



Digital Citizenship – A Case Study of Children's Online Experiences in One School

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ABSTRACT

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This study aimed to understand how the students of one private primary school use the internet and digital devices. More specifically, the students' awareness of the opportunities the internet has to offer, how they deal with the risks that arise and how their parents, teachers, and the school mediate to provide children with the tools and competencies to navigate the digital world are examined. Digital citizenship education was examined, and available resources for implementation were investigated. As the research topic is current and trending, the questionnaire questions, focus interview questions, and themes were selected to reveal the school community's awareness. The gaps that need to be filled in acquiring further knowledge on digital citizenship were examined.

This study was implemented as a case study. The survey consisted of two parts administered simultaneously. The questionnaire and focus group results were analysed concurrently and in triangulation. The themes in the questionnaire aimed to find out the children's online experiences about access and time spent online; practical and digital skills; and opportunities and risks. The focus group topics were centred around the same themes. Collected qualitative and quantitative data were analysed using content analysis methods.

The results provided a good reference point to examine the need for digital citizenship in the specific primary school in this study. Most online experiences were positive, but the risks of internet use are evident and prominent to all. The concept of digital citizenship is still new to all participants in this study. The teachers agreed that being proactive instead of reactive and teaching children about digital citizenship can help raise awareness. Particular attention should be given to what each participant needs to know, keeping in mind the children's wellbeing online. Cooperation between the school and parents is of utmost importance for future purposes.

Key words: Digital citizenship, children's online experiences, wellbeing, focus groups.

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1 INTRODUCTION

This work was commissioned by a private primary school in Cyprus. For confidentiality purposes, the school's full name will not be disclosed and is abbreviated as GJS.

1.1 Background

Children are now prolific users of the internet (Buchanan, Southgate, Smith, Murray & Noble 2017,275), and children's use of the internet is a worldwide phenomenon (Livingstone 2016, 5). The number of children at noticeably young ages going online is increasing worldwide and changing childhood (UNICEF 2017). The use of social media and mobile devices has grown extensively over the last five years (Hollandsworth, Donovan & Welch 2017,525). Significant changes have taken place in the digital world in the past ten years and more specifically in children's access to the internet with the rapid proliferation of tablets, smartphones, and fast internet (Smahel, Machackova, Mascheroni, Dedkova, Staksrud, Ólafsson, Livingstone & Hasebrink 2020,19). However, it must be noted that around 29% of the youth around the world, or 346 million people between the ages 15-24, do not have access to the internet, with the most significant percentage of young people without access to the internet living in Asia, Africa, or the Pacific (UNICEF 2017).

The multifaceted nature of access incorporates the type of devices used, the quality of internet connectivity and the functionality of devices (CORE 2020; Livingstone, Mascheroni, & Staksrud 2015,11). As far as the type of device, most children in Europe now prefer to use smartphones to go online (Smahel et al. 2020, 9). Having access to the internet and devices entails an added sense of responsibility. It demands respect towards others based on human rights and values and the technical skills to navigate in the online world (Richardson & Milovidov 2019,30). There is a global movement to educate children to use the internet safely and guide them to discover the benefits and positive potential. As noted by Ribble & Park (2019,272), the internet provides connectivity around the world.

The use of digital technologies has transformed how people communicate, socialise, play, learn, create, innovate, and interact (Cortesi, Clio & Hasse, Alexa & Lombana-Bermudez, Andres & Kim, Sonia & Gasser 2020) and has already changed children's lives and life chances (UNICEF 2017). This transformation has led to risks and opportunities that, as pointed out by Smahel et al. (2020,9), can include experiences or activities that can lead to either positive outcomes or harm. Online access is becoming more private and personal and less supervised, making children more susceptible to harm (UNICEF 2017).

Much of the conversation around the use of digital technologies has focused on the potential risks and harms. For example, time spent online and, on the screen, has been linked to obesity and children being tied to the screen instead of keeping a balance with physical exercise (Ribble & Mark 2019,44). On the negative side, a few of these experiences include online aggression, cyberbullying, experiencing data misuse, meeting new people online, and excessive internet use (Smahel et al. 2020,9). The UNICEF report (2017) points to risks and dangers that include loss of privacy and cyberbullying, impacting children's health and happiness.

However, now attention has turned to the potential opportunities for using the internet (Livingstone, Mascheroni, Olafson, Haddon 2014,34). People have never had access to this amount of information and the ability to be 'truly connected'. (Ribble & Park 2019, 42). As noted by the same authors, "The internet and mobile devices place information and opportunities in the palm of our hands." Some of the advantages of the internet are that digital technologies can deliver economic opportunities, accelerate learning, provide opportunities to children in remote areas. Moreover, digital technologies allow connectivity, access to information on issues that affect their communities and give children a role in finding solutions to problems (UNICEF 2017).

The EU Kids Online survey focused on practices and skills that denote the activities children do online and whether they can use the internet effectively and to their benefit. The survey also captured the activities that school-aged children engage in, namely, entertainment, socialising, and education. The key findings in

this survey show that the most popular list of daily activities is watching videos, playing online games, listening to music, communicating with family and friends, and visiting social networking sites (Smahel et al. 2020,9,22).

There is little consensus about what makes up the 'best practice' for promoting digital wellbeing. (Smahel et al. 2020,9). As Ribble & Park (2019, 43) have noted, "in the real world we lock our doors and protect what we have inside," and the same must be done in the digital world. Smahel et al. (2020,9,106) focus on the importance of mediation from other actors who affect children's online experiences. Other actors include their parents, peers and the school with whom children engage online and offline.

According to Livingstone (2016, 5), research is vital to exploring how children engage with the internet and in our further understanding of how children relate with their social worlds, which are progressively mediated and determined by the internet. Also, as technology changes and develops, so do institutional practices among children's families, schools, places, and communities, all of which call for attention. Research on children's online experiences that directly affect children's rights and wellbeing is crucial in forming policies concerning children's education, welfare, economy, and society in general (p.6). The UNICEF report (2017) suggests that the area is ripe for further research and data. It is essential to focus on what children are doing online rather than how long and to help them make the most of their time online. Technology is an irreversible element of our lives.

"By protecting children from the worst digital technology has to offer and expanding their access to the best, we can tip the balance for the better."

Anthony Lake, UNICEF Director 2017(UNICEF 2017)

1.2 Research objective

This case study aims to investigate the student's online experiences in one private primary school. The responses of their parents and teachers are also examined. Despite the increase in the promotion of digital citizenship globally, it is essential to determine how much the school community in the GJS study understands and is aware of what digital citizenship entails. The school needs to

determine the influence the prolific use of digital technologies is having on the students. More specifically, the school is particularly interested in finding out how children can be supported in acquiring the necessary skills.

The objective is to provide students with the appropriate tools to become responsible digital technology users who can safely and wisely navigate the digital world. For this purpose, digital citizenship is analyzed to help define what students, teachers, and parents need to know. Also, an appraisal is made of the emerging trends in digital citizenship education.

This study forms a starting point in raising awareness and gaining further knowledge as a school community. The following two research questions are raised and addressed in this research.

1.3 Research questions

Research question 1

What are the experiences of primary school children in the digital world?

The question seeks to answer what children face while being online and the points of view of their teachers and parents. Sub questions to the main question include:

- How can these experiences be categorized?
- Are children aware, and do they feel equipped to deal with the online world?
- Do teachers and parents feel equipped?

Research question 2:

How can digital citizenship support children to navigate in the digital world?

The question seeks to answer how digital citizenship can build children's competencies and help them understand their rights and responsibilities as digital citizens.

- Should this be taught in primary school?
- What skills need to be developed, and when?
- How can the school promote digital citizenship?

1. 4 Research approach

This research is a case study of one school, a single primary school. As pointed out by Gillham (2007,1), a case study seeks to investigate a case of either an individual, which can be a group (in this case, two classes) or an institution (in this case a school) or a community (in this case the school community). More specifically, this case study investigates two classes in a primary school. The students in this study attend the 5th and 6th class and are 10 – 12 years old.

This small-scale school survey was based on and adapted from a survey conducted by EU Kids Online, which investigates the online activities, opportunities, and risks for children throughout Europe and the world. The EU Kids Online project conducts research on children's use of digital technologies and the internet. Between 2017 and 2019, it surveyed 19 European countries seeking to enhance the knowledge of European children's online opportunities, risks, and safety. The research results were published in the Eu Kids Online 2020 (EUKO) report. This report mapped four fundamental areas: access, practices and skills, risks and opportunities, and social context.

The survey employed in this study under the name GJS Kids Online included online questionnaires for the students, parents, and teachers of Classes 5 and 6. All three questionnaires included cross-reference questions on the students' use of the internet, the negative and positive experiences, and the benefits the digital world can offer.

Participation was voluntary and aimed to provide the school with valuable information on the aspects of internet use that need special attention and help the children's wellbeing online. A Microsoft Form survey was sent to the parents' email accounts, and the participating children completed the form at school. The questionnaires for all participants were made available at the same time. All entries were anonymous and ethical considerations were followed. In the information email sent a week before the survey (see Appendix 1), parents were informed that the whole group results would be shared with the school community. It was also noted that by disseminating the results, the children would

know that they are part of a caring community that can offer support and cater to their wellbeing.

Alongside the questionnaires, focus groups were formed with 4 to 6 children per year level to allow children to voice their opinions and concerns about their life in the digital world. The parents of the children participating in the focus groups, the children themselves, and their teachers were asked to fill in a consent form.

Overview of the structure

This thesis is composed of five chapters. The background, objectives, research questions and research approach are clearly defined and described in the first chapter.

Chapter two provides the literature review. The first section defines digital citizenship, while the second section explores the frameworks for digital citizenship. The next section presents the framework chosen for this study. The last sections focus on major studies in children's online experiences and digital citizenship education.

The third chapter defines the research methodology used to investigate the online experiences of the GJS students, alongside their parents' and teachers' responses. The first section sets out the research approach in detail. This is followed by a detailed description of the data collection method focusing on the questionnaires and focus groups. The last sections present the ethical considerations and limitations.

Chapter four presents the results of the mixed-method approach. Details of the quantitative and qualitative data results are presented separately by theme. First, the key findings of the questionnaires administered to the students, teachers, and parents are presented. Students' self-perceptions regarding their experiences are compared with the teacher's and parents' perceptions. A comparison is made between the EU Kids Online and the GJS Kids Online survey results pointing to the similarities and differences. Next, the focus groups results are given in detail, focusing on the students' overall experiences in the digital world. Lastly, the key findings that emerged and that converge in both sets of data are presented.

Chapter 5 begins with a general discussion about digital citizenship established in this study. Section 2 provides answers to the research questions this study set out to investigate. The following section presents the limitations, while the next section offers a SWOT analysis of children's online experiences. Finally, it concludes this study and puts forth recommendations for future action and research.

2 THEORETICAL FRAME OF REFERENCE

The literature review has been divided into three sections. The first section defines digital citizenship. The second introduces the Frameworks for Digital Citizenship in Europe and the United States, focusing down on the framework chosen for this study. The third section examines the major studies of children's online experiences focusing on the critical topics of access, practice, and digital skills; opportunities, risks and negative experiences. The last section examines digital citizenship education.

2.1 Digital citizenship defined

Digital citizenship is referred to in literature under different synonyms including, global citizenship, global competence, digital competence, digital consciousness, digital literacy, digital media literacy education, media and information literacy (Frau-Meigs, O'Neill, Soriani, Tome 2017,13). Digital citizenship means different things to different people and is a concept debated amongst researchers (LiDA102). Digital citizenship in general searches is defined as the safe, skilled, and ethical use of online technologies. Digital citizenship is about knowing how to use laptops, tablets, and smartphones in a way that allows users to have a positive online experience (Ribble & Park 2019,38).

"Digital citizenship is the continuously developing norms of appropriate, responsible and empowered technology use." (Ribble 2017).

"Digital citizenship" is an umbrella term that covers a whole host of principal issues. Broadly, it is the guidelines for responsible, appropriate behaviour when one is using technology" (Borovy 2014).

"Digital citizenship is the ability to think critically, behave safely, and participate responsibly in the digital world." (Common Sense Education)

According to the Virtual Library Website, children need to know that to be a good digital citizen, one must:

- Respect themselves and others
- Protect private information for themselves and others

- Stay safe online
- Balance the time they spend online and using media
- Carefully manage their digital footprint
- Respect copyright and intellectual property
- Stand up to cyberbullying when they see it happening

Simultaneously, there is an ongoing debate of dropping the word 'digital' (Ribble & Park 2019,20) with the argument that one will be a respectable online citizen if one is a good citizen offline. However, citizenship refers to the rights, privileges, and duties of being a national citizen. This definition does not match the new digital environment exactly. The definition implies being a good citizen of a nation, whereas the digital environment is of one country and the entire globe (LiDA 102).

For the purposes of this paper, my understanding and the most straightforward definition for digital citizenship will be used. Digital citizenship is the safe and responsible use of the internet while taking advantage of the opportunities it can provide. Safety denotes knowing how to behave and react on the internet. Responsible use means knowing one's rights and keeping a balance between using the internet for entertainment and meaningful opportunities.

2.2 Digital citizenship frameworks

Depending on the framework being used, digital citizenship is classified into distinct categories. The categories fall under the large umbrella of digital citizenship (Figure 1) that encompasses all aspects of a child's experiences in the digital world.

The Council of Europe's Digital citizenship Education Handbook draws on ten digital domains that fall under three categories that define digital citizenship. These areas are being online, wellbeing and rights. Access and inclusion, learning and creativity, media, and information literacy fall under 'Being well online'. Wellbeing online looks at ethics and empathy, health and wellbeing, presence, and e-commerce. Online rights are all about active participation, privacy and security, and consumer awareness (Richardson & Milovidov 2019,1314).

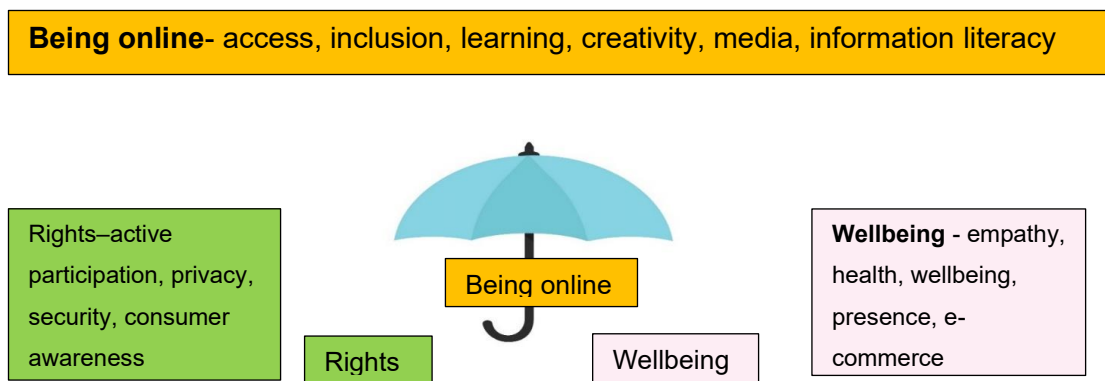


FIGURE 1. The Digital Citizenship Umbrella. (Content:Richardson & Milovidov 2019,1314)

Digital citizenship, according to the Council of Europe's Digital Competence (DigiComp) Framework 2.1, is divided into five competence areas. The area of digital literacy and information includes learning how to browse, search and filter data, information and digital content. Communication and collaboration are about interacting, sharing, engaging in citizenship, netiquette and digital identity. Digital content creation develops the competencies of creating and editing digital content, copyright, licenses and programming. Safety encompasses protection of devices, personal data, privacy, protecting health, wellbeing and the environment. Finally, the area of problem-solving enables digital users to solve technical problems, identify needs and technological responses, be creative and identify digital competence gaps (Carretero, Vuorikari, & Punie 2017, 21).

DQInstitute released the DQ Framework, the world's first global standards for digital literacy, digital skills, and digital readiness. DQ stands for Digital Intelligence and has three levels, eight areas, and 24 competencies that enable individuals to take advantage of the opportunities and face the challenges of digital life (Figure 2).



FIGURE 2. Digital intelligence. (DQ Institute)

The three levels are digital citizenship, digital creativity, digital competitiveness. The eight areas that fall under each of these levels are digital use, digital identity, digital rights, digital literacy, digital communication, digital emotional intelligence, digital security and digital safety. There are 24 subcategories for these eight areas aiming to encourage users to manage their online and offline lives by exercising self-control to manage screen time, multitasking, and engagement with digital media and devices. The DQ framework is adaptable, built on OECD (Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development) Education 2030 Learning Framework, enabling customisation and adoption by nations and organisations.

