the vicinity of the Lorma Preschool and Grade school, the locale of the study. The surveys utilized purposive sampling method as a sampling method where the interviewees selected the participants who possess certain characteristics fitted for the study.

The exclusion criteria for this study were most commonly be other people like senior citizens, middle-aged adults, and young adults who are not the parents/guardians of the young learners. Teenagers and toddlers are also not included. The researchers also excluded participants that have little to no involvement with the web. The participants were not qualified too if they are a student in a school outside of Lorma Preschool and Grade school.

In order to identify the participants, the researchers asked for referrals from teachers in the Preschool and Grade School Department, as well as for some information on parents. They then approached the participants by inspecting the Preschool and Grade School buildings during their free time. The researchers also considered the fact that they can speak to some of their close relatives, friends, or loved ones who also have children studying in Lorma Preschool and Grade School.

## **DATA GATHERING TOOL**

The researchers conducted interviews via limited face-to-face with semi-structured questionnaires to collect the necessary data for the study. Participants were asked to respond completely and open-endedly to the interviewers' questions. The researchers (interviewers) conducted a semi-structured interview with the participants, in which they did not strictly follow their formalized list of questions. They have questioned the interviewee with more open-ended questions and allowed a more casual discussion to entertain the interviewee (Doyle, 2020). The use of audio recording was also utilized by the researchers, which was proven useful later when verifying and thematizing data instead of relying on jotting down notes. The researchers also asked pre-interview questions as well as follow-up questions if necessary. The goal is to look into, examine, and verify issues raised by the researcher on a specific topic or set of topics.

## **2.4 DATA GATHERING PROCEDURE AND ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

Before collecting all of the study's data, the researchers first confirmed their presence with the Lorma Colleges Research Ethics Committee. This included requesting permission to conduct debriefings in the vicinity of the school. Prior to confirmation, the researchers requested changes to their research work, particularly from the school's headmaster or other academic administrators. The interviews began as soon as the researchers were given full rights.

Researchers conducted interviews with parents/guardians of the young learners via limited face-to-face surveys using a semi-structured question mode. But first of all, the participants were handed an informed consent form, which explained that they were invited to be surveyed for the study. Once the information is given, the person was given a choice to agree to each term before being interviewed for the study. The researchers did not compel participants to participate. Participants had the option to withdraw at any time without jeopardizing their relationship with the researchers. Now, after they have accepted the conditions of the consent form, the interview was scheduled during the participant’s free time. They were to answer a series of questions, while the surveyors recorded the interview. The interview only contained questions from the research paper and some additional questions that clarified their answers further.

The interview did as well considered its time limit. The researchers suggested that the interviews were only limited to ten to fifteen (10-15) minutes. However, most interviews finished under ten (10) minutes, therefore, saving more time for the researchers.

People were prevented from harming society or others by ethical considerations. Prior to the question, the respondents were given a detailed explanation of the survey's purpose. It also informed them of the significance of the study, allowing them to fully comprehend what the researchers were about to do and the data required for the study.

In the first few seconds of the interview, the interviewer asked the participant if they were comfortable with or willing to be recorded for the sake of research purposes. This is so that if they never gave their affirmation, the researcher were to pull out the recording paraphernalia. Otherwise, if the participant agreed, the interviewer were to immediately start the survey while recording.

The surveyors conducted one-on-one interviews while not including the identities, age ranges, genders, or addresses of the participants to maintain anonymity and ensure that identities are unknown. To respect privacy and ensure that certain information is not available or accessed by anyone other than the researchers, all participant data were kept confidential by anyone other than the researchers.

The researchers also ensured participant safety and, most importantly, welfare. Every single interviewee had the option to participate and was treated with the deepest respect possible. The questions served were simple and straightforward, as well as relevant to the topic. The questions did not include any personal or sensitive questions. Participants, in turn, honestly responded to the questions posed based on their own personal experiences.

To sum up, the researchers observed all these ethical considerations within the duration of the interview.

## DATA MANAGEMENT

Maintaining the research's authenticity, reliability, and accuracy requires accurate and appropriate data treatment results, the researcher used thematization to collect data from the participants.

According to Brown (2021), thematizing analyzes interview responses. To analyze the interview responses, data is analyzed for the presence of themes. Responses can be examined multiple times on an overall basis or on responses per interview question to identify the themes. In simpler terms, thematization is selecting specific topics as themes in discussion. This was used in the research study to help find data that are related to the research topic and to have a deeper understanding of it. Through thematization, the researchers were able to find the best possible alternatives to avoid unwanted things such as internet addiction, bullying, and all sorts of cybercrimes.

The researchers firstly familiarized themselves with the interview results by reading and reviewing interview transcripts gathered from surveys. It took time to comprehend the meaning behind what the participants were trying to tell. The researchers used codes that discussed the themes of our research via words, phrases, or numbers that were to be easily memorized, skimmed, and arranged (Medelyan, 2021). Then, the researchers assigned codes that summarized results because of themes. Depending on the problems of the participants, random codes were distributed. With the data gathered, the researchers arranged the codes to different theme categories.

After organizing the themes required for the study, it was now time for comparing the themes to the accumulated data set. Usefulness and accuracy are crucial factors to represent data. If there were issues encountered by the researchers, they either split, combined, discarded, or created more themes necessary for precise statistics. The final set of themes were named and explained accordingly. Finally, the themes were written on the research paper after all the procedures above were done correctly.

# CHAPTER 3

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS**

The interviews with the participants of the study were already conducted. There was a wide array of responses from the interviewees. And now, this chapter presents the results— particularly, the presentation, analysis, and interpretation of data obtained.

