

Article

Navigating Digital Risks and Benefits: Malaysian Parents' Perceptions of their Children's Digital Media Usage

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Abstract: In this article, we explore how Malaysian parents view their children's use of digital media. We studied 645 parents from various backgrounds to understand how they navigate the world of digital devices and content. Our research dives into the fine line parents walk between what they see as the risks and the benefits in this digital landscape. What we discovered is that these parents have a pretty nuanced view. They see the positives—like how digital media can boost education, improve communication, and expose their kids to diverse cultures. But at the same time, they worry. They're concerned about things like too much screen time, exposure to inappropriate stuff, and how it might affect their kids' physical activity. Our study found that different things influence how parents see these issues. Factors like how much education parents have, how much they earn, and the ages of their kids play a role in shaping their views. With Malaysia becoming more and more digital, our research aims to help policymakers, teachers, and parents themselves. By getting a handle on what worries and excites parents about digital media, we hope to find ways to make it work better for everyone. Our goal is to figure out how to make the most of the good stuff digital media offers while finding ways to deal with the concerns. Ultimately, we want to create a digital world that's healthier and more balanced for Malaysian kids.

Keywords: Digital parenting; Malaysian parents; resilience; digital benefits; digital risks

Introduction

It is often taken for granted that children nowadays are digital natives. They are shaped and influenced by technology daily. Most times, they can actively use digital technologies despite having no formal training. Parenting has become more difficult because of the widespread impact of digital technology on daily life. As a result of the proliferation of digital media, children and families now face both new chances for learning and simultaneously, new dangers.

The Malaysian context, characterized by a diverse demographic landscape and dynamic technological advancements, offers a unique backdrop to explore these complexities. The primary objective of this study is to investigate the perceptions of Malaysian parents regarding their children's digital media usage. Specifically, we aim to answer the following research questions:

- i. What specific worries and potential risks are Malaysian parents associating with their children's consumption of digital media?

- ii. How do Malaysian parents perceive the advantages and potential growth opportunities linked to their children's engagement with digital media?
- iii. What strategies and approaches do Malaysian parents employ to balance and navigate the potential risks and benefits inherent in their children's digital media usage?

Understanding the intricate interplay between the perceived benefits and risks of children's digital media usage among Malaysian parents holds substantial significance especially as Malaysia advances towards becoming a digitally connected nation, comprehending parental attitudes and concerns is vital for developing informed policies and educational programs that support responsible and productive digital engagement among children. By gaining insights into the unique contextual factors that shape parental perceptions, this study can aid in the design of tailored interventions and strategies to maximize the benefits of digital media while mitigating potential risks.

Literature Review

1. Digital Parenting

In an era characterized by rapid technological advancement and ubiquitous digital access, parenting has undergone a significant transformation. Worries about screen addiction, exposure to inappropriate content, and cyberbullying are prevalent (Livingstone, Davidson, Bryce, Batool, Haughton, & Nandi, 2017). The ubiquity of smartphones, tablets, and the internet has blurred the boundaries between online and offline life, necessitating vigilant parental guidance. Digital parenting refers to the strategies, practices, and attitudes adopted by parents to navigate their children's interactions with digital technologies, ensuring a safe and enriching experience. Parents today grapple with multifaceted concerns related to their children's digital media usage. As such, they engage in multiple strategies to accommodate the continuous change that is affecting their children and subsequently, the family life. These strategies include active mediation (co-viewing, co-playing), restrictive mediation (setting time limits, content filters), and conversational mediation (discussions about online experiences) (Livingstone et al., 2017). The choice of mediation strategy often depends on the child's age, maturity, and the specific digital context.

However, to strategise children's digital use requires more than a technical understanding of the functions of devices and applications. It requires a combination of knowledge and attitude that has to be based on an overall understanding of digital technologies and the acknowledgement that there are really no fixed rules on how to digitally parent a child. Instead, digital parenting is a dynamic activity that is contextual and often, are responses to the dynamic changes in technology and the child. This is why promoting digital literacy is essential for empowering children to navigate the digital world independently. Parents play a crucial role in teaching critical thinking, media literacy, and responsible online behaviour (Rideout, 2019). Digital parenting extends beyond restriction; it aims to equip children with the skills needed to make informed choices.