The Berkman Klein Centre for Internet & Society at Harvard University has set up a Youth and Media team that has conducted traditional research. It has also focused on community building and education concerning youth's learning and digital technologies. This Centre has mapped, selected, and studied 35 frameworks around digital citizenship and developed their framework under the name, 'Digital Citizenship Pus+.' More specifically, 17 areas of digital citizenship

have been defined as highly recommended by this team, which should be included in digital citizenship frameworks. For example, some concepts that appear across several studies under similar names include digital literacy, information quality; identity exploration and formation; digital access; media literacy; positive/respectful behaviour, privacy, and reputation, security (Cortesi et al. 2019,8). It is well beyond the scope of this thesis to examine all 35 frameworks developed by worldwide agencies. However, a few can be named, such as the DQ Institute, International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE), Media Literacy, International Computer Driving License (ICDL), UNICEF, UNESCO, World Bank, and World Economic Forum.

Richardson & Milovidov (2019,21) provide nine guiding principles for digital citizenship under three levels. Figure 3 shows that level 1 is contextual and deals with source infrastructure. Level two is informational, focusing on rights, responsibilities, participation skills and reliable information sources. Level three is organizational and points to communication channels, problem-solving and citizenship opportunity.

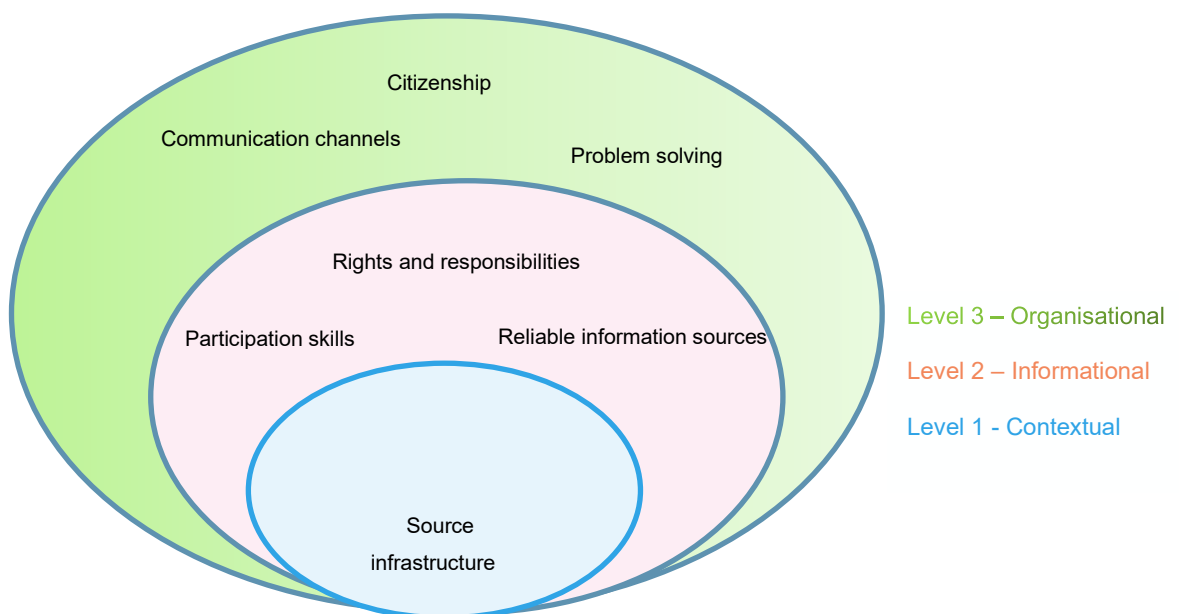


FIGURE 3. Nine guiding principles (reproduced Richardson & Milovidov (2019,21)).

Ribble (2017) was the first to coin the nine elements of digital citizenship in 2000. On his website digitalcitizenship.org, he offers resources for teaching digital

citizenship. The updated nine elements of Digital Citizenship by Ribble & Park (2019, 36) are shown in Figure 4.



FIGURE 4. The Nine Elements of Digital Citizenship. (Ribble 2017)

For schools, the nine elements imply that teachers need to be aware of the following:

1. There is a need for equity in the school community.
2. Digital commerce includes the buying and selling of goods in connection with the digital space.
3. Students should be provided with the opportunity to express themselves.
4. Digital etiquette should include in the classroom rules.
5. Digital fluency implies that the better-educated students will make good decisions online.
6. Digital health and welfare focus on the psychological and physical wellbeing of users in a digital world.
7. Digital law refers to the creation of rules that protect users from harm.
8. Digital rights and responsibility have to do with the requirements and freedoms of all online users.
9. Digital security and privacy are the guarantees of online safety when using devices. (Ribble 2017)

The updated nine elements go hand in hand with the New S3 Framework with the three guiding principles, S3 which stands for Safe (protect yourself and others), Savvy (educate yourself and others), and Social (respect yourself and others). Ribble & Park (2019,36) suggest that a child can be taught the S3 as soon as he/she picks up a device and starts using the internet.

2.3 Framework for the GJS Kids Online survey

EU Kids Online is a multinational research network that uses multiple methods to map children's and parents' internet experiences. It aims to stimulate and coordinate investigation into children's use of new media. The EU Kids Online theoretical model was used in European research and developed over the past two decades. The model encompasses three levels, individual, social and country factors. It offers a roadmap to the factors that influence children's online experiences and the impact on their wellbeing (Smahel et al. 2020, 11-12). As shown in Figure 5, each level seeks to provide a deeper understanding of children's online engagement.

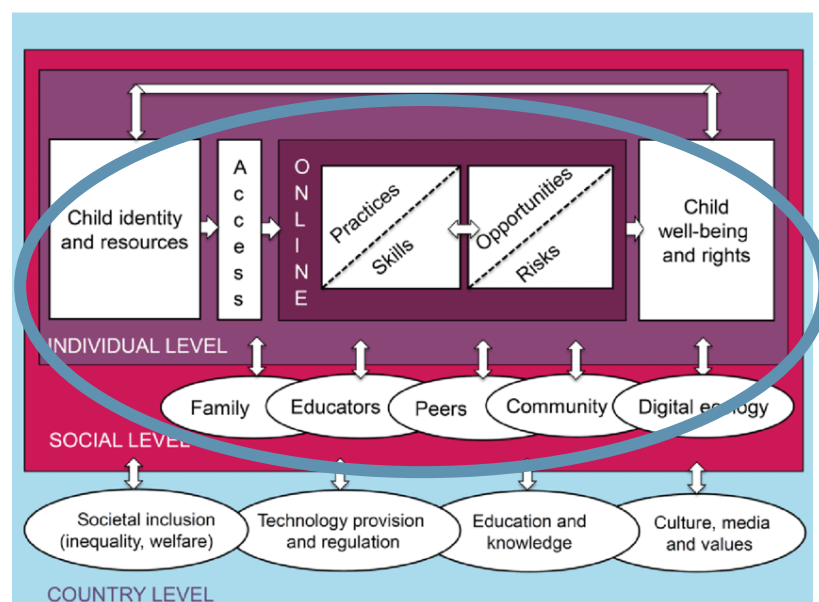


FIGURE 5. Eu Kids Online Theoretical Model Reproduced (Smahel et al. 2020,12)

The questionnaires in the EU Kids Online survey were designed based on all the levels in the model, but due to its complexity, the EU Kids Online 2020 report did not include findings at all levels. The report provided findings related to access, skills and practices, opportunities and risks and social context. The same process was followed in the GJS Kids Online survey using the themes only at the individual level (marked in the blue oval shape), aiming at children's wellbeing.

Table 1 shows the themes used in the questionnaires, which also help shape the focus group discussion themes. The themes were access, practice/skills, risks and negative experiences and social context.

TABLE 1. Children's online experiences themes

| Access | Practice/ Skills | Risks/negative experiences | Social context |
|---------------------------------|---|---|--|
| Access Time spent online. | Online activities Informational skills Operational skills Social skills | Hurtful experiences Coping with negative experiences Data misuse Meeting new people | Mediation from parents, peers, and school Digital citizenship |

The most recent research results using this theoretical model were published in EU Kids Online 2020 (Smahel et al. 2020,2). Survey results from 19 countries reported children's online practices, skills, opportunities and risks for children aged 9-16. The key findings show that children spend more time on the internet than they used to, and they prefer watching videos, listening to music and communicating with family and friends. Children also enjoy playing online games and visiting social networking sites. Negative experiences vary according to country and age, increasing by age. Children first turn to their parents for advice and then to their peers and teachers. Only one in ten children never feel safe on the internet.

2.4 Major studies on children's online experiences

Children's online experiences are central to multiple studies. There is an existing body of theory, expertise and evidence on children's online experiences, especially in developing countries (Livingstone 2016,8).

The media specialist survey carried out in the United States in 2011 examined how digital citizenship is taught in schools. Over 500 education professionals responded. The results indicated that most teachers and administrators are aware of digital citizenship issues but that many educators need to be educated about these issues and students. Digital citizenship encompasses a wide range of behaviour with varying degrees of risk and possible negative consequences.

Digital citizenship issues concern media and technology, which are constantly evolving, with new applications added regularly (Hollandsworth, Dowdy, Donovan 2011 p.45,46). The survey was readministered five years later. The two hundred and fifty respondents were media library specialists from fourteen states who shared their knowledge of digital citizenship in education. The survey explored (a) if awareness of digital citizenship issues by K-12 educators and administrators has changed, (b) the grade levels to begin initiatives on digital citizenship and (c) general digital citizenship in schools. The survey has shown that due to the dramatic increase in the abuse and misuse of technology, there is an increased need for digital citizenship awareness for all key participants. Teacher awareness has increased more than that of administrators, and the focus now is on respectful online behaviour (Hollandsworth et al. 2017,523- 529).

An Australian study examined children's awareness of digital footprints were examined in an Australian study using focus groups. According to the Internet Society, digital footprints are the records we leave behind us every time we use the internet. In this focus group study, 33 children participated from three primary schools in New South Wales. The findings showed that primary school children aged 10-12 constitute a crucial age to begin building children's knowledge about digital footprints. The study concluded that children should be given guidance on creating a positive online presence, thereby helping them to shape their future (Buchanan, Southgate, Smith, Murray, Noble 2019, 275, 287).

Global Kids Online is an international network set up in 2015 to support countries researching children's online experiences (Morton, Grant, Cook, Berry, McMellon, Robbin, Ipince 2019,8). Its management team includes international experts, and the research findings are considered a premier resource on children's online experiences by international stakeholders, partner countries, and influencers (p.76). This project provides a global research toolkit that enables interested parties to carry out standardized national research regarding children's online opportunities, risks, and safety factors.

Children's views on life in the digital age, including their perspectives on the use of digital technologies in their lives at present and in the future, were published in The State of the World 2017 Children's Companion Report, Young and Online:

Children's perspectives on life in the digital age. 490 children aged between 10 and 18 from 26 different countries participated in workshops held by UNICEF. The authors of this report hoped that the findings of the participatory research would bring light and insight into the depth and richness of children's digital experiences. In addition, the authors anticipated that researchers, practitioners, and decision-makers would be inspired to reflect, question, explore, and intervene in digital life. The main messages in this study (Third, Bellerose, De Oliveira, Lala, Theakstone, 2017, 12,14) are broken down into three categories, benefits, negative aspects, balance (Table 2).

TABLE 2. Main messages from the Children's Companion Report UNICEF 2017

| Digital World | Children's Views | Authors' views |
|------------------|---|---|
| Benefits | Communication and sharing Raising awareness for social change Achieving future goals | Children need to be supported to connect in beneficial ways. They can meaningfully participate socially, economically, and culturally. |
| Negative aspects | Risks of interacting with strangers Accessing inappropriate content The intrusion into private lives | Educational benefits are not equitable. |
| Balance | Understand their parents' concerns about their wellbeing. See a balance between negative and positive impacts on their health and happiness. | More evidence is needed to understand the impact of digital technologies on children's wellbeing and health. |

The University of Malta carried out a survey between 2014 and 2015 to investigate children's internet use and their parents' perceptions of their children's online experience. The questionnaires were based on previous studies held by the Malta Communications authority in 2010 and Eu Kids online research. The conclusions drawn from this study were that a small minority of households cannot access the internet and that the MCA must take action to bridge the digital divide. Parents' perceptions of their children's internet use differ from those

expressed by their children. Parents think they use the internet for schoolwork and are unaware that their children engage in online activities such as chatting online, video calling and watching videos. Both parents and children agree that it is essential to set privacy settings. The cooperation between school and parents is vital because children seek help from their parents. Parents consider schools as a source of information for online safety. The level of digital literacy in finding information about internet safety, blocking messages and privacy settings was considered quite good (Lauri, Borg, Farrugia 2015)

Supercell is a Finnish mobile game developer company, and HundrEd is a not-for-profit organisation that carries out research, discovers, and shares innovations in K12 education. In partnership, they conducted a global digital wellbeing survey with students and teachers entitled, Spotlight: Digital Wellbeing 2019. Digital wellbeing in this report is defined as "the ability to live holistically healthy lives considering all activities that involve the use of digital technologies; for example, the healthy use of social media, preventing cyberbullying and other abusive behaviour". The definition is adapted from the definition of wellbeing by McCallum and Price (2016) (cited in HundrED 2019,7). The teachers were asked, among other questions, if education is needed about digital wellbeing, how effective education on digital citizenship is in promoting healthy use of online safety and whether more solutions are needed in school on digital wellbeing. Students were asked, for example, to what extent they are using their mobile device in a healthy and responsible way, to which almost 50% answered that they do most of the time. They were also asked if they think the use of their mobile device is having a negative impact on their wellbeing, with the highest number of students answering that the impact is only slight. The key findings of this survey were that young people and teachers want better and more education on digital wellbeing (HundrED 2019).

Table 3 summarises the key findings of the surveys carried out by the Eu Kids online, the University of Malta, HundrED and UNICEF. Similarities exist across all major studies. These include the increase in mobile use by younger aged children, children's perceptions of knowing how to deal with negative experiences and the recognition that while the internet provides opportunities, there are also

risks. Children will mostly turn to their parents for help when faced with challenges.

TABLE 3. Children's online experiences surveys in a 'nutshell'.

| Study | Sample | Key findings |
|--|--|---|
| Eu Kids online 2020 Survey | European multi-national Countries 19 Ages 9 – 16 Children 25,001 2017-2019 | <p>The Time children spend online has almost doubled since 2010.</p> <p>Watching videos, listening to music, communicating with friends and family, visiting social networking sites and playing online games are the most popular activities.</p> <p>The proportion of children who have experienced negative online experiences varies by age and country. It increases by age in all countries.</p> <p>Children believe they know how to deal with negative experiences.</p> <p>Parents are the main source of help, and teachers the least common source.</p> <p>Teachers encourage them to explore and learn new things.</p> <p>One in ten children never feels safe on the internet across countries.</p> |
| University of Malta Children's internet use and parents' perceptions of their children's online experience | Entire country 23 primary schools Children 2000 Parents Ages 8 - 14 2014 -2015 | <p>Parents' and children's perceptions of internet use are very different.</p> <p>Most Maltese households have internet access. Children put more information online than their parents are aware of.</p> <p>More children than parents think that the internet is a safe place. Negative experiences cited by children were viruses and pop-ups. Most were not upset about pop-ups and ignored other experiences.</p> <p>The preferred safety source of information was their parents. Few parents apply restrictive mediation.</p> |
| HundrED research report Spotlight: Digital Wellbeing | Global survey HundrEd Teacher and youth ambassadors (Volunteers) December 2019 | <p>Young people and teachers want better and more education on digital wellbeing.</p> <p>Adults should prioritize improving digital wellbeing in education.</p> <p>Teachers should engage in the same activities as their students to bridge the generation gap. Discussion and critical thinking in and out of schools at all levels is needed.</p> <p>Adults should healthily model digital wellbeing. More hands-on, active and collaborative activities are needed. More research on wellbeing is needed, which is connected to physical and holistic mental wellbeing. Resources should be easily accessible, attractive and well designed for easy implementation.</p> |

2.5 Digital citizenship education

Lack of digital citizenship and education can lead to problematic, even dangerous student conduct (Hollandsworth et al. 2011,45). Creating awareness and enhancing digital citizenship in our society could best be assessed as having reached a pivotal point. Who will take on the challenge of guiding and supporting students towards a productive and effective digital society? (LiDA 102) Hollandsworth et al. (2011 p.38) very accurately question why we send children into the digital society without the basic online knowledge needed to trade, buy, sell, interact with others, be entertained, and get an education.