As mentioned earlier, the study aims at the young learner’s activities in the cyberworld, the possible dangers (stated by their parents/guardians) encountered, and the initial “solutions” of these parents to keep their children away from these hazards. And so, the researchers seeked out to acquire some necessary information regarding this matter. The said data were then transcribed and presented in the table shown below.

## Table 1.1

| **Major Themes** | **Sub Themes** | **Participant Code** | **Sample Significant Statements** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Applications Children Use** | Educational Applications Children UseEntertainment Applications Children Use | 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 161, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16 | * "Websites? Usually the G-apps [Google Apps like Classroom, Drive, Chrome, etc.]."
* "My child [is] mainly using Google Classroom [and] Gmail.”
* “My child uses Google Classroom, Youtube, and [Google] Chrome (for research purposes)."
* "In the youtube application specifically if they have to research videos about their MAPEH for dances and music"
* "Of course, number 1 [is] Google Class[room]. They use it in their classroom. Number 2 [is] Google"
* "For educational purposes, she uses Canva and other Applications."
* "It's because before he/she was [using Google Classroom] online"
* "We just used Google Classroom when they were online"
* "Zoom…Google Classroom for their

online classes."* "Google classroom [for educational purposes]."
* "What they use at home is Google application for their assignments"
* "For educational purposes, tutorial sites like Tinker."
* “Google.”
* "They usually use Google."
* "For educational purposes, sa Google and Google Classroom."
* "For educational purposes my child uses Google Classroom and Google to do his homework."
* “For entertainment, he is only using Youtube for watching livestreams and funny videos. He is not using social media and games.”
* “For entertainment, my child is using Roblox, Minecraft.”
* "And number 3 is Youtube... Mostly [is] games. Roblox; that is what they use [and] kids games."
* "TikTok, but limited. They have their own account but their only friends are their cousins.”
* "For entertainment, she’s into Roblox, Minecraft, and Valorant…She also uses Discord (that’s not a site) to communicate with friends."
* "She’s [also] into games. Minecraft, she’s into it. Roblox, she’s into it also. And [she’s referring to the game Valorant]…YouTube only."
* "[They are mostly using] Youtube Kids."
* "[She/He is using] Youtube. Sometimes, they watch along on the TV if they are with their grandmother."
* "My son uses Youtube; he watches there. And in Netflix, he watches there…He plays Roblox and car games."
* "[Mostly,] They play minecraft."
* "Youtube [and] Netflix; that's where they watch...Games? Mostly for [redacted] [is] Roblox and other games."
* "Mostly for entertainment [is] TikTok, Youtube... and Facebook."
* “Youtube.”
* "...and Youtube for educational purposes."
* "Facebook."
* "And for entertainment purposes my child mostly uses Tiktok to watch videos."
 |
| **Dangers Children Face When Using the Internet** | ScreentimeInternet AddictionCyberbullyingPornographyInappropriate Content | 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 163, 8, 10, 11, 123, 144, 7, 132, 5, 6, 7, 8, 16 | * "After school, she takes hold of her cellphone, but then I usually have it confiscated [at] 9 o'clock in the evening.”
* “Very often, which is our problem. For example, for an hour, he is using it for thirty (30) minutes continuously. I’m setting a time, but the problem is,he is sneaking out."
* “He uses the Internet, his Google Classroom, everyday for doing his activities and during his lessons, but with limited time. Two (2) hours for educational purposes and sometimes two (2) hours for his games and for watching Youtube and Netflix. He can only use it with a limited time. He has a schedule. In the morning, one (1) hour for games and one (1) hour in the afternoon (for education) to check his assignments and lessons for the next."
* "Four (4) hours in a day because they have screen time."
* "Saturday and Sunday only (weekends). Saturday? Maybe it starts at eleven (11) am and up to twelve (12) [pm]. Then, they will again stop for maybe three (3) to four (4) [hours]."
* "But now that they have classes, it's controlled. Normally, if there are no classes, it takes her (especially when you are not at home) maybe five (5) to six (6) hours. But if they have classes, they use it [the Internet] everytime we go home."
* "Everyday. For a couple of hours just up until the battery runs out."
* "Up until the battery runs out too, so more or less six (6) hours."
* "[Usually,] They go on for a whole day up until night time. Six (6) to twelve (12) hours [is mostly the longest]"
* "Everyday. Two (2) to three (3) hours they play there or use Google for their assignments."
* "I allow them to use the Internet eight (8) hours per day. Actually, it would be four (4) hours a day but they overdo it to more than eight (8) hours"
* "Almost everyday. How many hours? Four (4) to six (6) hours."
* "Actually almost everyday to check on their assignments and other information. Usually after classes, they spend two (2) hours before bedtime."
* "At Least I’m giving him an hour a day just to check the announcement for the Google Classroom and most of the time only on weekends."
* "Five (5) to seven (7) [hours]."
* "My child mostly uses the Internet when during his homework and playing games after the school."
* “How often? Too much. Everyday, she uses that one [the Internet]."
* "Addiction [mostly]."
* "Too much exposure [is also my fear]."
* "They can be addicted."
* "It's that they will be attached to the Internet."
* "Cyberbullies. Because I already have an experience that there is a player (sa Roblox) that she was sending [foul and violent] messages."
* "Cyberbullying and able to open offensive images and messages in the Internet."
* “The only fear I have is for her to be going to sites which are not good for her, like porn sites."
* “One of my fears is if he can access inappropriate websites."
* “Maybe, actually, if they will go beyond what's needed, what they get that isn't appropriate to them. For instance, the concept of files they get on the internet are more on the adult side. I think that’s every parent’s biggest fear."
* "They will also ask, ‘Mommy, I saw this,’ like that. That's what a child does..”
* "Nowadays, many vloggers’ contents are inappropriate for their age level. Some vloggers’ contents are sometimes funny, but the behavior that they are showing is inappropriate.”
* "Exposure to inappropriate materials."
 |
| **Parents' Soluions to Dangers Posed By The Internet** | Monitoring Child ActivitiesBlocking of SitesConfiscatingLimiting ScreentimeTalking to ChildEducating Child | 2, 5, 7, 81, 111, 4, 167, 8, 10, 151, 43, 12, 13 | * "I also monitor if [they use] the Internet...It's really necessary to monitor your child if they use their gadget. You know what they open. So it's necessary that you're there; close monitoring really."
* "If there's time, I really look too at the things they watch so that not all are bad."
* "... and I cannot see [his time limit] because I’m in the school; I’m a teacher also. If I'm not at home, their grandmother is whom they are with. But now that their father is here, then her father [takes care of them now]”
* "...and I’m always checking the search history, or the websites he accesses."
* "I check the history of the Youtube, the Chrome, the things he watch, what sites did he go, his games."
* "I really have no fear of what they see because all sites prohibited for a five (5) year old are blocked."
* “I block websites. There is an app in iPhone where you can block [unnecessary websites] and allow [certain] websites (to be used by my child)."
* “Whenever I hear now those words in what they watch, I just close the application. Then I just lock it so that they cannot access it anymore [on their internet]."
* "I confiscated her cellphone."
* ”As a parents we can help kids grounded in the real world by putting limits on media use. Keep computers in the public areas of the house. Avoid laptops and smartphones in bedrooms."
* "Guidance to the usage. I mean, there's a time [for using the Internet]."
* “I’m trying to limit the time of the usage of the Internet."
* "I tell them that they should do twenty (20) minutes on the computer. Afterward, rest for ten (10) minutes and resume again. But it can also be one (1) hour rest then one (1) hour again.”
* "7. “I give him a time limit."
* “After, just talk to them properly that they shouldn't access or watch those. They just change it.”
* “I usually talk to her and tell her that it’s a NO NO for you to go to these sites."
* “Giving advice about using the Internet.”
* "I don't think I will remove the [tracking] app. We just have to educate her. If they are a teenager, [I know] they'll be to be more responsible."
* “Maybe, just like too the traditional guidance of a parent, their guidance should still be random. Because everything, in other words, everything that they see and read influences the child's behavior and their brain. So, that is still my daily advice to [redacted]."
 |