In our digitally driven society, parenting approaches often manifest in two distinct forms: restrictive and enabling (Livingstone & Byrne, 2018). These approaches pivot on how parents navigate the myriad risks and opportunities entwined with their children's digital engagement. Restrictive parenting involves curbing and regulating their children's technology usage, while enabling parents actively endorse and support it. Sonia Livingstone and Jasmina Byrne's (2018) delineation of these parenting styles underscores the pivotal role of parental navigation – the nuanced ability to balance and adeptly navigate the intricate landscape of risks and advantages accompanying their children's digital interactions. Their assertion underscores the delicate equilibrium parents must strike, skillfully maneuvering through the complexities to foster a healthy and constructive digital environment for their children.

2. Risks in Children's Digital Usage

The idea of risk implicates the probable outcome of a certain actions or events that threatens the value of its assessor. It is in fact, defined by Aven and Renn (2009) as the judgment of uncertainty in outcome of action and its severity which threatens the value one holds. In our discussion surrounding children's digital usage, the concept of risk encapsulates the uncertainty and potential severity associated with activities that may pose

a threat to their well-being. As highlighted by Livingstone, Gorzig, and Haddon (2022), it's crucial to differentiate risk from actual harm. They assert that risk doesn't necessarily equate to immediate harm but rather denotes the probability of harm occurring. This distinction is significant as it reframes how we perceive digital activities; it emphasizes that harm isn't inherently embedded in these activities and isn't always imminent. Consequently, it urges a strategic and nuanced approach toward managing and mitigating potential risks associated with children's digital engagements. This understanding prompts a more holistic view, allowing for the development of informed strategies that empower children to navigate the digital landscape safely and responsibly.

The actualization of digital risk into harm i.e., the compromise of children's wellbeing depends upon the risk's severity, technical approaches used to mitigate the risk, psychological make-up of the children and the sociological constitution of the whole digital interaction (Gorzig, Haddon & Livingstone, 2022). At institutional level, endeavor to understand and therefore handle digital risk among children has resulted into the creation of digital risk typologies. Such typologies map the landscape of various risks children would encounter as they navigate through digital environment (OECD, 2021). This enables policy makers and researchers not only to enlist all the existing risks, but also provided empirical grounds for which they could understand its temporal dynamics, occurrence patterns, comparative standards, and resource allocation of strategies in definite terms (Mohamed, Wok, Nasir & Ghazali, 2022).

According to Livingstone & Stoilova (2022), the typology in its inception classified children's digital risk into three categories; content, contact and conduct. Content risks involves content exposure to children that are illegal, age ill-suited and harmful (OECD, 2021). Contact risks refers to the communication that preponderate the victimization of children by adults (Livingstone & Stoilova, 2022) whereas conduct risks pertain to exchange that involve the antagonism of children between one another, which nevertheless impacts them either as either perpetrator or victim (OECD, 2021). Later typology includes a fourth category of risk that relates to the commercial aspects of digital technology, which OECD (2021) named consumer risk, and later recommended to be renamed as contract risk by Livingstone & Stoilova (2022). This involves the children in accepting "(including unintentionally, involuntarily or unknowingly) the Terms of Service (or Terms and Conditions) of a commercial provider of digital products or services. Such contractual arrangements can bind the child in ways that may be unfair or exploitative..." (Livingstone & Stoilova, 2022, p.7).

There are also other kinds of risks that resist the neat definition of the aforesaid categories, which OECD (2021) aptly classified as cross-cutting risks. OECD enlisted privacy, advanced technology as well as health within this dimension of risk. Livingstone & Stoilova (2021) argued that cross-cutting risks links different kind of risks mentioned above, induced by multiple factors of different nature. This marks the complexity of digital technology and its progress that defies any sort of simple classification. All these categories of risks can be further categorized based on its nature. The nature of risk betrays four kinds: aggressive, sexual, value-threatening, and commercial (Livingstone & Stoilova, 2022). For instance, a contact risk is considered aggressive in nature if it entails online harassment on the child by an adult, whereas an aggressive content risk involves children's exposure to violent content. Such is the portrayal of risks that children are likely to encounter in their digital experience.