On the one hand, according to Frau-Meigs et al. (2017, 6), it is the education sector. that must raise awareness regarding the appropriate use of technology and at the same time promote responsible behaviour and participation in the digital era. On the other hand, other actors must also play a vital role. Parents, educators, students, and the community should all have input in creating policies, procedures, and curriculum. Parents and educators have a difficult job keeping up with the newest technologies, their purposes, and their effects on students. Schools need to stay informed and involved. Students need to survive in this digital society, create, innovate, and thrive. Parents must gain awareness, educate themselves and take action to prepare their children for this digital society before they enter the school doors. Although schools and parents try to ensure the safety of our students, students must accept responsibility for using current and future technology ethically and legally. Students must have the tools to handle difficult circumstances on the internet, and digital citizenship needs to be developed (Hollandsworth et al., 2011,38-41).

Jones & Mitchell (2016) recommend that citizenship in education should focus on online civic engagement and respectful online behaviour. The authors recommend a different take to just relying on lectures for teaching digital citizenship for curricula but instead propose that youth can become active participants by engaging in perspective-taking activities such as helping solve global challenges. Practical examples include sharing talents and knowledge with other online, helping peers research school or social problems, and making national and international online connections.

Educators require a specific set of teaching skills and knowledge currently encompassed under the digital citizenship umbrella. Rather than building skills against online behaviours such as bullying, educators are advised to help youth practice and build online social skills. These include practising tolerant and respectful behaviours towards others and increasing civic engagement. Civic engagement denotes behaviours such as improving social or community problems and addressing social justice. For digital citizenship to be implemented by schools, several critical steps must be adopted. Digital citizenship must be well-defined with effective educational strategies such as active learning, specific educational outcomes, and goals. Lastly, the impact and outcomes of the implementation should be evaluated (Jones & Mitchell 2016, 2064, 2065, 2074).

Teachers can reach out to several online courses for professional development and to support their students' learning. Schools can promote professional development in Digital Citizenship. Just to name a few, "Google Digital Citizenship", "The Cyber Civics course", "The OER LiDa 120 Digital Citizenship course", and the "DDL digital driver's licence". In addition, educational boards and governments offer support to the teaching community such as 'Digital Citizenship NSW Australia website', 'Digital Citizenship European Schoolnet' and 'Digital Citizenship Education Council of Europe'. Other significant initiatives for promoting digital citizenships in education include "The Good Project", the "#Digcit Initiative", "Gooseberry Planet", "The Digital Citizen", and "#IcanHelp".

The DRC e-learning course is a self-paced 20-hour e-learning course that offers a certificate in Digital Responsible Citizenship upon completion. The Council of Europe provides an additional Framework, DigiCompEdu, aimed at helping educators develop their digital competence, and each competence is presented at varying levels to be used by early childhood to adult education (Redecker, C. 2017).

However, as Borovy (2014) noted, the digital citizenship umbrella covers an overwhelmingly broad range of topics and subjects to explore. Although the need for teaching digital citizenship is current, there is an uncertainty of what it looks like and how it can be taught in an already overloaded curriculum. The Five-

minute film festival by Borovy (2014) offers an entertaining approach to teaching digital citizenship in schools.

Common Sense Education is devoted to providing valuable resources and a curriculum for teaching Digital Citizenship in schools. It resulted from a collaboration with researchers from Harvard Graduate School of Education working on Project Zero. Over 600,000 educators and 60,000 schools are registered and use the readily available and accessible curriculum for digital citizenship. The curriculum aims to help the youth be responsible, reflective, and make ethical decisions. The curriculum is available to be taught as a separate subject or woven within the existing curriculum (James, Weinstein, Mendoza 2019,10,11).

ISTE is made up of enthusiastic global educators who believe that technology can accelerate innovation, transform learning and teaching and solve challenging problems in education. ISTE provides resources that help schools to bring meaning to digital citizenship in the classroom. It aims to focus on the do's instead of the don'ts of being online, such as using technology to help the community, being respectful to people who are different, making voices heard, and determining the validity of online information. The digital citizenship in action 15-hour professional development course offers guidance on teaching students to be active participants online in sustainability and social justice projects and to explore digital citizenship education frameworks and learning standards.

According to Anne Collier, the heart of digital citizenship in education must be at the forefront of any discussion. In her TED talk, the Heart of Digital Citizenship, in 2016, Anne Collier said that adults are spreading fear about the use of social media by youth. Youth want to get away from 'scared controlling' adults as far away as possible. Citizenship should not be imposed on children, and their input is a necessity. Collier stresses the importance of practice, rights and agency. Agency recognises that children are stakeholders in their communities online and offline. Children deserve extra credit, and it should be given to them. Anne Collier concludes that young people should be helped to be the change they want to see in the world,

The digital life of children has been at the forefront for more than a decade. It is evident that the changing world which technology has brought about requires safe, secure, and savvy navigation of the internet (Ribble & Park 2019,36). The Council of Europe has focused on children's safety and protection in the digital environment rather than their empowerment through education or acquiring competencies for actively participating in a digital society. Although worldwide efforts are pointing in the direction of the role education must play in promoting digital citizenship, there is an obvious need for education authorities to effectively implement and integrate digital citizenship into school curricula (Frau-Meigs et al. 2017, 6).

The plethora of resources and methods of implementing digital citizenship education must be narrowed down to the specific needs of each school. It will be the school leader's job to lead others and encourage them to understand the positive use and connectivity of digital experiences in the school community. The school leader cannot do this alone and overnight. It is important to set up a program and a plan that can be implemented by all stakeholders. (Ribble & Park 2019, 54-65)

This chapter provided the literature review on digital citizenship and children's online experiences. The next chapter will present the research methodology.

3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter presents the methodological approach, followed by the data collection method and the data analysis. The following sections discuss the limitations and the ethical consideration in this research.

3.1 Methodological approach

The main frame of reference in conducting the survey was the Global Kids Online and EU Kids online toolkits which are readily available online for all interested researchers. I used five of the nine method guides in the toolkit, which were more suitable and adaptable to the needs of this study. Method Guide 1 (Livingstone 2016) provided a framework for researching and understanding children's wellbeing and rights in the digital age. Method Guide 2 (Berman 2016) helped me to explore the ethical consideration for research with children. Method Guide 3 (Barbosa, Pita, Senne & Sozio 2016) provided guidelines on survey administration. Method Guide 5 (Platt 2016) gave me information about conducting qualitative and quantitative research with children of different ages. Lastly, Method Guide 6 (Third 2016) outlined the benefits and opportunities of children online.

By carrying out a similar survey to the well-researched EU Kids Online survey, I hoped to determine if the participants in this school follow the same trends as in the rest of Europe. The use of specific themes in the questionnaire and focus groups were aimed at not only raising awareness but providing 'a key as to what needs to be done to change things' (Gillham 2008,7).

Since this was a small-scale, single-case study, it was necessary to use multiple sources of evidence and accumulate data using different methods. It must be noted that the specific research questions in this study can only be studied and understood in context (Gillham 2008,1). The findings in this study may not be generalizable because of the specificity of the case (Gillham 2008,6), which is one private primary school. What is true about this school may not be true about another school. However, it will be interesting to point out the similarities with already existing studies from previous literature with children of similar ages.

Data collected by different methods on the same topic is part of the multi-method approach (Gillham 2008,13) or mixed-method approach (Creswell 2003,18). The mixed-method approach mixes qualitative and quantitative approaches to research (Creswell & Clark 2007, 11). The mixed methodology was used to gather numerical and verbal data to gather reliable and rounded data (Cohen, Manion & Morrison 2007,115). Also, a mixed-mode design was adopted to minimize costs and errors (Barbosa et al. 2016,8). The same topic was seen from different angles using a mixed-method approach that included questionnaires and focus groups.

The convergent parallel mixed method design was used. Both forms of data were collected concurrently, and the information was integrated and interpreted in the overall results (Creswell 2014,13). A triangulation mixed methods design was used, a type of design in which different but complementary data covered the same topic (Creswell & Clark 2007,99). The triangulation design (Figure 6) allows the researcher to contrast directly and compare the quantitative results with the qualitative findings (Creswell & Clark 2007,62) and determine how and why the quantitative and qualitative data converge (p.106).

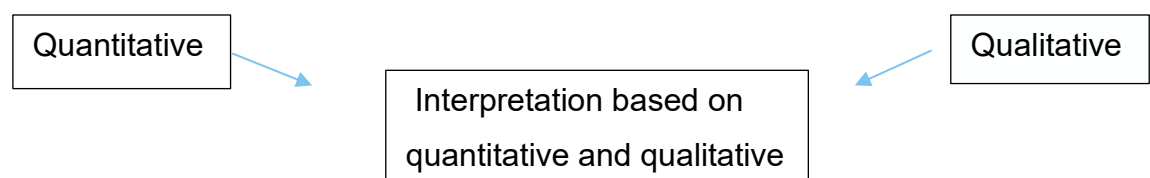


FIGURE 6. The Triangulation design Reproduced (Creswell & Clark 2007,63)

Focus groups were used because, as suggested by Cohen et al. (2007,395), they are quicker than individual interviews. According to Gibbs (1997,1), focus group research entails organized discussion with a carefully chosen group of people to obtain information about their views and experiences of an issue.

This study addressed how the students of the GJS use the internet and how their parents and teachers mediate to protect and raise awareness. The results were expected to provide the school with information on the aspects of digital citizenship that require particular attention.

3.2 Data collection

In this study, the participants were students from Classes 5 and 6 (ages 10-12) from a private primary school in Cyprus where English is the main language of instruction.

Quantitatively, questionnaires were used to gather data from the students, parents, and teachers. The questionnaire was distributed to 104 students and their parents and seven teachers. The completed questionnaires were submitted online through Microsoft Forms. The children found the link on the class website and answered anonymously during an appropriate time appointed by the class teacher. Absent children did not participate. The online questionnaires for the parents and teachers were emailed to their accounts simultaneously. The students completed the questionnaire at school. Submissions were automatically received on my Office 365 account. All submissions were anonymous. Parents and teachers were kindly requested to respond to the questionnaire within a week.

Concurrent with the data collection, qualitative focus groups helped explore the student's views of online experiences. A total of 19 children participated in five focus group sessions with 3 to 5 children. The first group was the pilot group. Some focus groups were run with three instead of four children because some were absent on the day. The absent children could not be replaced because parental consent was required. The focus group discussions were recorded on the mobile application called Otter. This application transcribes at the same time as it records. There were four sets of transcriptions.

3.2.1 The questionnaires

The questionnaire design was based on and adapted from a survey conducted by EU Kids online between 2017 and 2019 (EUKO 2020) and the Global Kids Online (GKO) toolkit. The use of Microsoft Forms allowed for an attractive design and uncomplicated presentation. At the same time, the questionnaires on Microsoft Forms provided a cheap method. The online questionnaires allowed

the speedy collection of the required information (Barbosa et al. 2016,10). The online questionnaires were filled in anonymously to guarantee confidentiality and anonymity (Cohen et al. 2007, 358).

There was clarity in the instructions and layout. The purpose of the survey was plainly stated initially, followed by clear instructions (Cohen et al. 2007, 242). The teachers' version instructions were as follows: "There is a growing concern in our school community and internationally about children's prolific use of the internet and their active participation in the digital world. We would be very grateful if you could take a few minutes to fill in this questionnaire about your students living in the digital world, their rights and responsibilities and what educators can offer. All responses are anonymous and ethical considerations have been taken into account. It should take between 5 to 10 minutes to complete and submit the form. Please complete and submit the form by Friday, February 28th".

The parents' instructions read: "We would be grateful if you could take a few minutes to fill in this questionnaire about your child's life in the digital world. There is a growing concern globally about children's prolific use of the internet. There is also a need for children to be equipped with the knowledge to navigate the internet wisely. Parents and schools must work in unison to help the children maintain a healthy and happy life. Your valuable feedback will provide the school community with important information. Children need to be encouraged to embrace the opportunities and benefits the internet offers and be good digital citizens. Submissions are anonymous, and all ethical considerations will be considered. Please try to answer the questions from your point of view and without asking your child. Please submit the form by Friday, February 26th".

Lastly, the children were given very simple and specific written instructions because their teachers were there to give oral instructions. "The survey will take approximately 10 -15 minutes to complete. Children use the internet in many ways. Please answer the following questions to let us know how you use the internet".

The primary objective of the questionnaires was to explore the children's experiences in the digital environment. Subsidiary topics to the main objective

were also included, such as to find out if the children are aware of their online rights and responsibilities. The questionnaire comprised closed-ended statements that provided quantitative data based on response categories (Cohen et al. 2007,208.340).

Daily issues brought to the school by parents and children regarding the effects of social media influenced the choice of some questions. The use of digital media and technology by the children at our school and ongoing discussions with the Director and staff also shaped the content of the questionnaire. The literature review on digital citizenship and comments and opinions discussed with the school community during lockdown due to the Covid-19 pandemic helped shape questions 49 – 53.

There were three separate versions of the questionnaire. There was one for the parents, one for the students, and one for the teachers (Appendix 2). The statements and questions were similar but worded slightly differently since not all pertained to all versions. For example, "Do you think digital citizenship should be taught as part of the curriculum?" only appeared in the teachers' version, and "I monitor my child's use of the internet at home" was only in the parents' version. The students' version included 53 questions, the parents' version had 42 questions, the teachers' version had 25 questions.

According to Cohen et al. (2007, 113), a more qualitative feature with an open-ended question or two questions at the end of the questionnaire allows the respondents to comment and state their opinions freely. Therefore, they were added in this study as well. The parents and students had two open-ended questions, and the teachers had one.

In the students' questionnaire, the first two questions were gender and grade-based. Question 3-6 asked about digital devices and time spent online, whilst questions 7 - 14 sought to find out how children spend their time online. For example, the social media apps or website they visit, the online games they play, watching videos and communicating with others. Questions 16 – 36 focused on hurtful experiences, coping with negative experiences and their operational skills. Question 37 was an open-ended question asking what things they think are good

for children their age. The questionnaire questions 38 – 49 aimed to provide information on the type of help children receive and who mediates in helping them with their online experiences.

One of the main weaknesses of questionnaires, as pointed out by Cohen et al. (2007,354), is that the questions may be ambiguous and not understood correctly. It is also challenging to write a good questionnaire making sure that the questions are worded correctly; the design must be made attractive; it must be piloted and distributed efficiently (Bell 2001, 171,172). Such difficulties were overcome because the questionnaires used in this survey were adapted from the EUKO 2020 questionnaire format designed by a team of experts.

It is advisable to pilot test all data-gathering instruments to check how long it takes to complete the questionnaire and make sure that the questions or statements are straightforward (Bell 2001, 168). The pilot questionnaire in this study was prepared and given to two colleagues, two parents and one student to complete. The necessary changes were then made, considering the feedback on the appropriateness and wording of the statements, the category responses and the length of the questionnaire (Cohen et al. 2007,242).

3.2.2 The focus groups

In addition to the numerical data, focus groups were used to explore the participants' responses further. Focus groups were used as part of the mixed-method approach to gather qualitative data. They were administered to find out the children's opinions and listen to their voices regarding their online experiences.

Although focus groups have been used in market research (Archer 1993), focus groups have been on the increase in social research as a method of data collection. However, few studies have used focus groups with children, and such methods are still underdeveloped (Morgan, Gibbs, Maxwell, Britten 2002,6). Some of the advantages of focus groups consist of generating new ideas; getting information on the participants' views and attitudes on a topic through discussion

in their language; they allow for interaction and are less threatening than an interview on a one-to-one basis (Litosseliti 2007, 16).

One of the motives for using focus groups was the open-ended nature that it provides and the ability to gain an insight into the participants' world in their language (Litosseliti 2007,18). Also, children enjoy and are comfortable and used to working in groups (Darbyshire, MacDoughall, Schiller 2005, 4). It was hoped that focus groups would allow the children to openly express themselves and clarify their views, beliefs, and attitudes, which may not be possible in an interview on a one-to-one basis (Kitzinger 1995,300, Gibbs 1997). In addition, individual interviews with the children may have emphasized the power differences (Gibbs 1997) since I am their headteacher. Another reason for using focus groups was that it encourages interactive conversation (Darbyshire et al. 2005,5), puts the shy participants at ease (Morgan et al. 2002,10), and allows them to get on with the conversation. The focus groups allowed me to gather a more significant amount of information more quickly than other methods of data collection (Gibbs 1997, Litosseliti 2007,17).