 During the gathering of data, three (3) major themes were formed. They include the following: (1) the applications children use, (2) the dangers children face when using the Internet, and (3) the solutions of parents to Internet problems, altogether with the subthemes and some significant statements.

## MAJOR THEME 1: APPLICATIONS USED BY CHILDREN

There are a wide variety of applications that children use, ranging from educational to entertainment-based. They would most likely be applications that are both user friendly and family friendly. For example, educational apps like Duolingo, Google Classroom, and Kahoot are the ones mostly used in 2020, according to statistical data by SensorTower (2020).

**Educational Applications Children Use.** Most of the participants let their children use Google apps for their education since it is found in any nook and cranny of this world. Take Participant 4 for example, who responded with Google Classroom, Drive, and Chrome, which are typically used for online classes during the time of the pandemic. Participants 8 and 14 told something similar. Google Apps for education is totally a suite of cloud-based productivity tools that are designed specifically for the education sector that includes a range of applications such as Google Classroom, Docs, Sheets, Slides, and Forms, among others, that allow teachers and students to create, share, and collaborate on educational content in real-time. As for statistics, Google Apps for Education has seen tremendous growth in recent years. According to Sinha, as of 2021, over 170 million students and educators worldwide use Google Workspace for Education, making it one of the most widely used educational technology platforms globally (Sinha, 2021). Learning online is now a trend, where almost everything is in front of the learner. These online learning techniques are represented in Google apps for education, it offers many opportunities for the online learner to explore different options in front of them to get the full experience of e-learning. A study conducted by Bhat, et al. (2018) confirms G-Suites as an alternative form of education for students worldwide. The study has also assessed the effectiveness of assignments when submitted manually to the teachers as opposed to submission through an e-learning facility like Google Classroom and the results show overwhelming success when this activity was carried out with the help of technology. That is why it is true that technology nowadays has made the education system much more innovative and engaging with the assistance of numerous tech tools.

**Entertainment Applications Children Use:** Entertainment before was only limited to playing outdoors. But with the rise of the internet, the way people consume entertainment has dramatically changed. Nowadays, users can access online entertainment, such as movies, TV shows, music, and more, with just a few clicks from the comfort of their homes (Partner Content, 2023). Entertainment has the power to change the way we think about certain issues and can even inspire us to make a change in our lives. It is important, however, not to take everything we see and hear at face value, as much of it is fictional and exaggerated. In addition, it can also be used to spread awareness about certain issues such as raising funds for a cause. Entertainment can also help change the way we think about certain issues, by presenting a new perspective that challenges old notions (Means, 2022). Participant 7, for instance, says that her child is using YouTube, a popular streaming platform, to watch live streams. Participant 11 conveys similarly, yet their child uses another media platform: TikTok. Participant 14’s child, aside from social media, plays video games. From interactive learning platforms to imaginative play worlds, these apps provide engaging and enriching experiences. However, parents and guardians need to monitor their children's app usage and ensure a healthy balance between screen time and other activities. While there are many advantages to utilizing the Internet for entertainment, it's vital to recognize that an unhealthy dependency on the Internet for amusement can have negative impacts on people. Overusing the internet for amusement can result in social isolation, a lack of activity, and the disregard of interpersonal interactions in the real world. The plethora of online entertainment alternatives can also lead to addiction and a decline in productivity since people may put more importance on amusement than on pressing tasks. In order to prevent entertainment from taking priority over other important elements of life, it is critical to maintain a balanced attitude to internet usage.