3. Benefits in Children's Digital Usage

Stood in contrast to the concept of risk, benefits are not as elaborately defined and in the literature of digital parenting, this is even more conspicuous (Hume & Mort, 2012). This implicates the dominance of risk-centered, control view of digital parenting that approaches technology as something to be delimited from children. Notwithstanding the current dominant narrative of digital risk, discourse surrounding benefits of digital technology for children can be ascertained.

The first and foremost area in children's life emphasized regarding digital benefit is education. According to UNICEF (2017), dissemination of knowledge can now transcend rural-urban, socio-economic divide due to digital connectivity. Education has been rendered more convenient with information management ability that the digital platform provides. In Livingstone & Bobber (2004)'s research, internet

serves as the informal means of additional supports to their formal education, where it was the second-most referred material after their textbooks. In Malaysia, students used the information gathered from the internet in deciding the itinerary of their tertiary-level education (Hassan et al, 2014). The recent covid-19 pandemic had further digitalized the educational experience, where synchronous and asynchronous virtual sessions were adopted, enabling transcendence over temporal and geographical limitations (Nordin & Nordin, 2020).

The second area of digital benefits that received the most exposition in the digital technology literature in relation to children is social interaction. Children use digital technology mostly to maintain social interaction with their peers, strengthening the already existing social bond while at the same time, expanding the network even more through new online acquaintances (Livingstone & Bobber, 2004). However, more than mere social network maintenance, digital platform confers the capacity to create and establish social community among themselves, where their individual identity and social sense of belonging are affirmed (Monteiro & Osario, 2016). In their observation of children's health-related digital behaviour literature, Park and Kwon (2018) noted that adolescent afflicted with certain health conditions not only approach virtual platform to find health information, but also to find others who go through similar experiences, leading to the formation of community among like-minded individuals with shared health experiences.

4. Parents Perception of Risks and Benefits

The idea of risk and benefit in approaching digital parenting had been criticized by Monteiro & Osario (2016) as disregarding the social reality of digital technology for children. This criticism was supported by the thesis that children are assumed as 'becoming', an imperfect entity that lacks any agency, who therefore require some sort of control. While there is merit in the criticism where it is true that risk-benefit cannot account for the entirety of digital parenting, the importance of this concept cannot be underestimated because of parent's perception on the said risk and benefit itself. Altuna, Martinez-de-Morentin and Lareki (2020)'s research traced link between risk perception and risk-inducing digital behavior among parents and children, in which they figured that the higher the risk perception, the more protective people would be and the less risky behavior are engaged in.

Altuna, Martinez-de-Morentin and Lareki's finding showcased that in general, people have varying levels of risk and benefit perception. Literature surrounding this theme suggests that some form of balancing between the two characterizes parent's attitude towards the impact of digital technology upon their children. This is exactly what Kurt Johnson (2014) found within his study in United States, where parents struggle to maintain balance between grasping the idea of digital technology as a life necessity and the idea that the same technology can erode the tradition of book reading, thus impacting children's learning experience. Bohn and Berghdal (2021)'s study among UK parents during COVID-19 pandemic observed that while parents agree on the convenience of online platform for their children's learning, they were unsure at the same time if the digital technology improve the educational experience any more than the conventional platform would.

The variability of parent's perception between risk and benefit can be accounted for in several different ways but technological literacy seems to be one of the most prior factors. Vaiopoulou and colleagues (2021)'s research on parent's attitude towards educational application for their children discovered a positive relation between parent's technical knowledge and their reception of the application. The more digitally literate parent tends to be more engaged as well as more receptive towards their children's usage of the learning platform. In another research, parents that have higher perceived efficacy in managing digital technology are the ones more likely to develop positive attitudes about it in the first place (Sanders, Parent, Forehand, Sullivan, A & Jones, 2016). In addition, study among Turkish parents demonstrated that their risk perception is associated with their level of knowledge in which, a majority of them recognize content and contact risk while concurrently oblivious to conduct risk (İnan-Kaya, Mutlu-Bayraktar & Yilmaz (2018).