According to Gibbs (1997), it is recommended that focus groups consist of six to ten people. The 'Voices of Youth' facilitators' guide (UNICEF) notes that smaller groups are manageable. Morgan et al. (2002,8) worked with focus groups consisting of anything between two and seven children. According to Kitzinger (1995,311), the ideal group size for focus groups is between four and eight. I decided to form five manageable groups of four and five children, respectively, balancing gender, age, and educational level. Arranging the focus groups by class meant that the participants shared common characteristics and understanding of the topic (Litosseliti 2007,32). The class teacher was asked to select pupils who enjoy discussion and have reached a sufficient English level to carry on a conversation well.

As the research sought to find out the experiences regarding the children's participation in the digital environment and the best way to support them, it was essential to gain official permission. Permission to conduct focus groups with the students from Classes 5 and 6 was requested from the School's Director, the parents, the class teachers, and the students themselves (Appendix 3).

Permission, in this case, means contracting the person in writing. The letter of permission identified the research aims and the method. The class teacher selected the pupils and asked them if they wanted to participate, making participation voluntary. The focus groups were organized during school hours, informally, and the subject matter was discussed in general, avoiding any personal or sensitive issues. The participating children were told that they could withdraw at any point if they wished to and that no questions or explanations would be sought (Cohen et al. 2007, 73).

For practical reasons, each focus group met in the conference room of the school. It was nice and quiet, as is it advisable that sessions be relaxed and in a comfortable setting (Kitzinger 1995, 311) and somewhere where the group will not be disturbed (UNICEF). I asked the children to sit around the table at a distance due to the Covid-19 restrictions. I sat at almost equal distance to all the participants.

Focus groups were carried out with four small groups of 3 to 5 children from Class 5 and Class 6 and a total of 19 children. The children were encouraged to discuss their opinions and experiences in response to living in the digital world and digital citizenship. They were also prompted to talk about the effects the digital world has on their friendships, the positive and negative aspects of digital media, plus ideas on how they would like to improve their digital navigation and online experiences.

The first focus group was a pilot focus group composed of four children. As Litosseliti (2007,29) advises, there are many advantages to running a pilot focus group. It allowed me to check whether the questions needed rephrasing, how the children might react and behave, and whether it would be necessary to discipline them. It turned out that they all behaved well and cooperated nicely.

At first, I explained the purpose of our discussion. Next, the aim of the study and the ground rules were set. The students were reminded that they had already filled in a questionnaire, as did their parents and teachers. It was then clarified that our focus group discussion is an extension and an enhancement of the

questionnaire. The students were also informed that the school cares and wants to hear their opinions which are particularly important to the school.

The ground rules included letting the children know that they should feel free to express their thoughts, interact and discuss with each other and that my role is just as a moderator. I told them that I would just be helping them to carry on with the discussion. It was also essential for them to know that it was entirely acceptable if they did not have anything to say about a certain point. They could speak out of order, there was no need to take turns, and finally, that mutual respect must be shown throughout the discussion. The students were put at ease knowing that all opinions are acceptable, that there is no right or wrong answer, and that no one should laugh or make fun of anyone's ideas. All ideas and points of view were welcome and were meant to be appreciated by all. The children were put at further ease with the knowledge that the group discussion would not last longer than 25 to 30 minutes.

The children were reminded that they would be recorded as they had been told when they signed the consent form given to them a week earlier. I explained that I was recording the session because I could not write as fast as they speak. I also wanted to pay full attention as they interacted with each other and responded to my questions. As soon as the session began, I placed my mobile in the middle, explained to them about Otter, the app that writes what they are saying as they speak. They were fascinated and looked at the mobile occasionally as their speech was instantly transcribed. The voice recording app gave me the freedom to maintain complete eye contact and shift the participation from one pupil to the other, ensuring everyone was included.

I explained that I would not have an opinion (UNICEF), and I tried to be constantly aware of my body language. As recommended by Litosseliti (2007,42), I was a good listener and just smiled and put the children at ease while expressing their thoughts and opinions. It was crucial to avoid any bias which may exist by keeping in mind that participants might say what they think the moderator wants to hear. My role was to make sure that the discussion stayed on track to stimulate discussion, probe when necessary, and keep the conversation alive (Litosseliti 2007,42).

The students were assured that all the information gathered would be kept confidential and anonymous (UNICEF). No names would be used, but they could use their names to talk to each other. I explained that in the transcription, I would use Boy 1, Boy 2, Girl 1, and Girl 2.

Keeping in mind that the conversation should be less structured to allow children to express their views openly, some open-ended questions were asked that the participants could easily understand and were rephrased where necessary (Litosseliti 2007,42). The topic guide provided by the EU Kids online toolkit was used as a guideline. The guide was written for a longer session lasting an hour but knowing that the children's concentration in groups at this age is limited, I used just a few of the questions (Appendix 4) to make the session last up to 30 minutes.

The first question was general. The children were asked what they most like to do on the internet, followed by more specific questions to encourage reactions and attitudes (Litosseliti 2007,42) and then ending with questions that could provide any additional information that we had not touched on. "Do you have any ideas on how to make sure everyone uses their digital devices correctly? The focus groups concluded the mixed-approach method.

3.3. Data analysis

The data analysis happened in two stages (Figure 7), and the results were analysed separately. First, the results of the questionnaires were instant because they were carried out online. It was exciting to see the graphs and tables change with each additional questionnaire that was submitted. The students all responded during a specified time. Microsoft forms provided the raw numbers, but I needed the percentages to compare with the Eu Kids online survey. The percentages were worked out on a calculator. The quantitative data was then analysed, and I paid particular attention to the patterns and themes.

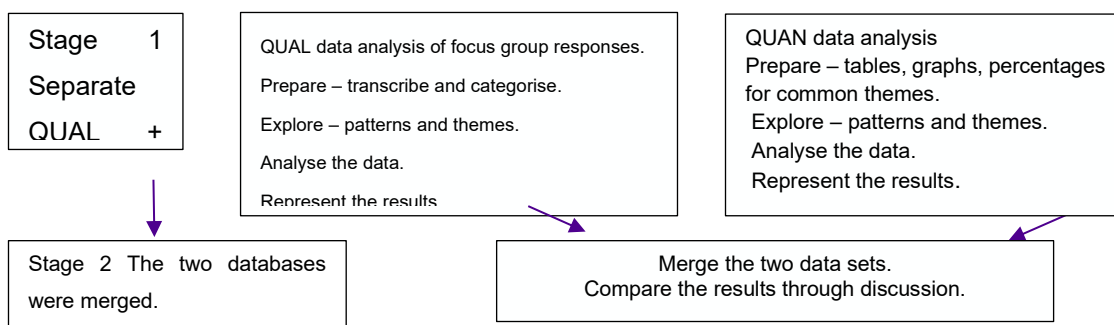


FIGURE 7. The stages of analysis (adapted from Croswell & Park 2007,137)

Next, the transcription from each focus group was taken for the qualitative data, and substantive statements were highlighted, with repetitions being ignored (Gillham 2008,71). A set of common categories were created like the EUKO categories. Some were combined. At first, the coding method provided in the qualitative research toolkit in the Global Kids Online website was used (Appendix 5). The toolkit is appropriate for a large-scale multinational study with multiple researchers. For the purposes of this study, it proved to be tedious and inappropriate. As the sole researcher, I had to create more applicable categories (Appendix 6). I used the predetermined themes in the quantitative data to create similar themes in the qualitative data (Table 3)

TABLE 4. Overlapping Quantitative and Qualitative Themes

| Quantitative data themes | Qualitative data themes |
|--------------------------|---|
| Opportunities | Most frequent activity Online learning School-related learning Find facts and entertainment Games |
| Digital ecology | Most visited websites and apps |
| Negative experiences | Unpleasant/hurtful experiences Reactions Feelings |
| Practical/Digital skills | Ways of being careful |
| Social skills/ Mediation | Person children turn to for help/ advice |
| Digital Citizenship | Children's perception of the meaning of DC |

In stage two, the two sets of data were merged, I made a cross-reference between the quantitative and qualitative data (Gillham 2008, 81) and the results were compared through discussion (Crowell & Park 2007,137).

3.4 Ethical considerations

When undertaking any research, ethical considerations must be considered pertaining just as much to adults as children (Morrow & Richards 1996,103). The students, parents and teachers in this study were given the information concerning the research in advance, including the objective, who it is for, and any benefits it may provide. It was stated in writing that participation was voluntary, which means that they have the right to choose whether to take part in the study or not (Cohen et al. 2007,117).

The participant children were reminded of their right to confidentiality (BERA 2018, 17) when they filled in the questionnaire and in the focus group sessions. Anonymity was also provided, and the participants were informed that their identity would not be revealed in any way – name, address, occupation, or some other coding symbol (Cohen et al. 2007,83).

All participants were informed that they have the right to withdraw at any time, for any reason. Throughout this survey, I kept in mind that a child might not express he is withdrawing consent directly and that a decline in motivation might be otherwise evident (Berman 2016,11). It essential to keep in mind when researching with children that should be in the child's best interest, and the child should be granted the right to express his/her views freely in matters affecting them, as is stated in Article 12 in the Convention on the Rights of the Child (BERA 2018,15).

Throughout this study, children's competencies were respected, making sure they did not suffer any harm (Marrow and Richards 1996,100). Also, I made all explanations clear, easy-to-understand and at their level (Berman 2016,19). The children's consent was accompanied by a responsible adult's consent and from all gatekeepers. In this case, the gatekeepers were the parents, the teachers and

the School Director, whom I contacted before approaching the children (Morrow & Richards 1996, 94).

3.5 Limitations

Limitations were encountered in the quantitative and qualitative methods. First and foremost, my position as headteacher placed me in an authoritative position from the start.

Although the children were told in advance that it was voluntary, they had to fill in the questionnaire online during school time and may have felt that they did not have a choice. No one withdrew, but they were possibly under pressure from peers, their teachers and myself since I was leading the survey. There were also time constraints, and although most children were able to answer within the time limit, there must have been children who usually work slower. They probably felt the pressure of time, resulting in them not reading the questions carefully and clicking on any answer. Other limitations may have included not being able to connect from their devices. The internet connection was strong that day, and only one child encountered the problem of not connecting. As far as the parents are concerned, it would have been preferable if all the parents had responded. After sending out a second reminder, 82% of the parents responded, which is an acceptable response for a voluntary survey.

While moderating the focus groups, I was aware of the most prominent ethical challenges for researchers working with children: the disparities in power and status between adults and children. Also, most school activities are compulsory, which may place children in a weakened position to oppose taking part (Morrow & Richards 1996, 98, 101). Some of the difficulties in interviewing children in groups as charted by Simons (1982, cited in Cohen et al. 2007, 381) and Lewis (1992, cited in Cohen et al. 2007, 381) are that children might be easily distracted; the researcher might be viewed as an authoritative figure; keeping children to the point and the avoidance of lies. As noted by Morgan et al. (2002,17), it may be challenging to afford confidentiality in a group interview because remarks are made and heard by all in the group.

I was mindful of the potential limitations attached to focus groups, including bias and manipulation, false consensus, participants influencing each other and difficulty distinguishing between a group view and that of an individual and the possibility of someone with a strong personality taking over. Lastly, it is noted that a knowledgeable and skilful moderator can help avoid these pitfalls (Litosseliti 2007, 21,25,26), and I hope that I managed this.

This chapter gave an overview of the methodology used in this study. The following chapter is devoted to the presentation of the results.

4 RESULTS

This chapter discusses the online experiences of the students in the GJS Kids Online survey. The responses of the parents and teachers are examined alongside the children's views. The first section discusses the quantitative data collected regarding access, namely devices and time spent on the internet. The next section examines practices and skills, while the following sections focus on the risks and opportunities, emphasizing overall negative and positive experiences and online communication. A closer look at the social context and the person students turn to for support is presented in the fifth section and digital citizenship in the final section. Qualitatively, a closer look at the focus group findings is presented in this chapter's final section by examining closely the same categories as in the quantitative data.

Although Cyprus participated in the EU Kids Online survey in 2010, comparisons will not be examined at the country level because it is too large a scope for the present study. Furthermore, the 2010 study was more than a decade ago. Since then, there have been drastic changes in technology, internet availability and use by younger children. Comparisons are made with the European survey results, EU Kids Online 2020 (EUKO 2020), to determine similarities in trends and responses.

4.1 Quantitative Data

In this study, the questionnaire was distributed to 104 students, their parents and 7 teachers. The return rate was 98 students (94%), 7 teachers (100%) and (79%) 82 parents.

4.1.1 Access/devices and time spent online

In the GJS Kids Online survey in response to whether students own a mobile phone, 73% of the students said yes, 68% of the parents said that their child owns

a mobile, and the teachers responded that most of their students have a mobile phone. There is an agreement in the responses making access to devices equitable in the school in the present study. Each child in this school has access to a device because the school has a 'Bring Your Own Device' (BYOD) policy.

The students and parents were asked about the time students spend on the internet each day during the week (Figure 8). The teachers were not asked about the time students spend on the internet because when it was included in the pilot teacher questionnaire, the teacher said it was not something she could answer. 36% of the parents responded that their child spends about half an hour during the week, but only 26% of students seemed to think they spend half an hour. It could be that parents are more accurate here since it might be that students are not concerned with tracking the time.

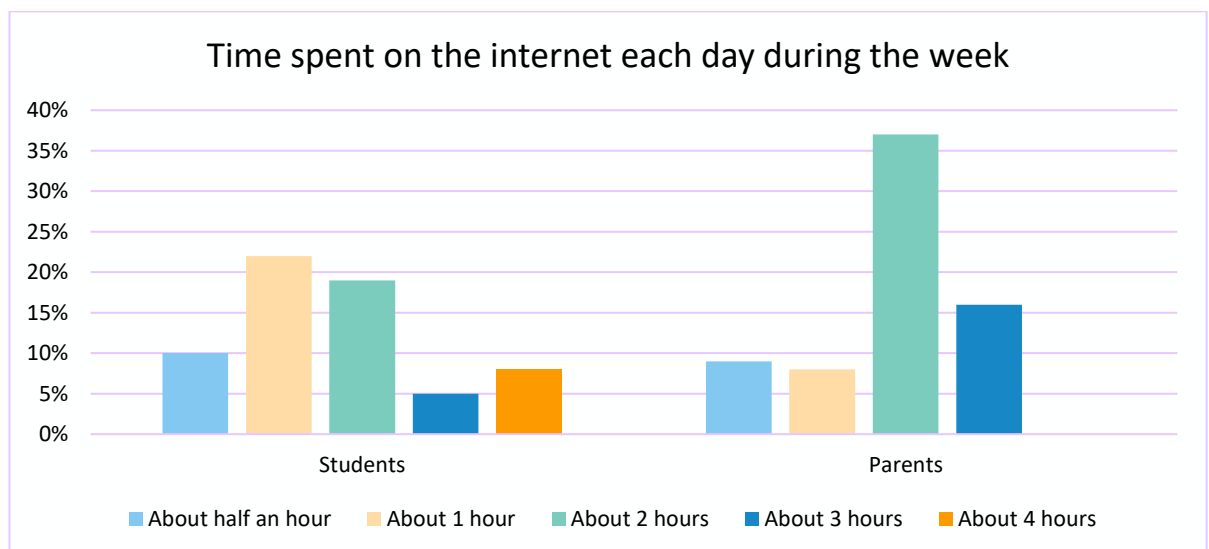


FIGURE 8. Parents' and students' perceptions of time spent online

During the weekend, 12% of parents and 19% of students said that the student spends about 2 hours on the internet. 16% of parents and 15% of students responded that they spend 3 hours. The response for about 4 hours was 11% students but 22% parents. It was interesting to note that some students and parents admitted to spending 7 hours or more on the internet during the weekend, 13% parents and 7% students. Points to consider in this question are that a child may not be aware of how long he/she spends and can only estimate how he/she perceives time.

The teachers and parents were asked how often the students do schoolwork online. The graphs below show how the students and parents agreed that they do school daily or daily, but only two out of the seven teachers said they do schoolwork. The teacher's responses indicate that not all teachers have their students work online daily. It is possible that they only considered schoolwork that happens at school and not schoolwork that takes place at home.