## MAJOR THEME 2: DANGERS CHILDREN FACE WHEN USING THE INTERNET

Now that the young learners’ Internet activities are shown, the second major theme displays the issues parents/guardians/caretakers face while their children are utilizing the usage of the Internet. As we all know, the Internet is a marvelous place that serves as a foundation or technique for children’s learning while also being a risk since children might stumble upon things they shouldn’t stumble upon (Ben-Joseph, 2022).

**Screen time.** The main worry of every parent in the world is this. This might soon result in one of the most dreaded challenges facing kids: addiction. Most kids spend more time watching screens than the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recommends, which is no more than an additional hour or two (Christensen, 2021). However, because taking classes online was popular at the time, the recommended amount of screen time for learning was ignored. Participant 8 provided a wonderful illustration of this situation when they stated that their child was only permitted to use the internet for a specific period of time (for both their academic work and leisure). However, another participant (in particular, Participant 7) struggles to limit their child's screen time since they frequently "sneak out" to use their technology. Participant 4 discovered a technique to limit their child's screen time by "having their phone confiscated" at the appropriate moment. As further explained by a study by Nagata (2023), it is true that spending too much time in front of screens is connected to a number of negative effects for children. According to the study, early teens who spend their time binge-watching movies and playing video games quickly acquire conduct disorder and obsessive-compulsive disorder. They abruptly encourage a "wanting to do it again" mentality in an unstable way, which introduces the following subtheme.

**Internet Addiction.** Spending too much time in front of the computer screen will increase their appetite and demand for it. Several individuals expressed concern about their kids becoming Internet addictions. The third participant claimed that their kid uses the Internet excessively. And Participant 8 worries that their child may spend too much time online. They appear to be aware of the negative effects of addiction and feel pressure to take immediate action. Tell us one of the causes behind the prevalence of Internet addiction. According to self-determination theory, addiction may occur as a result of the user's needs and desires being satisfied on the Internet. However, users need to be aware that addiction results in both mental and emotional symptoms like loneliness, despair, and anxiety (Zayed, 2022). A study by Noroozi (2021) demonstrates that Internet addicts' quality of life (QOL) is lower than that of a typical individual who even spends a middling amount of time online. As the Internet is already viewed as a "integral part of everyday human life" that might lead to a compulsive urge for some of the population, it affects the addict both "physically and psychologically." This is why addiction should be seen as a serious health issue or concern for every internet user and a reminder to lessen its side effects.

**Cyberbullying.** Many children find it difficult to halt situations where they are being bullied online, despite their best efforts. It is a less severe form of bullying when compared to traditional or direct bullying. Cyberbullying is the act of sending, uploading, or disseminating offensive, harmful, false, or cruel content about another person via websites and online tools. It may also entail revealing private or delicate facts about another person in a way that humiliates or embarrasses them. Sometimes cyberbullying turns into a criminal or unlawful conduct. Cyberbullying is no different from conventional bullying because both involve depression, worry, loneliness, low self-esteem, and, in some cases, suicidal thoughts (Dreckett, 2022). One in three children experience bullying at least once per month, and one in ten pupils are the targets of cyberbullying, according to a PhilStar news article. According to the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), cyberbullying is "on the rise" during the COVID-19 pandemic as more students are "living, learning, and socializing online." This leads to a sharp increase in screen time and the merging of the online and offline worlds, which greatly increases children's susceptibility to both physical and online bullying. Cyberbullying is more prevalent since it is simple to remain anonymous and harass any random internet user. According to the deindividuation theory, which we discussed previously in our theoretical framework, anonymity causes a person to lose self-awareness, which makes it easier for them to engage in hostile behavior (Nickerson, 2023). Returning to the participants, it can be noted that Participant 14 is concerned about their child's ability to "open offensive images and messages," implying that their child may be offended by phrases, films, or messages posted on the Internet. Participant 3 suffered a traumatic encounter when an online user sent their child offensive and aggressive remarks. These parents are concerned about the repercussions cyberbullying may have on their kids. Soon after, the children would experience episodes of depression, trauma, self-harm, and suicide.

**Pornography.** One of the most prevalent addictions affects unsupervised youngsters as well as adults and teenagers, in some situations. Crawford (2021) details the effects of porn on young people in a written essay. Pornography damages the developing brains of youngsters, changes their perspectives on sex and other people, lowers their quality of life, and even causes harm to their fellow classmates. In addition, Participant 13 elaborated on their opinion about pornography addiction. Participants 4 and 7 voiced their worry about their child browsing porn sites or "inappropriate sites." They expressed concern that their child may acquire documents "beyond what is needed (which is for school purposes)" and "content with a concept much more adulthood." It suggests that this parent only wanted their child to use the internet for educational purposes and not for any other pointless pursuits. Similar to heroin addiction, porn addiction involves regular doses of the substance. Dopamine, a neurochemical that causes emotions of elation, happiness, motivation, and attention, is released in the brain as a result of it (Barnett, 2019). Curing this form of addiction would take many years, especially for a toddler whose psyche is already preoccupied with explicit visuals and media, as the brain would only be directed to high degrees of "excitement."