All of this implicates the importance digital literacy in determining the balancing between risk and benefit for parent's perception. However, none of all the studies cited, map the balance concretely. Thus, any inference made from them can only be done in a vague manner. Therefore, there is a need to identify, in a more precise manner, the way parent perceives digital risk and benefits for their children. This way, a more definitive conclusion can be drawn about how this perception impacts their digital parenting strategies.

Methodology

This study employs a quantitative research design to investigate Malaysian parents' perceptions of their children's digital media usage. A cross-sectional survey approach was utilized to collect data from a diverse sample of Malaysian parents. The study involved 645 Malaysian parents from various demographic backgrounds. To ensure diversity, participants were recruited from multiple regions, including urban and rural areas, as well as different states within Malaysia. Parents of children aged 7 to 12 were eligible to participate, representing a wide age range of children in various stages of development.

Data were collected through structured online surveys administered using a web-based survey platform. The survey instrument was developed based on a review of relevant literature and research questions. It included both closed-ended questions (e.g., Likert scale items) and open-ended questions to capture a comprehensive understanding of parental perceptions. The survey assessed the following key areas:

- i. Parental perceptions of the benefits associated with their children's digital media usage.
- ii. Parental perceptions of the risks associated with their children's digital media usage.
- iii. Demographic information, including parental age, education, income, and ethnicity.

The survey was pre-tested with a small sample of parents to ensure clarity and validity. Minor adjustments were made based on feedback before the full-scale data collection. Quantitative data collected through the survey were analysed using statistical software (e.g., SPSS). T-test was conducted to examine relationships between parental perceptions risks and benefits.

The Findings

1. Demographic Characteristics of Parents

A total of 654 parents participated in the study. Table 1 shows that two-thirds of the parents are mothers (66.1%) while the rest (33.3%) are fathers. Two-fifths of the parents aged between 41-50 years old (42.0%), followed closely by those aged 31-40 years old (41.7%). However, only 8.7% of them are 51 and older while 6.9% are between 20-30 years old. Almost all of them (91.3%) are married while the rest 4.4% are either divorced or 3.7% widowed. More than half the number of the parents (55.2%) have 3-5 children, followed by 1-2 children (35.5%) while the rest are having 6-8 children (8.0%) and 0.6% are having 9 and more children.

Table 1. Demographic Characteristics of Parents

Demographic Characteristics	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Role	Mother	432	66.1
	Father	218	33.3
	No response	4	0.6
	Total	654	100.0
Age (years old)	20-30	45	6.9
	31-40	273	41.7
	41-50	275	42.0
	51 and above	57	8.7
	No response	4	0.6
	Total	654	100.0
Marital Status	Married	597	91.3
	Divorced	29	4.4
	Widowed	24	3.7
	No response	4	0.6
Total	654	100.0	
Number of children	1-2 children	232	35.5
	3-5 children	361	55.2
	6-8 children	52	8.0

	9 children and above	4	0.6
	No response	5	0.8
	Total	654	100.0
Ethnicity	Malay/Bumputera	489	74.8
	Chinese	88	13.5
	Indian	67	10.2
	Others (specify: Indonesian, Orang Asli)	6	0.9
	No response	4	0.6
	Total	654	100.0
State of residence	Perlis	12	1.8
	Kedah	49	7.5
	Pulau Pinang	25	3.8
	Perak	47	7.2
	Selangor	114	17.5
	Kuala Lumpur/Putrajaya	7	1.2
	Negeri Sembilan	50	7.7
	Melaka	45	6.9
	Johor	48	7.3
	Pahang	48	7.3
	Terengganu	41	6.3
	Kelantan	45	6.9
	Total	654	100
Employment status	Employed	497	76.0
	Unemployed	26	4.0
	Self-employed	66	10.1
	Student	1	0.2
	Homemaker	59	9.0
	No response	5	0.8
	Total	654	100.0
Highest completed education	Secondary education/SPM/ STPM	257	39.3
	Diploma	133	20.3
	Bachelor degree	232	35.5
	Master/Ph.D.	31	4.8
	No response	1	0.2
	Total	654	100.0
Total household income	RM2,000 and below	127	19.4
	RM2,001 – RM5,000	283	43.3
	RM5,001 – RM10,000	182	27.8
	RM10,001 – RM15,000	46	7.0
	RM15,001 and above	13	2.0
	No response	3	0.5
	Total	654	100.0