Most pupils own a mobile device. They use the internet briefly daily and for more extended periods during the weekends. The teachers do not have a clear picture of time spent as they can only respond about the time the child is at school.

As far as excessive use is concerned, parents, teachers and caregivers have a different view to that of the children in the Eu Kids Online survey (Smahel et al. 2020, 81) and in this study. Measurement of the amount of time spent on the internet is subjective.

4.1.2 Practices and digital skills

The questions in this part of the survey sought to understand the online opportunities children engage in more often.

TABLE 5. How often children watch videos online/play online games.

| | Watch online Videos | Play online games |
|----------------------|------------------------|----------------------|
| Daily or more often | 54% | 44% |
| At least every week | 14% | 28% |
| Never or hardly ever | 19% | 15% |

The number of 9- to 11-year-olds who watch videos on the internet every day ranges from 30% (France and Germany) and 73% (Estonia). In half the countries, more than half of the youngest children watch videos online (2020). The school in this study showed remarkably equivalent results.

Studies show (EUKO 2020, Malta 2015) show that children have moved away from Facebook and tend to visit other social networking sites. Similarly, the GJS Kids Online survey has shown that students prefer to visit Viber and, less often, WhatsApp, Snapchat, and Instagram (Figure 9). Online games are visited by 61% and Tik Tok 30%. Only 3% said they visit Facebook Messenger.

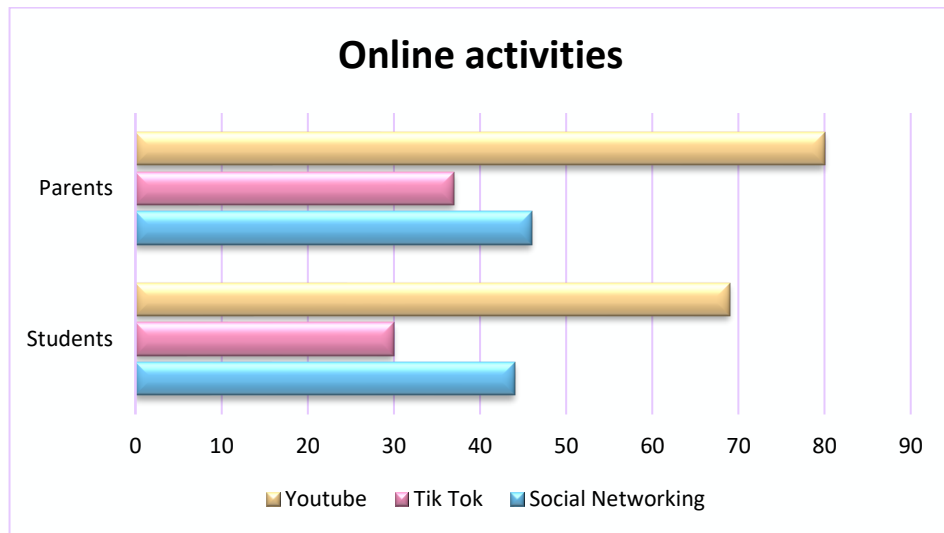


FIGURE 9. Comparison of children's and parents' perception of online activities

Online games are central to children's online experiences. 61% of the children and 62% of the parents noted that this is what children do online most often. Playing online games is an everyday entertainment activity in Europe, as the EUKO 2020 survey reveals. The highest was 71% of children in Lithuania who play online games every day, which is just 10% more than the children in the GJS Kids Online survey.

According to EUKO 2020, using the internet for schoolwork daily ranges at the one end 46% in Lithuania and 16% in Poland. In the GJS Kids Online survey, 35% of the students said they use it daily or more often, which is on the high end in comparison.

The digital skills measured in the GJS Kids Online survey included operational skills, finding information/navigation skills, and social skills. Smahel et al. (2020) adopted and used three out of the five skills in the Internet Skills Scale developed by Van Deursen., Helsper., & Eynon (2016, cited in Smahel et al. 2020, 35). In

the GJS Kids Online, I adapted (Table 5) the version used by Smahel et al. (2020). I included one question in the operational skills and informational skills and two under the social skills category.

TABLE 6. Measurements of digital skills (% who say very true or true)

| | Operational | Information/ navigation | Social | |
|--------------|---|---|--|---|
| | I know how to change my privacy settings. | I find it easy to check if the information I find online is true. | I know which information I should share and shouldn't share. | I know how to remove people from my contact list. |
| GJS students | 79% | 50% | 85% | 83% |
| GJS teachers | 40% | 0 | 60% | 60% |
| EUKO | 79% | 59% | 86% | 89% |

It is fascinating to note how similar the results are between the GJS and EUKO kids online survey and EUKO. Children score high in operational and social skills and lower in information/navigation skills. Teachers do not believe that their students possess this knowledge. There is a gap between what the children claim they know and the teachers' perceptions. Further attention needs to be paid to the skills in the latter category in helping children acquire the appropriate skills, especially according to the teachers.

4.1.3 Risks

The questionnaire results showed that the students are aware of all the risks entailed when being online. These risks included being careful who you meet online, who you play games with, what you post and say, scams and hacking. The students also recognised the consequences and feelings coupled with dangers and appeared confident of their reactions when confronted with a negative experience. Similar outcomes were reported in the EUKO 2020 survey.

Online aggression was worded in simplistic language so that children could understand. The students were asked if anyone posted nasty or hurtful messages where everyone could see or if other nasty things happened to them on the internet. They were also asked how they would react. The students were asked in the online questionnaire whether anything hurtful or something they did not like happened to them in the past year (Figure 10). The very few reported hurtful experiences in this study could result in just sweeping it away as sporadic incidents. However, according to the EU Kids Online survey (Smahel et al. 2020,60), the point to consider is that the harmful material may have reached a larger audience. This harmful effect should be considered. It must also be noted that children have different resilience levels and emotional responses, which should not be ignored.

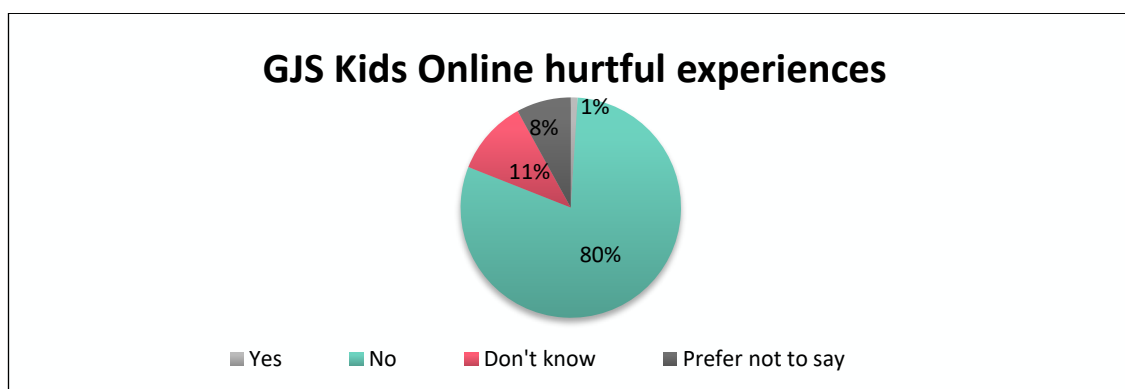


FIGURE 10. Hurtful experiences

In the EUKO 2020 report, between 7% in Slovakia and 45% in Malta responded that they had had a negative experience. An average of 80% of the students at the primary school in this study answered that they had not received any negative experiences. Less than 1% said that they had. However, 20% of parents and 71% of teachers reported that the students had negative experiences. This discrepancy in responses could be that children's perceptions differ or that they forget.

Cyberbullying can be defined as victimization repeated over time; the harm is intentional, and there is asymmetric power between the aggressor and victim (Smahel et al. 2020,52). The term cyberbullying was not used in the GJS Kids

Online survey. Instead, students were asked if they had been excluded from a group or activity on the internet, how this made them feel and how they would react if something like this happened.

According to the GJS Kids Online survey results, if someone acted online in a way they did not like, the students would block the person (51%). Next, the students would either ignore the problem (31%), and equal distribution of 23% responded that they would close the window or app, delete messages, change privacy messages, report the problem, and stop using the internet. The parents had a different view. Although they agreed that their child would block the person as a first resort (45%), they would close the window or app (28%). 21% said their child would delete the messages, but 14% said they would stop using the internet. Interestingly, 14% of the parents do not know how their child would react.

In the statement, "I know what to do if someone acts online acts in a way I don't like," 65% of the students said they always know what to do. Likewise, EUKO 2020 reported that most children often or always know how to react online, with the highest percentage being 49% in Norway. Therefore, the students in the GJS Kids Online survey far exceeded this average. The EUKO 2020 survey showed that the older the children are, the better they know how to react, with a maximum of 88% in Estonia.

According to Smahel et al. (2020,49), most children prefer to talk to their parents and friends, and only a minority talk to their teacher. The same results were yielded in the GJS Kids Online survey but with a significant difference in talking to parents with 84% (Figure 11). Who do children talk to after having a negative experience at the GJS primary school?

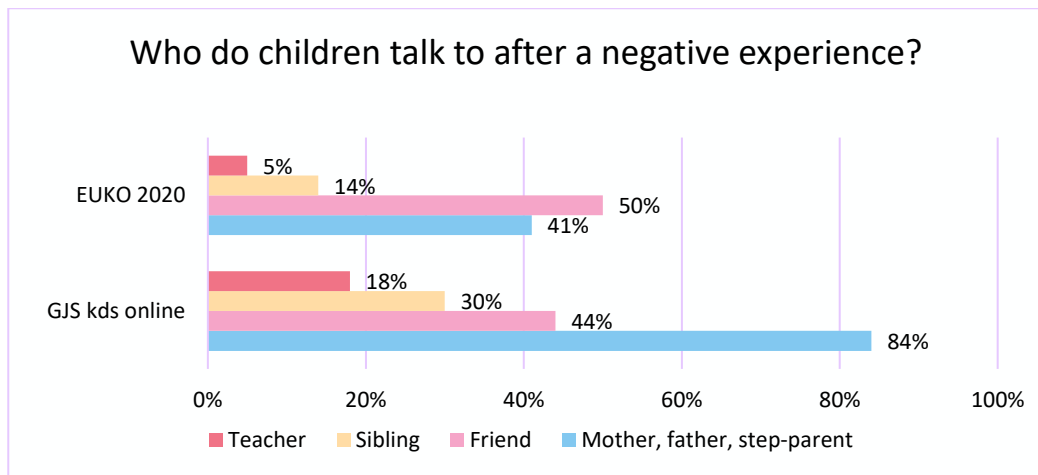


FIGURE 11. Most children talk to their parents after a negative experience

In another statement, the students were asked how they felt when someone treated them in a hurtful or nasty way. A quarter of the students said they were upset or very upset, and a fifth, they were not upset. The equivalent ratio was reported in EUKO 2020 for not being upset. On average, one fifth was upset, making the GJS Kids Online survey respondents slightly more prone to being upset.

In the EUKO 2020 survey, it was reported that less than one-fifth experience at least one of the three data misuses. Data misuse includes giving out personal information, pretending to be someone else or misuse of passwords. In the GJS Kids Online survey, it was less than a tenth, but at the same time, more than one-tenth answered that they do not know if someone has used their password or pretended to be them.

The students and parents were asked if the amount of time causes problems for them. 43% said never and 38% sometimes while only 9% said often or always. However, more than half the parents answered that it sometimes causes problems, and a quarter said often or always.

Children's awareness of the online environment is essential because it shapes their online behaviour (Smahel et al. 2020,126). The GJS Kids Online survey included the following statements: "I feel safe on the internet" and "I find other people are kind and helpful on the internet." The scale ranged from never to

always. The GJS Kids Online survey found that 46% of students always or often feel safe online, as opposed to 60% in the EUKO 2020 survey. Just 29% of GJS Kids Online survey respondents thought other people are kind and helpful, and 39% in the EUKO survey.

4.1.4 Opportunities

In an open-ended question, parents were asked what they think the most valuable part is of their child being online. Students were asked about the ways they are creative online and how the internet helps them learn. Teachers were asked in what ways the internet provides their students with opportunities.

Parents recognized all the opportunities the internet offers, from knowledge to communication, socialization, and continued education, especially during the pandemic. For example, "New knowledge, creativity, innovation, current events" and "Easy access to information and playing with friends". At the other extreme, one frustrated parent responded, "Nothing, I hate it!"

Students also recognized that the internet helps them search and find the latest information with schoolwork and with online learning during the pandemic. One child noted, "The internet helps me learn by me searching something I don't know, and then it tells me". Students point to Minecraft, drawing, writing, playing online games, making Tik Toks, and playing a game as ways of being creative online. A child said, "I play games that help you learn more things", and another said, "You can play creative games so that your creativity will grow ". Some children agreed with some of the parents and said that it does not help them learn things, and another child said that he does not know.

In turn, the teachers from their angle acknowledged that "When it is used properly, it can enhance their learning in various school-related projects", and at the same time were concerned about the appropriate use of the internet. The teachers wrote that, "It helps broaden their horizons", "Helps them to think critically", "It allows them to explore beyond the classroom", and "Opens up a whole new world when used correctly."

4.1.5 Social context and mediation

In this section, the students' social environment or context was considered. Children meet others on the internet in social contexts and multiplayer online games.

Smahel et al. (2020,94) note that meeting new people on the internet embodies one of the significant online risks in the media. Even though these cases are sporadic, they do raise substantial concerns. Meeting new people is perceived as harmful, and it is overlooked that meeting new people is a natural part of everyone's life which can also bring potential benefits. Benefits such as finding new friends with similar interests, learning current information, receiving emotional support, or practising a foreign language are all part of meeting new people (p.94).

The GJS students were asked, "Have you ever had contact on the internet you have not met face-to-face before?". 70% responded negatively, and 20% said yes, with the remaining students answering either do not know or do not want to say. Similarly, in the EUKO survey, just 16% in the 9–11-year-old category had contact with a previously unknown person on the internet.

Do children find it easier to be themselves online? About half the respondents in both the EUKO and GJS Kids Online surveys find it easier sometimes, often, or always to be themselves online. Do children find it easier to talk about different things online than face to face? In the EUKO survey, 38% find it easier, and in the GJS Kids Online survey, 48% do so.

Mediation includes talking with children about their use of the internet, explaining what is good and bad on the internet. The need for higher digital skills is directly connected to enhancing children's understanding of the internet. The more children understand and are aware of their interactions on the internet, the better equipped they will be to deal with online content and experiences. Additionally, they need to know how they can be protected via technical monitoring and mediative restrictions (Smahel et al.2020,106,107).

Students were asked the following questions:

- Do your parents know what you do on the internet?
- Have your parents made rules about what you can do on the internet at home?
- Have your parents explained what is good or bad on the internet?
- Have your parents suggested ways to use the internet safely?
- Have your parents talked to you about how to behave towards other people online?
- Have your parents helped you when something has bothered you on the internet?
- Have your parents used parental control or other means of blocking or filtering unwanted content?

The results show that parents mostly play an active role in advising their children on internet safety and much less on applying filters (Figure 12).

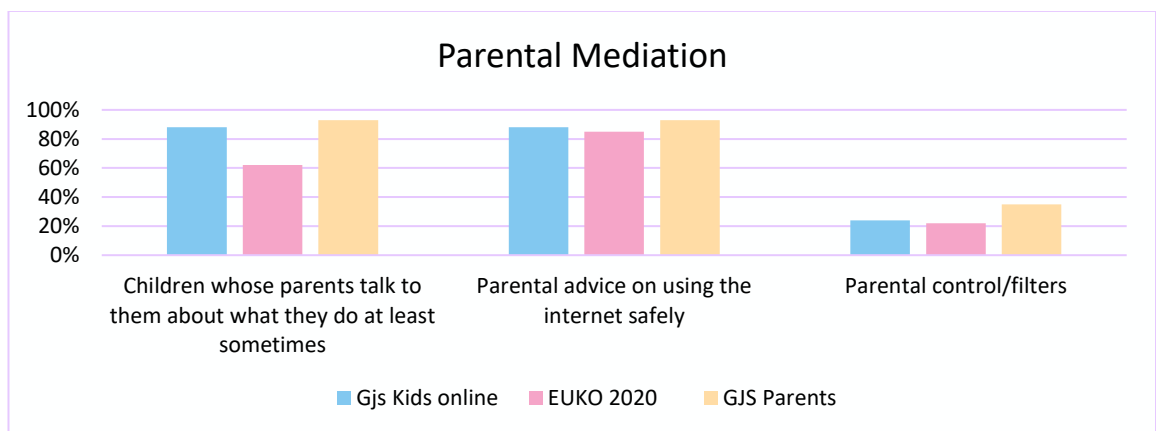


FIGURE 12. Parents advise their children on internet safety

Students, parents, and teachers were also asked if the school has suggested using the internet safely, encouraged the students to explore and learn new things, made school rules, taught students about rights and responsibilities and whether the content is good or bad. The answer in most categories was "very often", except in whether the content is good or bad, both parents and teachers responded, "I do not know", whereas the students said it is "very true."