**Inappropriate Content.** Many of the people who were interviewed also express dread of any other form of offensive information except porn. They are also referred to as 18+ material because they are intended solely for adults. The e-books they read, the media they watch, and the video games they play may deal with inappropriate subjects for kids such as violence, terrorism, suicide, foul language, gambling, racism, sexism, and homophobia. Any social media post, including text messages, photographs, videos, memes, and many more, might be deemed "inappropriate" (Twigg, 2020). Since they have the ability to "manipulate" computers in ways that the user doesn't want, even viruses and malware are regarded as "harmful content" (Johansen, 2020). Something that is threatening to the youngster is considered inappropriate content. This would quickly result in altered behavior, including drinking or smoking, insomnia, anxiety, a fearless mindset (thinking about starting fights), and many other things. The fact that their child is "being exposed to inappropriate materials" as opposed to the typical kid-friendly programming disturbs Participant 16. Participant 6 also brought up the topic of curiosity, saying that children may show their parents anything they come across out of pure curiosity (including material that is inappropriate for them as minors), which is a "trial-and-error" method of figuring out their children's Internet issues as a way of figuring out their child's activities and how they can approach them in the future. On the other side, Participant 7 mentioned that some "vloggers" (individuals who frequently publish brief videos known as "vlogs") also exhibit unsuitable material. Any form of unsuitable content poses a risk to the child's attitude and perhaps reputation. According to social-cognitive theory, at their young age, they shouldn't be exposed to the kind of odd information that will damage their entire life if they imitate their behavior.

## MAJOR THEME 3: PARENTS' SOLUTIONS TO DANGERS POSED BY THE INTERNET

Despite the Internet's innovations for the current world, it is obvious that a person's life might be badly impacted when they are still developing their minds and are unfamiliar with the Internet. However, parents have eventually discovered early measures for their children to prevent the negative influences of the internet and found them to be successful.

**Monitoring Child Activities.** Monitoring a child's online behavior is done to ensure their safety rather than to invade their privacy. Parents should take precautions to protect their kids from internet predators, identity thieves, viruses, and spyware as well as cyberbullying and sexting (Woda, 2019). This implies that the parent must maintain a close relationship with their child in order to ascertain their regular online activities, as Participant 2 indicates, if the parent wants to assure what their children are doing online. Participant 8 has access to see what their child views, visits, and does on the Internet. However, because they frequently attend to their jobs, not all parents are present to watch over and mentor their children at home. Participant 7 asserts that because they are a school teacher, they must leave their home to get to work, leaving their child behind and unable to monitor their screen usage. Fortunately, the grandmother and father of the child can use their devices to monitor their offspring. Parents need to make it a priority to watch over their kids' internet usage. Children might be exposed to unsuitable content and harmful behaviors like bullying and harassment on the internet since it is so chaotic. To keep their kids safe from viruses, online predators, and cyberbullying, parents should keep an eye on how their kids are using the internet (Sarmiento, 2023). A child has a genuine chance of developing ties with people who use the internet to pretend to be someone they are not in real life. Children and even teenagers who are exposed to this "act" at a young age may have issues with sexting (Capriola, 2019). These risks should be known to parents. They must therefore discover means of communication with their child as well as a means of keeping tabs on their online activities.

**Blocking of Sites.** As Participant 1 reveals, resourceful parents discovered a solution for their child to get around Internet risks with the aid of site blockers, which helps the parent get over their concerns about their child's online activity. In fact, schools are the ones with the most expertise in website blocking. A different person, referred to as Participant 11, demonstrates an iPhone function they use to ban and permit particular websites for their child to use. However, by blocking unrelated websites for kids, you can prevent them from accessing inappropriate websites, downloading infected files, or even being influenced by violent, pornographic, or harsh language. You can also stop kids from being distracted by gaming and entertainment websites that could harm their academic performance (Dunkin, 2019). Web filtering technology on some websites protects both students and teachers in the educational setting from online dangers such phishing schemes, identity theft, cyberbullying, and unsuitable content. A variety of software limits access to websites that are inappropriate for educational purposes, include illegal content, or are generally hazardous to the student's health or education (Singh, 2022). The objective is straightforward but successful since schools are aware that while the Internet can be helpful for teaching, it can also pose risks and dangers to children, especially those who are younger. Thus, this kind of technology guarantees children's safety and, more significantly, protects them from hazardous internet content.

**Confiscating.** It's referred to as "confiscating gadgets" when parents confiscate a child's device as a form of discipline. One of the most frequent responses from a parent when their child engages in behavior that is inappropriate in their sight is to confiscate technology. Several people expressed concern about the possibility of their kids being exposed to inappropriate content. If Participant 1 hears profanity in the videos (for example) that their child is watching, they would quickly take their child's device and lock their computer. Due to "a recent school issue involving their child," Participant 4's child had their phone taken away. Participant 16 states that they "put limits on media use" by "keeping computers in public areas of the house" and "avoid laptops and smartphones in bedrooms," which basically means they try to prevent their child from using gadgets by taking them away. Given how prevalent technology is in kids' life, removing it can be used as a tool for discipline. In fact, taking away a child's phone has become a common punishment method for parents. According to a Civic Science survey, 64% of US parents say that limiting their children's screen time or taking away their phones is their biggest threat to them (Forstmann, 2018). Psychologists claim that in order to stop this entitlement culture, overprotective inclinations must be regulated. Strong arguments are made for both sides of this difficult matter of confiscation. Making sure that youngsters have great associations with their gadgets may require striking a balance between taking concerns about excessive screen time and recognizing the benefits of technology.