In term of ethnicity, three-quarters of the parents (74.8%) are Malay, followed by Chinese (13.5%) and Indian (10.2%) while others made up of only 0.9% of the parents. In terms of residence, the most represented state is Selangor (17.5%) with the least represented is Kuala Lumpur/Putrajaya (1.2%). The rest of the stated are substantially represented. About three-quarters of the parents (76.0%) are employed while 10.1% are self-employed. The rest of the respondents are either homemaker (9.0%), unemployed (4.0%), or a student (0.2%). More than one-third of the respondents (39.3%) are having secondary education/SPM/STPM while 35.5% are Bachelor degree holders, followed by Diploma holders (20.3%), and finally are those with Master's degree and PhD (4.8%). More two-fifths of the parents (43.3%) are having a total household income of RM2,001-RM5,000, followed by those having RM5,001-RM10,000 (27.8%), and below RM2,000

(19.4%). Those having RM10,001-RM15,000 made up of 7.0% and the rest is having RM15,001 and more (2.0%).

RQ1: Potential risks Malaysian parents associating with their Children’s Digital Use

The findings presented in Table 2 underscore the significant level of concern among parents regarding potential risks associated with their child's engagement with digital media. This heightened concern is corroborated by the overall mean score, which stands at 3.620 (SD = 0.900) and a substantial t-value of 17.620 (p = 0.000). Notably, most parents expressed apprehension about various facets of digital media's potential negative impact on their children:

- i. A significant 81.1% of parents believed that digital media could lead to physical discomfort, such as eye irritation and backaches.
- ii. More than three-quarters of parents held the view that digital media might induce neurological issues, including attention deficit or nervous system overstimulation (77.6%), expose their child to inappropriate content such as pornography and violence (77.2%), result in emotional harm such as increased aggression, depression, and mental health concerns (76.3%), contribute to laziness (76.1%), foster Internet addiction (75.1%), and create opportunities for malevolent individuals like predators and swindlers to target their child (75.0%).

Furthermore, a substantial proportion of parents reported concerns that digital media:

- i. Made their child antisocial, preferring online interactions over face-to-face friendships (74.0%).
- ii. Diminished their child's imaginative and creative faculties (71.6%).

Additionally, a noteworthy six in ten parents expressed apprehensions that:

- i. Their child became uncontrollable when denied access to digital media (65.4%).
- ii. Digital media eroded their child's boundaries, particularly in spiritual and religious aspects (63.7%).

In sum, the findings highlight the prevalent concerns held by parents regarding potential risks associated with their child's digital media engagement. These concerns span physical, psychological, and social domains, reflecting the multifaceted nature of parental apprehensions in the digital age.

Table 2. One sample t-test for parent’s risk perception on child

No.	Parent’s Risk Perception to Child	M*	SD	%	t**	p
1.	4a1: It leads to physical discomfort such as eye irritation and backaches.	4.055	0.936	81.1	28.828	.000
2.	4a2: It leads to neurological issues such as attention deficits or excessive nervous system stimulation.	3.882	1.022	77.6	22.079	.000
3.	4a7: It may expose my child to unsuitable content, like pornography and violence.	3.859	1.113	77.2	19.743	.000
4.	4a3: It results in emotional distress, potentially leading to aggression, depression, and impacting mental health.	3.815	1.019	76.3	20.445	.000
5.	4a5: It promotes a lack of activity or initiative in my child.	3.804	1.036	76.1	19.852	.000
6.	4a9: It causes Internet addiction.	3.755	1.095	75.1	17.642	.000
7.	4a10: Individuals with malicious intent, like predators and fraudsters, can readily locate and target my child.	3.749	1.098	75.0	17.455	.000
8.	4a6: It fosters anti-social behavior in my child, leading them to prefer online interactions over spending time with friends in person.	3.702	1.117	74.0	16.067	.000
9.	4a4: It diminishes my child's imagination, fantasy, and creativity.	3.581	1.099	71.6	13.516	.000
10.	4a8: My child exhibits uncontrollable behavior whenever I restrict their online access.	3.271	1.216	65.4	5.693	.000
11.	4a11: It results in my child disregarding spiritual or religious boundaries.	3.185	1.305	63.7	3.625	.000