4.1.6 Digital citizenship

Central to the GJS Kids Online survey was finding out what children already know and what children need to know to become good digital citizens. The parents and teachers who play a vital role in helping the children become knowledgeable were also asked about digital citizenship. The results were essential in determining the consensus amongst the key players and what each party needs to know to become better informed. In general, there was a vague awareness from all participants on what digital citizenship is and what they need to know.

Likewise, the global and school community is experiencing the repercussions of the pandemic that we are all experiencing. The online education aspect of the pandemic is beyond this study. However, the participants were asked which they prefer, online or face-to-face education and the parents were asked if their child adapted to online education. 80% of the parents said their child adapted to online education, 40% of students said they prefer face-to-face education, 40% said they like both, and only 10% responded they prefer online education. Teachers responded in a comparable way to the students, but none believe that students prefer online education.

4.2 Qualitative data

Although the focus groups responses served to duplicate the quantitative data results, they also brought up some different answers. Questionnaires are more guided, whereas an open discussion in a focus group provides free answers. The focus group topic categories fell under the same themes used in the questionnaire. Opportunities included questions on the most frequent activity, online learning, school-related learning, finding facts, entertainment, and online games. Digital ecology investigated the most visited websites and apps. Negative experiences engaged the children in a discussion about unpleasant, hurtful experiences, including their reactions and feelings. The category of practices and digital skills sought to find out how children are careful online. The topics did not follow the same order as the questionnaire. Finally, the children were asked what they think digital citizenship is.

4.2.1 Opportunities

The children's most frequent activity is watching videos on YouTube and TikTok. A few also mentioned Netflix, which is internet TV and was a category that was not included in the questionnaire. Games and entertainment also came up quite often in the discussion. Games such as Roblox, Minecraft and Geometry Dash were mostly mentioned by the 10-year-olds. When I asked one child who he plays with, he said, "Oh, you can actually play on your own, just have your own results and so on. Sometimes I play online with others. Sometimes maybe Roblox". The response showed that not all online activities need to be social and can be for individual entertainment.

The 11-year-old children were more into YouTubers such as PewDiePie and Reddit. There seemed to be quite a discrepancy in most activities between the two age categories, with the younger children being much more innocent and childish. Many mentioned using the internet to find fun facts and information about subjects that interest them, such as football players. Few children thought of the internet for schoolwork.

A child mentioned using "Nightzookeeper", a creative writing website that the school uses. Using the internet for school projects was an afterthought and after probing from myself. When the 6th graders were talking about their preferred activities, they were talking in a 'lingo' that they were quite sure an adult would not understand. One boy had the need to express himself lengthily.

"My favourite thing to do on the internet is, it's kind of a combination. Can I say, well, I like to play Call of Duty. Cold War, because I got, I got a really good game. I got the Faze clan skin. And I also grind on Reddit, where I post memes, and the mighty, my most upvoted meme has like 1000 upvotes on PewDiePie subreddit and I got featured, do you want to know why, and I got a big PP so...."

The truth is, after our discussion, I had to look at the games and YouTubers they had mentioned. Communicating with friends and family was mentioned by some

children not because they do not use it but perhaps because it is taken for granted.

When children were asked which websites or apps they visit most, they mentioned several other websites and apps that did not appear in the closed-ended questions. These preferences also came up in the open-ended questions of the questionnaire. Apart from the common apps and websites such as Instagram and Viber, they pointed out Facetime, Snapchat, Spotify, Pokemon Trading Card game, Duolingo and Amongus.

4.2.2 Risks/negative experiences

Most of their negative experiences were related to playing online games and 'cheats', as they called them. Someone even admitted to doing something bad online and that others were talking back to him. He said that in the end, they started bullying him, so 'he left it alone.' While playing online games with others, they have experienced annoyance, and one child even said he was accused of using bad words and was reported to the company which blocked him. The children who play Roblox or S GO talked about 'trading', and some mentioned that they even trade for real money. Someone even mentioned that he got a new 'skin'.

Another child said that someone had made a fake account for one of his best friends and said, 'horrible stuff'. Several children wanted to talk about the subject of fake identities. They recognized that some people use fake identities to text and email others and viewed this as a threat. At the same time, they said they also make fake identities to protect themselves!

Only one child mentioned pop-ups that might contain inappropriate content. Some children admitted that they have some disagreements on Viber. They also mentioned that being left out or removed from a group was bad, and even worse was losing a friend. When asked about the risks, they were aware that there are dangerous posts such as 'blue whale' that they must avoid.

Some children mentioned negative experiences with hackers, their address and private information being leaked out to the public, pranks, scams, and the worst extreme being kidnapped. Being reported to the police was pointed out as a worst-case scenario. A boy mentioned that you might become addicted and that parents should take away the device from that child or just give it to him for an hour a day.

4.2.3 Practices and digital skills

Most of the children said they use fake names and identities to safeguard themselves and their privacy. In addition, they hide things about themselves and do not give out private information. Some children said they put all their private 'things' anonymous and never friend or trust a person they do not know face to face. Someone even said, "Think before you post". A 12-year-old boy said that he uses a VPN because hackers can intercept the flow of data from his device to the internet. A 12-year-old girl suggested that the internet should put a specific application.

"So that you're like this is not for my age, I should probably delete this application".

4.2.4 Social context and mediation

Most said that they usually turn to their parents when they have a negative or hurtful experience. Interestingly, they had recommendations for others about what they should do when faced with something unpleasant.

"Talk to your parents because parents will find a solution on how you can react".

"Share your experiences with your friends so if it happens to them, they will know what to do".

“If someone says something bad, it goes through one ear and out of the other, only good information stays in your mind, discuss with your family because it might get even worse”.

“My advice is, just don’t talk to people on the internet, if you want to talk to someone do it face to face or send them like the old days a letter by pigeon, yes, message in a bottle”.

“If you see something inappropriate you should close it immediately”.

When the children were asked how they felt after having a hurtful experience, they found it difficult to answer and mostly avoided doing so. I had to think of several ways to reword my question for them to respond. The older children answered that they sometimes might feel scared or worried, out of their comfort zone and do not know what to do if they have a hurtful experience. Others said they feel sad, angry, hopeless, frightened, alone and paranoid.

4.2.5 Digital citizenship

When I asked them what a digital citizen is, I thought they might remember the answer from the assemblies I had given and which they had attended. They found this to be a difficult question and hesitated in their answers. However, some answers showed that they have some ideas of what digital citizenship entails.

“I think a good digital citizen is the people that are on the internet and use the internet daily which is like all the people in the world. The digital citizen must respect the rules of the internet. “

“A digital citizen is like an online user....”

“It's like a person who is like a he's on the internet, but he's not like hacking and doing like bad things he's, like, he's the good version.”

“I think it is like when you're a person that just does go on the internet and does stuff but doesn't do anything bad uses the internet right and like doesn't like hack or like, like, want to find like like people's like more information about them if they don't know them, or like do any like bad things that hurt someone's feelings.”

“It's like my opinion, actually, is that you have to be respectful to everyone, you find like even online.”

4.3 Key findings

In summary, the focus group results showed that children mostly view the internet as a source of entertainment, for playing games, listening to music, and watching YouTube videos. When prompted into thinking what else they could do on the internet, they responded with using it to find information or do their schoolwork.

Similarities to the quantitative data results included knowing how to be careful online and enjoying communicating with family and friends. They like watching videos and playing games with others. Table (6) presents the summarized key findings of the GJS Kids Online survey.

TABLE 6. Key findings GJS Kids Online survey

| | | |
|---|---|--|
| GJS Kids Online survey Children's online experiences and digital citizenship | Single case study – one private primary school, Cyprus Ages 10-12 Children 108 Parents/teachers 2021 | More than half own a mobile device. Parents and children have different opinions as to the time spent online. More time is spent during the weekend than daily. Children watch videos, play online games, listen to music and social networking sites most often. Children scored high in operational and social skills but lower in information and navigation skills. Children are confident of their reactions when confronted with negative experiences. Most children have not experienced anything negative online. Online opportunities are recognised mainly for information, as is the appropriate use of the internet. Children mostly reach out to their parents for help. Teachers believe that the school community needs to know more about digital citizenship education. |
|---|---|--|

Other benefits of being online included being able to carry on learning as they did with online learning during the lockdown due to the COVID-19 pandemic. As far

as digital citizenship is concerned, some had a very vague idea of what it might mean, but others offered some very interesting definitions. For example, a boy said, "I can't really describe it, I don't really know", but another child said, "Well, it's how you behave in the online world".

In this chapter, the results from the collection of quantitative and qualitative data were presented and discussed. The next chapter concludes the main themes concerning the findings and with further recommendations.

5 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

5.1 Discussion

Children's online experiences and digital citizenship go hand in hand. There are just as many definitions for digital citizenship as there are frameworks to teach it. Many of the responses in my adapted questionnaire and the numberless global studies cannot stand alone. For example, time spent on one activity such as playing on the mobile phone might be combined with watching television simultaneously.

Although there are so many studies and so many experts working on implementing digital citizenship in schools, there is still the need for a method to be found that will be effective and reach all education sectors. Hurtful messages, risks, and experiences are still out there and must be faced by the youth daily. Many educators and parents still do not have the adequate knowledge to support students in this digital world.

The need for digital citizenship arose at our school with the introduction of digital technology and internet connectivity almost a decade ago. At first, it was focused on internet safety, and the school went as far as blocking all sites that might be harmful. It was then decided that children must learn to use the internet responsibly. Sporadic efforts were made during the computer lesson to teach the children about cyberbullying and internet safety.

More and more children started owning a mobile matching the trend worldwide. Simultaneously we began receiving reports from concerned parents and children about the inappropriate use of the internet. A letter was sent out to the parents informing them about the issues and suggesting that it is everyone's responsibility to become better informed. At the same time, it was stated that the school and parents must work together to help children.

Digital Citizenship gained further importance at the GJS when the school transitioned to online learning due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Children were

spending even more time online and were attending online classes. Teachers presented them with the online classroom rules, but we still had a few incidents of inappropriate use. I conducted assemblies with 96 children. One was on being a good digital citizen and the other about digital footprints.

5.2 Answers to research questions

The first research question aimed to investigate the experiences of primary school children in the digital world. The online experiences of the 10–11-year-old children at the primary school in this study are similar to the experiences encountered in Europe and other developed countries.

For example, while being online, just a few children encounter negative experiences such as hurtful messages and inappropriate content. At the same time, they enjoy using the internet especially watching videos, playing online games and communicating with friends and family. They also view the internet as a source of information for doing schoolwork and looking up their homework. The children in this survey think they know how to react when faced with negative experiences. They feel they are equipped to deal with the online world. Teachers and parents feel that children should use the internet more wisely rather than just play and 'waste their time'.

Unlike the children who seem to think they are knowledgeable; the literature review has shown that digital citizenship encompasses an array of elements that need to be mastered. From the three main categories of being online, rights and wellbeing (Richardson & Milovidov 2019,13) to the nine elements defined in the Digital Citizenship in Schools Handbook by Ribble & Park (2019) to the 36 elements mapped by the DQ Institute. Studies and experts suggest that digital citizenship can help children be safe, savvy and social (Ribble & Park (2019,36) on the internet.

The second question sought to answer how digital citizenship can build children's competencies and help them understand their rights and responsibilities as digital citizens. Children need to be taught about their rights and responsibilities and must build their digital competencies. The earlier they start learning, the better.

Children are owning personal devices at increasingly younger ages, and the trend does not seem likely to change (Ribble & Park 2019, 38)

Children can learn the concepts of Digital citizenship at the age-appropriate levels. For example, Common Sense Media offers a Digital Citizenship curriculum that can be used within the curriculum or as a separate subject. Skills need to be taught at various levels, and children must become more knowledgeable about the risks and opportunities of being online.

The school in this study needs to follow a timeline for the implementation of Digital Citizenship. The teachers will need clear, simple and specified instructions on the small steps that need to be taken to support children in the digital world. The easiest way is to specify the videos they can share with the children, followed by a brief discussion. Discussion and assigned activities will not be enough. Children need to be active participants and can do this in several ways. Teachers would rather not have lengthy professional development courses cramped into a few days or hours because of all the heroic efforts and hours they have spent after having to transition to online learning several times during the past year.

Based on the recommendations by Ribble & Park (2019, 54-65), the GJS primary school can follow a three-year plan adapted to its specific needs. Year 1 is the needs assessment and was attained by the school by carrying out the survey. The results of the study will be disseminated to the school community. A committee can be set up to discuss the results and define the essential needs. Students and parents can also participate in this committee. A digital citizenship policy can be set up to be included in the general school policy. Year 2 can include professional learning opportunities for educators, reaching out to parents, sharing ideas and information. Teachers can start sharing information with their students. If my proposal to the School Director is accepted, teachers can teach alongside my teaching of digital citizenship as a separate subject to Classes 4, 5 and 6. In Year 3, the program can be re-evaluated, making any changes or improvements necessary.

The questionnaires and focus groups in this study served as a mere starting point to introduce the concepts and make the participants aware of all that is entailed when children go online. The feedback from all participants and the significant response to the survey shows that the issue is of utmost importance. The seeds for Digital Citizenship have been sown. The participants will receive feedback from the survey that I conducted, which will re-awaken the subject and stress that the school cares about the children's wellbeing online and offline.

As a headteacher, I intend to carry on with the assembly themes on Digital Citizenship. I will also present the key findings of this study to the School Director with a proposal and recommendation for implementing Digital Citizenship in the school curriculum. I will recommend that Digital Citizenship should be a weekly lesson for classes 4 – 6 (ages 9-12). I would like to teach this lesson which will give me the chance to know all the children personally. In addition, I would like to help the teachers in all possible ways to work together as a team with a common goal. Finally, the parents can benefit from seminars and workshops from leading experts brought to the school.

The whole school community can cooperate and be brought together to help children succeed in their present and future lives on the internet. As has been noted by Curran M.B.F.X., & Curran D., (2019,100),

“It doesn't matter what language you speak, where you live, or what religion you practice — digital citizenship is all about community and an opportunity to inspire and empower others to take action and become changemakers in their own communities, because once you make an impact locally in your own backyard, it has a ripple effect and continues to influence global and digital communities”.

The school can use the concept of a 35-word strategy statement (Collis & Rukstad 2008,10) to promote children's digital wellbeing:

‘Encourage communication amongst the GJS school community during 2021-2022 by engaging in an open dialogue aiming to promote the children's digital wellbeing and active participation in digital citizenship, thereby creating a healthy digital school environment’.

5.3 Limitations and further research

The quantitative and qualitative data in this study were gathered over the same week. The questionnaire to the parents preceded the focus group sessions. It was evident that some of the children had discussed the questionnaire with their parents, which influenced their responses during the focus group discussion. If the focus groups had taken place before the questionnaires had been distributed, this could have been avoided.

It is also worth considering when the children answered 'yes' to some answers in the questionnaire whether they really knew the answers or just marked 'yes' to show that they know. For example, when they were asked if they know how to set privacy settings, they may have said yes without even knowing what it means. The question, "Do you know your rights and responsibilities?" may have received several 'yes' submissions. However, if I were to walk in class and ask the children, it would be interesting to see how many would be able to elaborate on that. My guess would be just a few.

Further research is recommended to find out about the practical application of digital skills for children ages 9 to 11 in this school. Although some children may experience sexting, it was not incorporated in this study because it would cause a different turn and possibly take over. Further research is needed to investigate and pay attention to other devices such as social robots and gaming devices that children use but were not included in the survey. Gender or age differences and sexting which were not considered in this study, can be included in future research.