**Limiting Screen Time.** According to a piece by Ayuob (2021), taking a brief break from your screen can give you more time to spend with your loved ones, raise your general health, and improve your mood. Additionally, cutting back on screen usage helps prevent the signs of stress, anxiety, and depression. Participant 10 offered a set screen time schedule for their child to follow with varied time periods of screen time and relaxation, similar to Participant 16's concept. Participant 7 stated that they are "trying to limit the screentime of Internet usage." It is true that the internet was designed to isolate people from their regular lives. In the modern era of today, the internet is undoubtedly a fantastic tool. However, excessive online use can have serious negative effects, like addiction. Additionally, it's possible that excessive screen time can change a child's brain. Numerous studies have linked it to risky conduct and hyperactivity (Lange, 2019). However, they would need to take swift action as parents. In order for their children to stay active, social, and safe in the technological age, it is their obligation to teach them to restrict their screen time (Leavitt, 2019). Furthermore, as self-determination theory argues, addiction occurs as a result of the user's needs and desires being satisfied in the cyberworld. Researchers advise parents to spend as much time as possible with their children, keep them amused, or just talk to them more. Typically, kids use the internet for entertainment. However, if the parent or guardian provides entertainment, the youngster is usually never forced to use the internet for amusement, which reduces screen time and addiction while also improving the bond. All of this is done to combat the biggest threat posed by excessive screen time: addiction.

**Talking to Child.** Many children are self-assured that they understand how to stay safe online. Children are frequently more at risk for a number of reasons, though. They might not always consider the repercussions of their behavior, which can lead them to divulge excessive personal information. Cyberbullies and predators occasionally target children explicitly. If you're a parent or legal guardian, you can keep your children safe by having open conversations with them about their Internet use, educating them about the risks of the Internet, and doing all the research you can so you can make wise choices. Approaching the child could be difficult, but it's worth it (DeLeon, 2023). But in this day and age of social media, video games, and even homework, a strategy and initiative must be implemented for the protection of kids. Additionally, it is increasingly likely that teachers would employ technology to educate kids, according to a Loudoun Pediatric Associates (2019) article. This would quickly cause the risks associated with using the Internet to increase. The piece also notes that various ages have different dialogues about using the Internet. The much older kids or teenagers, who are considerably more independent and secretive, would be more harder to manage because they can be more outspoken about their actions. Participant 4 tells their child that it is completely forbidden to access inappropriate websites, especially those that corrupt the child's pure brain. Additionally, Participant 1 believes that talking to their child in a calm manner can persuade them to avoid specific content on the Internet. It is essential to have a conversation with children about the dangers of the internet in order to secure their safety and wellbeing in the digital age. It requires having real and open dialogues with them about the risks children can encounter online, such as fraud, identity theft, offensive content, cyberbullying, and online predators. Regular conversations on online safety can strengthen the trust between parents and their children.

**Educating Child.** According to White Lodge News (2020), a parent's influence and support can be extremely important for a child's personal and academic development. Parents have a duty to educate their children while they are still young because their brains have not yet fully matured to the point where they can understand the dos and don'ts, particularly with regard to Internet safety. Parents should let their kids learn about the various online risks that exist as well as the safety precautions for young netizens. Children can traverse the online world safely with the aid of education. By teaching kids about internet safety, parents can help them use the internet wisely and lessen their exposure to online risks like cyberbullying, identity theft, and inappropriate information. While refusing to delete the tracking program, participant 3 said that they would need to step in and teach their child Internet safety skills that would continue until the child's teenage years. Participant 12 makes a similar statement. Following the "traditional guidance," Participant 13 instructs and counsels the younger generation as an older and wiser person. By teaching their children how to use platforms properly and safely, as well as by emphasizing the value of online privacy, parents can lessen the online effect on their children. They might also encourage kids to participate in more traditional activities like playing with friends, playing sports, and joining groups, which can promote social connection that is good for both kids and adults (Byjus, 2023). Kids who feel comfortable discussing their internet experiences and concerns are more likely to ask for help or assistance when confronted with challenging conditions. Thanks to this open communication in a supportive environment, children can learn from their errors and receive guidance on how to handle challenges they may meet online.

# CHAPTER 4

**FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

Previously, this research already accomplished conducting interviews with the target participants, as well as thematizing the data in one single table. Now, this chapter shall provide a quick recap of the study, as well as cover the analysis and interpretation of the data collected during the study’s duration. In other words, the summary of the findings. This part shall also list down the recommendations of what the parents should do in order for the young learners (or their children) to remain secure, uninfluenced, and unscathed while utilizing the advantages of the cyberworld. Chapter 4 shall be divided into two subchapters.

## FINDINGS

As technology is creating easier lives, the younger generation, namely the young learners, have the ability to browse the cyberworld for the sake of learning and even amusement. Yet, along with the Internet’s immense advantages comes its threatening hazards to the innocent minds of children. Cybercrimes, cyberbullying, addiction, and many others. Those were just some of the things the “dark web” (or the cyberworld’s dark side) has to offer to various Internet users around the world. The researchers were more than aware of this mess. And now, they struggled to find solutions for children to avoid Internet dangers by taking a look at the children’s experiences beforehand. Thus, this study was established.

Three major themes emerged from the participant’s responses in the interviews, which were also based on the questions.

The first major theme was the applications children use. Children would usually go for educational applications and websites suitable for young audiences. Yet, they were also exposed to sites meant for all ages too, Google being the most relevant one. There is no difference when it comes to entertainment. Video platforms like YouTube and Netflix, video games like Roblox, and social media apps like TikTok are what these children use as well.