Overall Parent's Risk Perception to Child (N = 654)	3.620	0.900	72.4	17.620	.000
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* On a 5-point scale where 1=strongly disagree (1-20%), 2=disagree (21-40%), 3=slightly agree (41-60%), 4=agree (61-80%), and 5=strongly agree (81-100%). ** Test value = 3

RQ 2: Advantages and potential growth opportunities parents associate with their Children's Digital Use
 Digital media, it is widely recognized, has a dual impact on children, with both positive and negative contributions. Table 3 shows that parents hold a significantly positive view of the benefits digital media offers to their children, with a noteworthy mean score of 3.885 (SD = 0.781) and a highly significant t-value of 28.974 (p = 0.000). Specifically, an impressive majority of respondents (more than three-quarters) identified various beneficial aspects related to their child's digital media engagement, including:

- i. Information Discovery and Curiosity Building: 79.6% believed that digital media allowed their child to explore topics of interest, nurturing curiosity.
- ii. Expanding Horizons: 79.0% saw digital media as a means to broaden their child's worldview.
- iii. Technological Proficiency: 78.6% recognized that digital media helped their child keep pace with technological advancements, enhancing digital skills.
- iv. Educational Enrichment: 78.1% acknowledged that educational applications facilitated learning and skill development.
- v. Enhanced Openness: 76.5% felt that digital media fostered openness in their child, encouraging receptiveness to new ideas.
- vi. Creativity Promotion: 76.4% noted that their child's engagement with digital media nurtured creativity and content creation abilities.
- vii. Foreign Language Acquisition: 76.0% believed digital media aided in foreign language learning.

Moreover, a substantial proportion of parents (seven in ten) recognized that digital media:

- i. Supports Relationship Maintenance/Formation: 73.1% felt that digital media helped their child maintain and form new relationships.
- ii. Boosts Problem Solving/Intelligence: 72.5% saw digital media as a tool for enhancing their child's logical thinking, problem-solving abilities, and intelligence.
- iii. Offers Leisure and Entertainment Opportunities: 70.3% acknowledged digital media's role in providing leisure and entertainment options.

Additionally, more than two-thirds of the respondents (69.4%) believed that digital media had a positive impact on fine motor skills development. Parents demonstrate a decidedly positive perception of the benefits digital media offers to their children. The array of items in Table 3 collectively reflects a strong affirmation of the constructive influence digital media can have on a child's development, encompassing cognitive, social, and creative domains.

Table 3. One sample t-test for parent's benefit perception to child

No.	Parent's Benefit Perception to Child	M*	SD	%	t**	p
1.	4b8: My child can search for information about things in which he/she is interested and this builds curiosity.	3.982	0.826	79.6	30.384	.000
2.	4b1: It opens my child's world.	3.950	0.929	79.0	26.144	.000
3.	4b10: My child can stay updated with technological advancements and enhance their digital skills.	3.939	0.837	78.8	28.682	.000
4.	4b7: My child can acquire knowledge using educational applications, facilitating their learning process.	3.904	0.855	78.1	27.041	.000
5.	4b3: It fosters openness in my child, encouraging them to be more receptive to the world and new experiences.	3.827	0.921	76.5	22.978	.000
6.	4b11: My child develops greater creativity and proficiency in generating digital content.	3.820	0.876	76.4	23.935	.000
7.	4b9: It contributes to foreign language acquisition.	3.800	0.989	76.0	20.678	.000
8.	4b2: It assists in nurturing and sustaining relationships.	3.653	0.928	73.1	17.995	.000