5.4 SWOT analysis on children's online experiences

Organizations and businesses usually use SWOT analysis as a decision-making tool that helps develop strategic plans. I have adapted the SWOT analysis (Figure 13) to summarise the (S) strengths, (W) weaknesses, (O) opportunities, and (T) threats of children's online experiences in this case study. The strengths and weaknesses are internal factors that an organization can control, and the

opportunities and strengths are external factors that cannot be controlled (Speth 2016,12, 227). In this case, the digital world represents ‘the organization’ because children engage in online experiences in several contexts, namely the home, school, plus other spaces such as friends’ and close family’ homes and other recreation areas.

| | |
|---|---|
| <p>STRENGTHS</p> <p>Children can draw on the unique resources of the internet to access information. Information is accessible to a large audience simultaneously. Digital technology allows for creativity and innovation in presentations. Learning and lessons become more interesting and interactive.</p> | <p>WEAKNESSES</p> <p>Access to the internet and devices is not always equitable. Lack of knowledge and skills can lead to the inappropriate use of the internet. Excessive use and harmful effects of screen time. Access to fake news and inaccurate information.</p> |
| <p>OPPORTUNITIES</p> <p>Collaboration and cooperation are made possible beyond the four walls of the classroom. Contact with others who share similar interests. Being invited to create or participate. Social networking for shared experiences. Civic engagement for the common good. Advice on personal and health issues.</p> | <p>THREATS</p> <p>Harmful, hateful content. Being bullied and harassed. Harvesting and tracking personal information. Meeting strangers. Unwelcome persuasion. Internet viruses and data misuse.</p> |

FIGURE 13. A SWOT analysis of children’s online experiences

5.5 Conclusions

The mixed-method approach used in this research and the comparison with the EUKO 2020 survey provided several answers to the research questions in this study. The findings show a general awareness amongst students, parents, and teachers about some areas in children's online experiences, but there is a gap in other areas.

It has been shown that the internet has both negative and positive aspects. There was a consensus by all the participants that the internet can provide opportunities if used correctly. Furthermore, they recognize the need to feel safe on the internet and that it is at times difficult to know how to react when faced with challenging

situations. The parents' role and the school's role should be to provide the necessary skills and knowledge for children to navigate safely and wisely on the internet. Striking a balance between the opportunities and risks, thereby offering a more holistic approach to children's wellbeing is not easy to deliver (Smahel et al. 2020,135). Rideout (2019,85) noted that media has a significant claim on young people's lives, which is 'well worth our continued attention.'

In conclusion, the school in this case study, needs to consider both digital citizenship lessons and participatory action. Implementation is necessary to build awareness, provide knowledge and the tools to become 'good digital citizens.' Knowing that there can be a balance between the opportunities and strengths, risks, and threats of digital technology will allow the whole school community to make informed choices. Change needs to happen, one step at a time. The school community must change from being reactive to proactive and, in turn, productive.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1. Information letter survey

Information for Parents about the GJS Kids Online Survey

Dear Parents

In our ongoing efforts to raise awareness and provide our pupils with the appropriate guidance to navigate the digital world, we will be conducting a school community survey during the month of February 2021.

The small-scale school survey is based on and adapted from a survey conducted by EU Kids Online, which investigates the online activities, opportunities, and risks for children throughout Europe.

This survey includes an online questionnaire for the students, parents and teachers of Classes 5 and 6. We will ask all participants how children use the internet and about their online rights and responsibilities. Participation is voluntary but will provide the school with valuable information on which areas we need to focus on. A Microsoft Form survey will be sent to your email account, and the participating children will complete the form at school. All entries will remain anonymous and ethical considerations will be followed. The whole group results will be shared with the school community. The aim of disseminating the results is to let the children know that they are part of a caring community that can offer support and cater to their safety and wellbeing.

In addition, focus groups (discussion) with 4 to 6 children per year level will be formed to allow children to voice their opinions and concerns about their life in the digital world. Parents of the children participating in the focus groups will be asked to fill in a consent form.

If you have any questions about the survey, please contact Ms Anna Koni, Head of Upper School, who is leading the survey.

Thank you for your valued time, participation and support.

Best regards
Ms Anna Koni
Head of Upper School

Appendix 2. (13) Questionnaires

Questionnaire for students

1. About you

- Boy
- Girl

2. What class are you in?

- 5
- 6

3. Do you have a mobile phone?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know
- Don't want to say

4. Do you have a tablet?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know
- Don't want to say

5. About how long do you spend on the internet each day during the week?

- Little or no time
- About half an hour
- About 1 hour
- About 2 hours
- About 3 hours
- About 4 hours
- About 5 hours
- About 6 hours
- About 7 hours
- Don't know
- Don't want to say

6. About how long do you spend on the internet on average during the weekend?

- Little or no time
- About half an hour
- About 1 hour
- About 2 hours
- About 3 hours
- About 4 hours
- About 5 hours
- About 6 hours
- About 7 hours
- Don't know
- Don't want to say

7. How often do you hang out or have fun with your friends online? (social media, gaming etc.)

- Never
- Hardly ever
- Monthly
- Weekly
- Daily
- Many times a day
- Don't know
- Don't want to say

8. How often do you hang out with friends offline? (meeting face to face ?)

- Never
- Hardly ever
- Monthly
- Weekly
- Daily
- Many times a day
- Don't know
- Don't want to say

9. How often do you play online games?

- Several times a day
- Daily or almost daily
- Weekly
- Monthly
- Never
- Don't know
- Don't want to say

10. How often do you do schoolwork online?

- Several times a day
- Daily or almost daily
- Weekly
- Monthly
- Never
- Don't know
- Don't want to say

11. How often do you watch video clips online?

- Several times a day
- Daily or almost daily
- Weekly
- Monthly
- Never
- Don't know
- Don't want to say

12. How often do you communicate online with friends or family?

- Several times a day
- Daily or almost daily
- Weekly
- Monthly
- Never
- Don't know
- Don't want to say

13. How often do you visit social media websites? (For example, Whatsapp, Viber, Snapchat, Messenger, Instagram etc.)

- Several times a day
- Daily or almost daily
- Weekly
- Monthly
- Never
- Don't know
- Don't want to say

14. Which websites or apps do you use most often? Tick all that apply.

- Whatsapp
- Viber
- Snapchat
- Instagram
- Tik Tok
- YouTube
- Online games
- Facebook messenger
- Other _____

15. Has somebody ever used your password and pretended to be you?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know
- Don't want to say

16. Has somebody ever created a page or image about you that was hurtful?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know
- Don't want to say

17. Has anyone ever posted nasty or hurtful messages about you where everyone could see?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know
- Don't want to say

18. Have you ever been left out or excluded (kicked out) from a group or activity on the internet?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know
- Don't want to say

19. Other nasty happened to me on the internet.

- Yes
- No
- Don't know
- Don't want to say

20. Thinking of the last time someone treated you in a hurtful or nasty way online how did you feel?

- I was not upse
- I was a little upset
- I was fairly upset
- I was very upset
- Don't know
- Don't want to say

21. If something happens to you on the internet who will you talk to? (tick all that apply)

- My mother or my father (or stepmother/stepfather)
- My brother or sister
- A friend
- A teacher
- An adult I trust

- I don't talk to anyone
- I don't know
- I don't want to say

22. In the past year how often did you send your personal information (your full name, address or phone number) to someone you have never met face to face?

- Never
- A few times
- At least every month
- At least every week
- Daily
- Don't know
- Don't want to say

23. In the past year how often did you pretend to be a different kind of person online than you really are?

- Never
- A few times
- At least every month
- At least every week
- Daily
- Don't know
- Don't want to say

24. Have you ever had contact on the internet with someone you have never met face to face before?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know
- Don't want to say

25. How true are the following statements about you? « I know when I should or shouldn't share information online. »

- Not true
- A bit true

- True
- Very true
- Don't know
- Don't want to say

26. « I know how to remove people from my contact list. »

- Not true
- A bit true
- True
- Very true
- Don't know
- Don't want to say

27. « I know how to change my privacy settings. »

- Not true
- A bit true
- True
- Very true
- Don't know
- Don't want to say

28. « I know how to check if the information I find online is true. »

- Not true
- A bit true
- True
- Very true
- Don't know
- Don't want to say

29. How do you usually respond to requests from people to become your 'friends' online? Please tick as many boxes as needed.

- I usually accept all requests
- I accept only if we have friends in common
- I accept only if I know them
- I only accept them if my parents/carer says it is ok

- I don't know
- I don't want to say

30. The last time you had a problem with someone or something online how did you react? Tick all that apply.

- I ignored the problem or thought that the problem would go away on its own.
- I closed the window or app.
- I felt a bit guilty about what went wrong.
- I tried to get back at the other person.
- I stopped using the internet for a while.
- I deleted any messages from the other person.
- I changed my privacy or contact settings.
- I blocked the person from contacting me.
- I reported the problem online.

31. How often do the statement in questions 31-36 apply to you? « I feel safe on the internet. »

- Never
- Sometimes
- Often
- Always
- I don't know
- I prefer not to say

32. « I find other people are kind and helpful on the internet.»

- Never
- Sometimes
- Often
- Always
- I don't know
- I prefer not to say

33. « I know what to do if someone acts online in a way I don't like. »
- Never
 - Sometimes
 - Often
 - Always
 - I don't know
 - I prefer not to say
34. « I find it easier to be myself online than when I am with people face to face. »
- Never
 - Sometimes
 - Often
 - Always
 - I don't know
 - I prefer not to say
35. « I talk about different things online than when I am with people face to face. »
- Never
 - Sometimes
 - Often
 - Always
 - I don't know
 - I prefer not to say
36. « I think the amount of time I spend on the internet causes problems for me. »
- Never
 - Sometimes
 - Often
 - Always
 - I don't know
 - I prefer not to say
37. What things on the internet do you think are good for children your age?

38. Has the school suggested ways to use the internet safely?

- Never
- Hardly ever
- Sometimes
- Often
- Very often
- I don't know
- Prefer not to say

39. Has the school encouraged you to explore and learn things on the internet?

- Never
- Hardly ever
- Sometimes
- Often
- Very often
- I don't know
- I prefer not to say

40. Has the school made rules about what you can do on the internet at school?

- Never
- Hardly ever
- Sometimes
- Often
- Very often
- I don't know
- I prefer not to say

41. Has the school explained why some online content is good or bad?

- Never
- Hardly ever
- Sometimes
- Often
- Very often

- I don't know
- I prefer not to say

42. Has the school talked to you about what to do if something on the internet bothered you?

- Never
- Hardly ever
- Sometimes
- Often
- Very often
- I don't know
- I prefer not to say

43. How much do you think your parents know about what you do on the internet?

- A lot
- Quite a bit
- Just a little
- Nothing
- I don't know

44. Have your parents made rules about what you can do on the internet at home?

- Yes
- No
- I don't know
- I prefer not to say

45. Have your parents explained what online content is good or bad?

- Yes
- No
- I don't know
- I prefer not to say

46. Have your parents suggested ways to use the internet safely?

- Yes

- No
- I don't know
- I prefer not to say

47. Have your parents suggested ways to behave towards other people online?

- Never
- Hardly ever
- Sometimes
- Often
- Very often
- I don't know
- I prefer not to say

48. Have your parents helped you when something has bothered you on the internet?

- Never
- Hardly ever
- Sometimes
- Often
- Very often
- I don't know
- I prefer not to say

49. Do your parents use parental control or other means of blocking or filtering some types of content?

- Never
- Hardly ever
- Sometimes
- Often
- Very often
- I don't know
- I prefer not to say

50. Do you know your rights and responsibilities as a digital citizen on the internet?

- Yes
- No
- I know some things
- I don't know

51. What do you prefer?

- Online education
- Face to face education at school
- Both
- None
- Don't know

52. In which ways are you creative online?

53. In what ways does the internet help you learn?

Questionnaire for parents

https://forms.office.com/Pages/DesignPage.aspx?fragment=FormId%3Du2z4rEzZD0qcauFOtSP5hLHpc9c0-XxBr2h57_0s341UNkFWQTIJRzhFV0NPTVNUQ1FPQjBXWFBCOS4u%26Token%3D72c6887097904e8e9925d0c6be7e834d

Questionnaire for teachers

https://forms.office.com/Pages/ShareFormPage.aspx?id=u2z4rEzZD0qcauFOtSP5hLHpc9c0-XxBr2h57_0s341UMVdXSjRSM0hQUkw3UjkzOExBWIFSWjNRSS4u&sharetoken=iEydEshAdLmiJ7xSO5UX

Appendix 3. Letters of consent

Letter of consent for School Director

From:

Ms Anna Koni

Head of Upper Primary

The GJS

Nicosia, Cyprus

To:

The Director

Ms

The GJS

Nicosia, Cyprus

8th February 2021

Dear Ms

As part of my master's degree course with Tampere University of Applied Sciences (Finland), I request your permission to form focus groups (group discussion) with a small number of pupils (four to six) from Classes 5 and 6 respectively. The purpose of discussion will be to give the children the opportunity to voice their opinions and concerns about living in a digital world.

I am grateful to the school for the opportunity to further my professional development.

Yours sincerely

Anna Koni

Ms
Director

Ms Anna Koni
Head of Upper Primary

Letter of consent for teachers

From:

Ms Anna Koni

Head of Upper Primary

The GJS

Nicosia, Cyprus

To:

Teacher's name

Class 5A

The GJS

Nicosia, Cyprus

8th February 2021

Dear Ms

As part of my master's degree course with Tampere University of Applied Sciences (Finland), I request your permission to form a focus group (group discussion) with two pupils from your class. The purpose of the discussion will be to give the children the opportunity to voice their opinions and concerns about living in a digital world.

I am grateful to the school for the opportunity to further my professional development.

Yours sincerely

Anna Koni

Ms

Class 5A Teacher

Ms Anna Koni

Head of Upper Primary

Focus group brochure for children with consent



focus group
brochure for kids fina

GJS Kids Online

CONSENT FORM FOR GJS Kids Online SMALL-SCALE SURVEY Focus groups

| | | | | |
|---|------|----|----------------------|----------|
| To be completed by the: PARENT/GUARDIAN | | | | |
| Please circle the relevant answer: | | | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have you been informed about the GJS Kids Online survey? YES/NO • Do you agree that your child can take part in the focus group with the same year level? Neither you nor your child will be identified in any way. YES/NO | | | | |
| If YES , please fill in the details below. | | | | |
| Child's name: _____ | | | Child's Class: _____ | |
| Signed by Parent: _____ | | | Date: _____ | |
| Full | Name | in | Block | Letters: |
| _____ | | | | |

Please place the consent form in an envelope, seal it and return it to the class teacher by Thursday, February 25th.

For any questions about the survey, please contact Ms Anna Koni at anna.koni@thegrammarschool.net.

Appendix 4. Focus group topic guide

GJS Kids Online

Focus Group Topic Guide

Question 1

- What do you do on the internet most often?
- What do you enjoy most on the internet?

Follow up question depending on how the above is answered.

Question 2

- What exactly do you do there?
- What do you like about it?
- Has anything interesting happened to you there recently?

Question 3

- Have you experienced anything on the internet that was not very pleasant?
- Are you careful on the internet while playing?
- Have you met anyone on the internet that you have not met personally?
- What other things are you careful about?
- What other things that are not very pleasant on the internet that can happen to you?
- Can you think of anything else?
- Try and think as many things as possible.

Question 4

You have mentioned many things that are not pleasant. Let us talk about each one of them.

- Which one of them do you think are the worst? Least pleasant? Why?
- Has anything like that happened to anyone else?
- Can you imagine it happening to you?
- What did you do about it?
- Have you learnt anything from the experience?
- How would you react if something similar happened again?
- How did you feel at the time?
- When is such a situation fine, and when not?
- When does it start to be a problem?
- Can anything be done to prevent this from happening in future?
- Can you do anything to avoid such an experience?

Conclusion

Sum up what has been discussed. Mention the positive aspects, compliment and thank the children.

- How did you like talking about the internet in our little discussion group?
- Is there anything important to you we have not mentioned?
- If you want to follow up on any issues we have not touched, feel free to come and see me any time.