The second theme was the dangers children encounter when they use the Internet. The researchers expected everything they’ve said, but with some further evidence. A wide array of challenges that children face such as addiction, cyberbullying, inappropriate content, and many others could lead to bigger consequences affecting the life of the child. Some even confessed that their fear came true. It is true that as the Internet evolves, it would lead to the rise of incidents like this. Parents would have to immediately intervene with these kinds of issues happening with their child/children, which leads to the third or final theme.

Parents finding out initial solutions effective for their child/children is the third major theme formulated. Most of the parent’s responses would be confiscating, educating the child, monitoring the child's activities, limiting screentime, and many common solutions. While others can go as crafty as installing tracking devices, securing passwords, as blocking sites. The efforts of trying to stop their child/children from Internet dangers are commendable. Yet, still, they aren’t proven to be enough.

Overall, although different parenting techniques were tried, it still turned out flawed in the end. Albeit the vast opportunities children can discover in the Internet, it still didn’t encourage children’s safety when exploring the cyberworld. With this, the researchers suggested alternative mediations for parents.

## 4.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

Here are some solutions the researchers would like to promote. There were some answers from the participants that the researchers would also like to suggest. It is certain that these solutions lessen negative effects of a child and promote the spirit of Internet safety. Going back to the significance of the study, it showcases that there are three (3) different people who shall be benefited in this study. They include the children (or the young learners), the parents or guardians (or the caretakers), and the netizens. The researchers would also recommend solutions for some people involved with the children’s Internet safety. The solutions are explained below specifically for these categories of people.

### For parents:

**Proper Communication.** Something as simple as this is never done flawlessly. Most parents would raise their voices or even physically hurt their child, therefore, affecting the physical and emotional stability of the child. Of course, this is the “form of discipline” for children who committed something wrong in the parent’s eyes. Yet, it should never be resolved that way since children might adapt a negative perception towards their mothers and fathers. Instead, the proper way to deal with this kind of situation is to properly communicate with the child/children in a soft tone and a meaningful manner. After that, the child/children can receive a reward for following their parent’s advices.

**Tracking Devices.** This is actually done by Participant 3, who claimed that they used a tracking device to monitor the child’s activities without them knowing. This looks like some kind of genius tactic to determine what activities the child is really doing. Yet, there are some drawbacks. What if the child can remove or delete the tracking application? The good news is that there are some tracking devices that cannot be uninstalled by non-admins (the child’s device) without alerting the admins (the parents). Some examples are Qustodio, Bark, and Norton Family. They can also try downloading multiple tracking devices for extra “eyes” on their child’s activities on the Internet. Remember to do it secretly without them knowing. If this is way too confusing for the parent to execute, then they can just do another type of solution.

**Installing CCTV Cameras.** Most children at these ages aren’t clever enough to try to remove the CCTV cameras in their rooms. In some cases, they won’t even try to find them. This is what parents can do in order to utilize the full potential of the CCTV cameras at home. They can put it in proper positions at home, place multiple cameras, or even hide or protect the cables. This achieves even better security results for their child. There is rarely a time where their child complains about their privacy being violated. If this happens, they can consider trying the next option.

**Having Someone to Look Over.** This is another instance if parents would go outdoors and leave their child/children at home, which was done by Participant 7. They aren’t necessarily needed to be paid. Other family members, like older brothers or sisters, grandparents, or relatives, can help look after the activities of the child/children. They can even try limiting the screentime by encouraging them to play outside or eat snacks. It’s as simple as that if only they are available for doing so.

**Educating Children About Internet Safety.** Just like what some participants have responded, children who are already exposed to the cyberworld need to learn about safety. Monitoring isn’t enough to protect them against the “dark side” of the Internet, as well as having their identities leaked. They need some form advice too. This is, in fact, connected to communicating in a precise manner. Without the proper advice, these children’s minds would soon become corrupted thanks to the “bad side” of the Internet, and even make the whole Internet world an unsafe place for them. Parents won’t hesitate to impart advice to their children in order for them to become safe, young netizens.

**Limiting Screentime.** A very effective way of eradicating addiction. Parents providing a schedule for their child/children can limit the usage not just for the Internet, but also for devices as a whole. They just have to make sure that the schedule is viable and balanced; not too long, not too short. The sufficient amount of time a child needs a day would be around one (1) to four (4) hours of screentime for them to really enjoy the wonders of the Internet while not really being engrossed to it too much. Researchers would not recommend confiscating as a form of limiting screentime of child as it might affect the overall mood and the relationship between the parent and child, unless it is required.

**Knowing Their Friends Online.** Although making friends online may be a good thing for children, finding out who they’re really connecting with online can mostly uncover the child’s online activities. They can either be their friends who they interacted in real life, or purely online who have kept their identities secretive. It is important for parents to have knowledge on who they’re talking with online as their child might often be naive and leak some personal information to unknown netizens, or even be influenced to unrightful actions. This is where parents would need to inform their child/children about some people whom to avoid. Parents should also say that making online friends isn’t a harmful thing with the help of certain restrictions.

### For children:

**Be educated about Internet safety.** It is crucial for both children and adults to be educated about internet safety in order to protect themselves from the potential dangers that exist online. The basic do's and don'ts of the internet serve as a foundation for creating a safe browsing experience. Children, in particular, are often unaware of the risks present in the online world, making it even more important for them to understand how to navigate the internet safely. By equipping them with the necessary knowledge, they can make informed decisions and avoid potential pitfalls.