9.	4b6: It enhances logical thinking, problem-solving skills, and overall intelligence..	3.624	0.900	72.5	17.718	.000
10.	4b4: It provides leisure/entertainment opportunities.	3.515	1.009	70.3	13.055	.000
11.	4b5: It enhances fine motor skills.	3.469	0.989	69.4	12.137	.000
Overall Parent's Benefit Perception to Child (N = 654)		3.885	0.781	77.7	28.974	.000

* On a 5-point scale where 1=strongly disagree (1-20%), 2=disagree (21-40%), 3=slightly agree (41-60%), 4=agree (61-80%), and 5=strongly agree (81-100%). ** Test value = 3

RQ 3: Comparison and Relationship between Parent's Risk and Benefit Perception of Their Children's Digital Use

Table 4 presents the outcomes of a paired t-test conducted to assess how Malaysian parents balance and navigate the potential risks and benefits inherent in their children's digital media usage. Notably, the mean score for parental benefit perception of digital literacy (Mean = 3.885, SD = 0.781) surpasses that of the risk perception toward their child (Mean = 3.620, SD = 0.900). This disparity is statistically significant, with a t-value of -6.720 and p-value of 0.000, indicating that parental benefit perception of digital literacy significantly outweighs their risk perception. Consequently, parents generally perceive the benefits of digital literacy as outweighing the associated risks for their child.

However, it is noteworthy that a weak positive correlation exists between parental risk perception of digital literacy and their benefit perception toward their child. This implies that parents who hold a higher level of risk perception also tend to possess a correspondingly higher benefit perception regarding the impact of digital literacy on their child. In simpler terms, those parents who express concerns about the potential risks also recognize the potential benefits of digital literacy. These findings underscore the nuanced nature of parental perceptions, where risk and benefit perceptions often coexist.

Therefore, it is essential to highlight the importance of teaching children to navigate the dual nature of digital literacy. Children should be aware of the associated risks while acknowledging the potential benefits. This duality underscores the need for children to exercise caution, make informed decisions, and differentiate between what is appropriate and inappropriate in their digital encounters. In sum, while parents perceive both risks and benefits, it is imperative to guide children in recognizing the simultaneous existence of these factors within the realm of digital literacy.

Table 4. Paired t-test for Parent's Risk and Benefit Perception of Their Children's Digital Use

Pair	Variable	N	Mean	SD	Mean diff	SE Mean	t	p	r	p
1	Parent's Risk Perception	654	3.620	0.900	-.265	0.039	-6.720	.000	.289	.000
	Parent's Benefit Perception	654	3.885	0.781						

Discussion

The findings of this study reveal a nuanced and balanced perspective among Malaysian parents regarding their children's digital media usage. It is evident that parents in Malaysia recognize both the risks and opportunities that digital technologies present to their children. While concerns exist, such as screen addiction and exposure to inappropriate content, parents generally tend to lean towards perceiving digital technologies as bringing more benefits than risks to their children. The results further indicate that Malaysian parents are not solely preoccupied with the potential drawbacks of digital media. Instead, they acknowledge and value the educational benefits, enhanced communication, and access to diverse information that digital technologies offer. This balanced perspective is essential, as it aligns with the idea that digital media can play a constructive role in a child's development when used responsibly and purposefully.

This pragmatic viewpoint demonstrates that Malaysian parents understand the significance of technologies in their children's lives. With this awareness, it becomes crucial for them to adopt an effective approach to digital parenting. Instead of monitoring their children's digital activities, parents should focus on mentoring them. This brings us back, to the principles of parenting, where acts of encouragement, guidance, open dialogues, and empathy contribute to nurturing confident children.

Additionally, establishing shared values within families creates a cohesive framework that guides both online and offline behavior for children. For instance, open discussions about empathy, respect, and critical thinking can serve as pillars shaping how children interact with digital platforms. These values act as a compass, influencing their decisions while engaging with online content, interacting with peers, and navigating potentially risky situations.