Appendix 5. A sample of the first attempt at focus group analysis GKO Coding

| Opportunity | Description | Code |
|----------------------------|--|------|
| Positive online experience | | OP |
| Online learning | if I want to learn some things on my guitar, weebly, print some exercises for me to practice, watching like tutorials, of how to draw. I like to draw build houses learn ideas, sketches or current stuff and I learned how to do it on the internet sketches or current stuff and I learned how to do it on the internet fun fact find information online lessons, printouts or worksheet and do some, like practice. | OL |
| in-school learning | you can't really control other people because they can do the stuff that, like, you can't listen to music. Some people have wireless like earphones and they come to like this on the wall so they can't hear and that's considered like not obeying the rules. And it's unfair for the others because then the others don't listen to music, which in this case they want to. And the one guy that's not like not obeying the rules, he is and it's quite unfair. | OSL |
| Socializing online | play the games with mostly my friends, talk to my friends in the class group on viber, | |
| Online entertainment | I listen to music mostly, I listen to music mostly I listen to music, listen to music, watch funny videos listening to music listen to music a lot play that game art, music listen to music I play some games, not online games. we play | |

| | | |
|--------------------------------------|---|---|
| Websites or apps used | Minecraft YouTube Spotify. Safari. Spotify YouTube PlayStation Roblox. instagram, viber, weebly, viber, iMessage, Viber, | GOO, WAPP, WIKI, WEEBLY, MINEC. |
| Approach to online communication | This can include a range of issues discussed in relation to how the child feels about the online environment in terms of safety and security and in comparison to face-to-face communication, for example: | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feeling safe on the internet (S) • Knowing what to do if someone acts online in a way they don't like (KA) |
| Behaviour on social networking sites | <p>Under this code a number of issues fall that the children might discuss, including having their own profile on a social networking or social media or gaming site, the number of profiles they have, the information available about the child on these profiles, which social networking or gaming sites they use, and responding to requests from people to become online 'friends</p> <p>they were accusing me of saying bad words but I never said that, the game that created it, and they can see so if you're innocent, there's, you're not, you're not gonna get banned, I would never find a friend person that I don't know, I know that my cousin knows her face to face. I haven't experienced anything.</p> <p>I would leave the group and talk in private messages</p> | OB |
| Social networking sites safety | <p>Awareness of safety features on social networking sites, such as blocking button (to block contacts), report button (if being treated badly online), help centre or link to a helpline (to contact someone who can help), and safety centre (to get information or advice)</p> <p>says report the person</p> <p>, I don't answer because my friend, someone hacked into her account, and someone hacked into her account. And because of this, because I had her friends who have friends. And I unfriend her because the hacker might access my account.</p> | SS |

Appendix 6. Focus group analysis common theme categories

PREFERRED USE OF INTERNET

- MUSIC: Listen to music, listen to music, listen to music, download music
- VIDEOS: watch funny videos, watch videos, watch Youtube, watch some talks, watch movies on Netflix, watch Youtube videos, Youtube, Netflix, watch TikTok or Youtube, Tik Tok, Netflix, enjoy movies and educational videos with your family and friends. Watching movies
- LEARN THINGS: Learn some things on my guitar. Learn some things, learn how to draw, sketch, learn something new, it can teach me things, you can google things, you can new new stuff from like googling things, look up a spelling word, learn more skills for my basketball, if I don't know some words I can translate them from Google translate, Google translate and speak in that language to annoy my little brother, to learn another language, actually like if I want to learn something new, interesting, I searched, Google, or sometimes I watch some videos in YouTube like to learn for my German exams, Youtube to learn something new, to learn Grammar, Discovering new stuff.
- SCHOOLWORK: I see the weebly, print some exerices, study for my lessons, do school projects, learn more about a project for school, to see for today like my homework, Weebly for homework, Weebly, Weebly to check out our school stuff,
- FIND FACTS/ENTERTAINMENT: watch the news, find fun facts, Also like learn information from the internet like can you give them like an example. Like, for example, if you're watching a movie and like you want to know the actors you go on the internet and like you see them all, or like for the project if you want to learn things you learn things from the internet, like around the world, youtube to watch some sports, watch football on Youtube and learn more stuff about footballers and how to play very good.
- GAMES: play games, Roblox, playstation, Minecraft, play games with friends, PS4, educational games, play games, play video games, play some games with friends, Minecraft with friends, Call of Duty, grinding camos on War Zombies, Call of duty cold war, post memes on Reddit, PewDiePie(Swedish Youtuber), play offline games, Geometry Dash, Roblox, Road stars,

- COMMUNICATION: talk to friends and parents when I'm lonely, play games together, communicating with friends, play with friends online, text on Snapchat.

MOST COMMON VISITED WEBSITES/ APPS

- Spotify, Youtube, Roblox, Instagram, Viber, iMessges, Snapchat, Facetime, Whatsapp, TikTok, Nightzookeeper, Class Weebly website, Youtube, Call of Duty, Netflix, Reddit, Pokemon Trading Card game, Netflix, Google translate, Duolingo, Google translate, Instagram, Snapchat, Amongus, Obama 2020 app, Youtube, Weebly, NightZookeeper, Youtube

UNPLEASANT EXPERIENCE/REACTIONS

- When playing games someone started saying something bad, I ignored them, didn't speak to them, deleted them, didn't respond, they get tired of typing.
- Someone started annoying me, accusing me of saying bad words that I never said, they were accusing me and reported me to the company that blocked me but I didn't do anything,
- Fighting with friends
- Someone made a fake account to like talk to me, it was kind of scary in the beginning because at first I thought it was a friend but then I realised that something was going wring and I stopped talking to him and discussed it with my parents and we sorted thing out
- Someone changed their email to text me and I just deleted them.
- Two bad things happened to me online, I did something bad in the game and they started talking back to me, they started bullying me and I left it alone. The other thing is that someone made a fake account of one of my best friends and he said horrible stuff. I couldn't 't believe this because my best friend wouldn't do that. I found out it was someone else.
- We usually have small disagreements but nothing else.
- Some things might happen in a Viber group.
- One time I posted something on Reddit and somebody else reposted it without giving me credit for the meme.
- I was playing CS GO with some friends and we were global elite. And of of my friends asked me, hey can I try your weapons because I want to buy it. Weapons can cost real money. So I said sure, I traded him the weapons and he never gave

me back by weapon skin back. But I wrecked him on global elite, and I got up and I got up to a rank higher, so I got another skin to it was fun to do that, but I don't talk to him anymore.

- Stupid fights on Viber groups over the group name or a fight in school so that we can discuss in the group chats. My mom told me whenever I'm in a group chat, I have to leave some stupid fights to avoid stupid fights.
- Sometimes there's misunderstandings that are sorted out later and nothing really bad happens. But something bad can happen when somebody gets removed from a group.
- Losing a friend because of an online misunderstanding.
- Swearing,
- hackers sending random emails, they might know your life and you can be really worried.
- The worst thing is your address being leaked to the public, people could do pranks, they may scam you, hacking into your private information, they might come to your home, hurt you, they might steal things, kidnap you and you may never see your parents again, they do a million things if your address leaked.
- They might put your private information online and people will start messaging you and you have like a lot of stress on your mind. Worst thing that can happen is to be hacked, or like become friends with someone on the internet and you trusting them and then like you go to actually meet and like suddenly like really bad happens. Another worst thing that can happen is someone reporting you to the police even if you did nothing wrong because you may have done something that you made someone mad on the internet but it's not that serious. You could get banned, pay a fine.
- I got kicked out of Amongus but I called my best friend and she explained everything and said it's okay don't worry and they just added back, I don't know why.
- On Tiktok someone was pretending to be chicken nuggets and lead children away to kidnap them you. You can look it up on the internet and they kidnapped a kid.
- Someone can hack into your account, either Tik Tok, Snapchat, Facebook or Instagram and they can accept people you don't want. It happened to one of my cousins.

- My mum told me theres this thing on Instagram like blue whale or something. If I see Mickey Mouse and they want to play a game it will most probably tell you to kill yourself and stuff. It's very scary. She told me whenever I see it I have to block it and tell my mum. They can hack into your account and they can take that response and they will trace it and threaten you if you don't want to do it.
- If you post like an Instagram picture someone can repost it and you didn't want it to be public.
- A 71-year-old was sending message to girls my age and she wanted pictures of their feet.
- Someone was asking them on FaceTime take off their shirts and use a face filter to cover the camera cover or use a face filter.
- This other guy constructed his face digitally to make himself look like a girl, used voice changer and he was like let's take a selfie and they were like showing each other and he was talking pictures of them and then he would take off the filter and then he would get off.
- The police traced the people who were doing the whale thing and enabling everyone to do these bad things, they got a life sentence.
- You might get banned for no reason. Some people report you and you might get banned. Yeah, they just do it for fun.
- Sometimes the internet does things you don't search. Something might pop up.
- So, it may cause problems for exam parts. My uncle knows this. He teaches. And he has this friend. And he gave his son a phone, and the son. He at night. He woke up and played games, and he got bad marks on his test. And he went to school and slept in class. And they caused that problem.
- WAYS OF BEING CAREFUL
- I used to play Roblox with strangers, but my parents don't let me because they say, they could trick you into telling personal information
- .I've never chatted to anyone I don't know, I just declined.
- I would never friend a person I don't know unless my cousin knows her face to face.
- I put all my private things anonymous
- I hide things about me, I will not leak anything that is important about me because people may like just bully me because of that

- . I would never reveal anything of where I live or anything. I never share my private information. When I play online games I usually have my first name not my last. I don't allow friends I don't know. I use another name when I sign up for a game and I never show my face.
- There's many rare items in Roblox, you pay money to get them, real money. My friend got scammed, tricked in Roblox when someone in China left the game and got a very expensive item.
- I would never trust anyone I haven't met face to face.
- Allowed to have a private Tik Tok account and I accept only people who I know to follow me.
- Private Tik Tok account where only my relatives and friends are in
- If someone invites me and I don't know him I won't accept it. Only for my friends or my family or someone that I know, I will accept.
- I don't swear like video games and other things,
- I don't accept people I don't know, I use a VPM so that no one can see where I am, they can't find me. I never use my real name.
- If you accept the request from someone you don't know something might happen to me.
- I never put my passwords, I put fake birth date. If someone sends me a request I only accept if it's someone I know. To be sure I call them and ask them, did you send me this request.
- I put my fake birthdate everywhere, I have private accounts everywhere and I only accept people I know.
- If you say something in person they can see you and they know what you mean. Losing a friend is the worst thing that can happen to you.
- If its someone from my classroom I would just go up to them and say like hey dude, it's not cool to do that kind of thing, please give me the item back. I will talk to him to convince him to give them item back. If it happens in a viber group I would text the person privately, delete him, block him, leave the group, talk to my parents, all my accounts are private.
- Talk to your parents because parents will find a solution on how you can react.
- Listen to that person, try not to do things that will make people mad because once you post something on the internet someone might find it disrespectful. Think before you post them.

- Tell others what happened to you so that they might get a little scared so that they know how to react if it happened to them.
- The internet could put like a limit on certain application so that you're like this is not my age I should probably delete this application. People might post something inappropriate.
- Do we have the tools, do we know how to react, do we know what to do when we get upset? I think the tool we need is to go to our parents. Talk with our parents and they can tell us what to do.
- Share your experiences with your friends so if it happens to them they will know what to do.
- Talk to your parents.
- If someone says something bad, it goes though one ear and out of the other, only good information stays in your mind, discuss with your family because it might get even worse.
- I would unfriend someone who hacked a friend.
- I would convince not to care and that what they are texting it is not true. You know you're a good person and they're a bad person.
- Risk of identity theft so you have to be prepared. This is why I use a VPN. Because hackers can intercept the flow of data from your device to the internet.
- Avoid these things by just blocking the user. You can just tell you mum or brother or someone. And then they will do something like you can't do it by yourself. You have to tell someone to help.
- They place their cameras in the person's house. They traced who did it and they found him and put him in jail for harassment.
- I would block the user and immediately tell my parents.
- I would probably delete the app.
- My advice is, just don't talk to people on the internet, if you want to talk to someone do it face to face or send them like the old days letter by pigeon, yes, message in a bottle.
- I would never text anybody on social media website. If I want to talk to someone I'll either say in person or call them on their real number.
- My mum has taken care of that so that I don't see things I don't like.
- I play with friends and I try to avoid somebody I don't know.
- If there's a pop up and I don't like it I won't go back to that game.
- Maybe I can tell others like ways I think it will be safe.

- Talk to them tell to use the internet less and be more careful.
- so on is feeling really down from when you're not like my friend. Anyone basically. I'll just go ahead and say you're very good person and stuff that I actually mean. And basically try to make them happy.
- They can tell the student, not to use apps, not for their age, and, like, explain to them why they should do. And, yeah, okay.
- Like that. If you see something that's inappropriate for you or for another age and you're small. You're young to see, you have to close like immediately. And you need to know. If you want to go to YouTube and see something new that you didn't know, you have to know what's good or bad for you because if you go in to say, I'm gonna say something new today, and put like something that you don't know you have to know if it's safe
- You should know that if something bad happens you should tell your parents
- You should know that you shouldn't search things that are not for your age, and don't use things that are not for your age because then if something bad happens you'll feel very guilty, saying bad stuff on the internet and also sharing. If anything bad happens with your parents, not just keep it a secret forever, and feel sad.
- not paying much attention to your family when you least have it. Now, for like some time you know it's not that it's not gonna last forever. They might be addicted on the game like your dad was gonna come. Hey, do you want to play ball football. And you might say no, I'm playing a game now with my friends can you leave
- Yes. So maybe they can take away their device for a bit. So, they get. Oh. And what will their reaction be though of this person who's addicted and suddenly not maybe be angry. But still, they have to try to make him or her. Stop using and being addicted.
- You might not give it to them like because you already know he's gonna be playing every day. Just give it for him for like an hour a day.

HOW DID YOU FEEL?

- Children did not want to answer this question and changed the subject.
- Older children answered – felt scared and worried, I was out of my like comfort zone, confused, didn't know what to do, but now I've learnt what to do. I was scared and when someone made a fake account of my best friend I felt kind of

sad. I felt upset because after the disagreement we may have never forgiven each other but we usually do.

- Sad and very scared, very angry
- This can make someone paranoid or scared. They can feel scared and alone, they can feel like it's hopeless,
- A person can feel very frightened.
- Sad, frightened, angry,
- Scared and worried
- Probably don't know what to do
- What if they trace me? Kidnap me?

DIGITAL CITIZENSHIP- What is a digital citizen?

- a digital citizen is like an online user that she's like, on an app like tik tok or YouTube, beauty, my instagram snapchat WhatsApp, lay all that stuff.
- a good citizen by respecting the others who use the app. By not cursing them or saying bad words to them and not disrespecting them
- Okay, well, being a digital citizen means. Don't. Don't steal stuff from people on Vin in video games, especially in CS GO, because he has got some skins could cost like upwards to \$100. Don't close Don't, don't go out and be like, hey, if you are. And also, don't steal people's identity. I think that's generally frowned upon. Okay.
- to not abuse other people to not take pictures or someone's profile and Photoshop them to look like something else that
- Well, when you are careful what you post when get into fights or when you don't make fun of other people during social media. When you always take care of others if they have a problem you can attend to it.
- I think good digital citizen is is are the people that are on the internet and use the internet daily which is nearly like all the people in the world. And the digital citizen must respect the rules of the internet, I think, and I address the people that are indeed that use the internet every day.
- I think a digital citizen is someone who is online. Nearly every day but doesn't do anything bad or inappropriate and always follows the rules. Okay, it's I think it's what you just said. It's like a person who is like a he's on the internet, but he's not like hacking and doing like bad things he's, like, he's the good version

- how all of us should like be on online, I feel like there should be like, like a no hackers and, like, That's bad. And like I feel like they don't understand what digital citizens is.
- I think it is like when you're a person that just does go on the internet and does stuff but doesn't do anything bad uses the internet right and like doesn't like hack or like, like, want to find like like people's like more information about them if they don't know them, or like do any like bad things that hurt someone's feelings. So, yeah, yeah. So it's the way you behave online really is what you've said, isn't it, and that's a good digital citizen with behaving in a way that would be good.
- the internet is something on devices that somebody created, and everybody can put information on. But it's something we should use correctly, if that's nice.
- Try understand the guy who created the internet you wanted to entertain people. And, like, make sure they have something to do. By watching YouTube.
- Maybe to be kind on the internet
- somebody who is a member of the world. Yeah. So, the digital part. Okay, a kind citizen. Okay. So that would mean what would you be doing is like a digital citizen. It's like my opinion, actually, it's that you have to be respectful to everyone, you find, like even online.

HOW DO YOU KNOW IF THE INFORMATION YOU ARE SEARCHING IS TRUE?

- I don't really go online so I don't know so many things, but sometimes you can understand from the words they put, like, I. It doesn't make sense. But like, if you think this is like crazy or something like that. And you have no right to put something like that
- You can understand. If it's not true, because maybe doesn't really make sense. Or maybe, something happened very unexpectedly. I guess someone died, maybe it won't be true because, like he was well the previous day.