**Avoid Shady and Unfamiliar Sites.** Ensuring that children avoid shady and unfamiliar sites is an essential aspect of internet safety. It is crucial to protect children from stumbling upon websites that are not suitable for their age or may contain harmful content. One effective way to determine if a site is potentially suspicious or inappropriate is by encouraging children to trust their instincts. If a child encounters a website name or content that feels suspicious or uncomfortable, they should immediately report it to their parents or a trusted adult. This, therefore, prevents them from entering the site and receive additional knowledge on which are the prohibited sites for them. It also prevents them from activities that may cause potential harm to their lives such as violence.

**Never Reveal any Personal Information to People Online.** Confidential data such as name, address, phone number, school name and location, and passwords are not to be shared with people whose identity is especially unknown. Even sharing pictures online (for other people to see) can be a grave mistake for these children. One of the fundamental rules of internet safety for children is to never reveal personal information to unknown individuals online. It is important to emphasize to children that these pieces of information can be misused by malicious individuals, leading to potential risks such as identity theft, stalking, or other forms of exploitation.

**Know How To Set Limitations.** Setting limitations is an essential skill that children should learn, even without parental guidance. It empowers them to take control of their actions and make responsible choices. One aspect where limitations are crucial is screen time. Children need to understand and adhere to the restrictions advised by their parents. By setting boundaries on when to stop using the Internet and engaging in other activities, they can prevent themselves from excessive screen time and develop a healthy balance in their lives. This not only helps them avoid becoming addicted to screens but also encourages them to explore different interests and engage in productive pursuits. By learning to set limitations on their own, children develop self-discipline and become more capable of managing their time effectively.

**Know How To Act in Certain Scenarios.** Children already know how they can be safe online. Yet, there is a possibility that they might end up in sticky situations. Knowing how to act in certain scenarios is crucial for children to navigate the online world safely and responsibly. While children may have a basic understanding of online safety, it is important to prepare them for potential sticky situations that they might encounter. For instance, if a child receives a threatening email or becomes a victim of cyberbullying in an online chat forum, they should be equipped with strategies to respond effectively without causing further harm or escalating the situation. By teaching children how to handle such incidents, they can develop the necessary skills to protect themselves and seek appropriate help when needed.

### For teachers:

**Collaborate with parents.** Maintain open lines of communication with parents regarding internet safety. Share resources, strategies, and tips for promoting safe online practices at home. Consider organizing workshops or parent-teacher meetings dedicated to discussing internet safety. Establish open lines of communication with parents to discuss internet safety concerns, share resources, and exchange information. Use various channels such as parent-teacher meetings, newsletters, emails, or online platforms to keep parents informed about internet safety initiatives and updates.

**Teach Students About Online Privacy.** Children may be naive enough to share their personal information such as their passwords or addresses online. And even if they know better than to share it online, there are still new threats that they may not understand. Teachers should take their time teaching their students what not to share online, what common tactics hackers do, and how to identify them. That way, children are trained on how to deal with online privacy with the help of teachers in school, aside from parents.

**Cyberbullying Awareness.** Teachers should educate students about cyberbullying, its impact, and strategies to prevent and address it. Encourage open discussions, and establish a supportive environment where students feel comfortable reporting incidents of cyberbullying. When it comes to educating children about cyberbullying, teachers play a critical role in raising awareness, promoting empathy, and providing strategies for prevention and response.

**Parent Support Groups.** Teachers should facilitate the formation of parent support groups or online forums where parents can discuss internet safety concerns, share experiences, and seek advice from each other. These groups can provide a supportive network and valuable insights for parents navigating the challenges of raising digitally savvy children. Discuss topics such as parental controls, effective communication, setting boundaries, monitoring online activities, and promoting responsible digital behavior. Provide guidance on recognizing and addressing specific online risks and challenges.

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### For netizens:

**Build Up Awareness.** People on the Internet should be aware that every unethical action could often lead to consequences. It would be the best action to welcome them to the world of the Internet rather than finding a way to insult their existence. There should be more awareness of the effects of online bullying on fellow netizens. It’s not just cyberbullying that’s the problem here; addiction also is. For instance, there should be persuasive propaganda that declares the results of staying on the Internet all day long. Therefore, the researchers suggested awareness as a good way for netizens to be aware if what they’re doing may be potentially wrong.

**Be a Model Citizen.** A minor suggestion here is that netizens are able to be a role model for other netizens to follow. People on the Internet should serve as an “influence” on what to do and how to be secure while exploring the cyberworld. And what the researchers mean by “people on the Internet,” it can also refer to family members and relatives, peers or friends, or even teachers and school staff who also use the Internet in a good way, and not just anonymous people. For example, if children can see their friends play outside more than using their gadgets, they would most likely follow what they are doing.

**Promote Internet Safety, Especially for Children.** There is no place where the Internet is safe for younger audiences. That is why netizens should find a way on how children can keep their noses out of Internet dangers. For example, some software developers can program user-friendly antiviruses or site blockers that can be installed in all types of devices. They can also install two-factor authentication to certain websites, an account creation system where users are required to provide two pieces of evidence to verify their identity when logging into an account. Even if an attacker manages to obtain the password, they would still need access to the user's second factor to gain unauthorized access. This provides an extra layer of protection against various forms of attacks, such as password breaches, phishing attempts, or stolen credentials. With this, other netizens promote safety to themselves and to other users too, especially children.

### For future researchers:

**Base their work on our study.** Our current research can serve as a starting point for future studies on a related subject. We have gathered data on the applications used by kids, the issues they encounter, and the solutions used by their guardians or parents**.**

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