Parents' adaptation to the technology-driven world is paramount. Viewing technology as a shared learning experience fosters mutual growth between parents and children. Parents can learn from their children's innate grasp of technology, gaining insights into new platforms, digital trends, and even digital safety practices. This collaborative approach strengthens familial bonds while ensuring a more informed and supportive environment for children's digital exploration (Akkaya, Burcu, & Metin, 2021).

While existing research often focuses on children's digital activities, the emphasis is shifting toward evaluating the tangible benefits and outcomes (Fidan & Seferoğlu 2020). For example, fostering digital literacy through coding or enhancing problem-solving skills via interactive educational apps are increasingly recognized as valuable outcomes of digital engagement for children.

Building resilience in children is pivotal for their digital well-being. Resilience doesn't merely involve shielding children from online risks but empowering them to navigate challenges effectively. It's about equipping children with the skills to make informed decisions, manage online interactions, and bounce back from setbacks. This approach emphasizes proactive engagement with digital platforms, providing a balance between exposure to online opportunities and appropriate guidance to handle potential risks (Mohamed et al., 2021).

In the digital landscape, resilience stands as a personal attribute that develops through active engagement with suitable online opportunities and challenges. Encouraging children to confront and learn from digital challenges, rather than shielding them completely, fosters their ability to adapt and respond effectively in a constantly evolving digital environment situations (Vissenberg & d'Haenens, 2020).

While resilience isn't something that can be instantaneously instilled, it can certainly be nurtured over time through experiences that encourage problem-solving, critical thinking, and responsible decision-making. By guiding children through these experiences, parents play a crucial role in shaping their resilience and capacity to thrive in the digital age.

By integrating these aspects into parenting approaches and educational initiatives, caregivers and educators can effectively support children in harnessing the full potential of the digital world while equipping them with the skills and resilience needed to navigate its challenges successfully.

Conclusion

In conclusion, understanding and managing children's digital media usage in Malaysia necessitates a holistic approach that integrates shared values within families, acknowledges parents' adaptation to a technology-driven world, and emphasizes the development of resilience in children. The establishment of shared values acts as a guiding force, shaping children's behavior both online and offline. Parents adapting to technology as a shared learning experience not only fosters mutual growth but also ensures a supportive environment for children's digital exploration. Moreover, the shift in focus from solely observing children's digital activities to evaluating tangible outcomes, such as digital literacy and problem-solving skills, is crucial. This evolution highlights the need to move beyond monitoring "what" children do online to understanding the actual benefits and implications of their digital engagements. Building resilience emerges as a key strategy, empowering children to navigate the digital realm effectively. Resilience isn't just about shielding children from online risks but equipping them with the skills to manage and bounce back from challenges. Encouraging proactive

engagement with digital platforms while providing guidance to handle potential risks prepares children to adapt and thrive in the dynamic digital landscape.

However, it's important to acknowledge the limitations of this study. Firstly, the research might be influenced by the subjective perceptions of a specific group of parents, potentially limiting the generalizability of the findings to a broader population. Additionally, the study might lack diverse perspectives, as it primarily focuses on parental perceptions without incorporating children's viewpoints, educators' insights, or cultural variations within Malaysia. Furthermore, the rapidly evolving nature of digital media and technology could render some findings outdated or insufficiently comprehensive. Given the ever-changing digital landscape, ongoing research and continuous adaptation of strategies are necessary to keep pace with new challenges and opportunities that emerge.

For future research, it is recommended to explore the evolving landscape of digital parenting further, examining the long-term effects of parental mediation strategies and how cultural and regional factors shape parental perceptions. Additionally, longitudinal studies could provide insights into how these perceptions change over time as technology continues to evolve. Furthermore, qualitative research may delve deeper into the lived experiences of Malaysian parents and children in the digital age, offering a more comprehensive understanding of this dynamic relationship. In essence, while the study underscores crucial aspects of parental perceptions and approaches toward children's digital media usage in Malaysia, it's essential to recognize these limitations and encourage further research that incorporates diverse perspectives and accounts for the dynamic nature of digital technologies. Such endeavours will contribute to more robust strategies and guidelines for promoting safe, beneficial, and balanced digital experiences for Malaysian children.

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