

An Investigation of Processes of Children's Digital Technologies Usage from the Perspective of Digital Age Parents

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ABSTRACT

The developments in digital technologies and their widespread use among children day by day bring the need to investigate the processes of children's use of digital technologies. The purpose of this study is to investigate the processes of children's digital technologies usage from the perspective of digital age parents. The phenomenology pattern is used to conduct the study. The study group consists of 15 parents, selected according to the criterion sampling. A semi-structured interview form is used as a data collection tool. Content analysis is used in the analysis of the data. It is found that the majority of parents do not find digital environments safe. Parents stated the negative effects of digital technologies on children as developing various addictions, health problems, decline in academic success, decline in face to face communication skills, moving away from real life experiences, and moving away from cultural values. The majority of parents indicated that they did not witness a negative event that their children experienced in digital environments. Another important result is that the majority of children do not seek help from their parents regarding the problems they encounter in digital environments. It is recommended that parents should create an environment of trust where their children can share their negative situations and establish a strong communication with their children.

Keywords: Digital Age, Digital Age Parents, Digital Technologies, Use of Digital Technology, Secondary School Students

Çocukların Dijital Teknolojileri Kullanım Süreçlerinin Dijital Çağ Ebeveynlerinin Perspektifinden İncelenmesi

ÖZ

Dijital teknolojilerdeki gelişmeler ve gün geçtikçe çocuklar arasında yaygınlaşan kullanımı, çocukların dijital teknolojileri kullanım süreçlerinin araştırılması ihtiyacını da beraberinde getirmektedir. Bu çalışma, çocukların dijital teknolojileri kullanım süreçlerinin, dijital çağ ebeveynlerinin perspektifinden incelenmesi amacıyla yapılmıştır. Araştırma fenomenoloji deseni kullanılarak gerçekleştirilmiştir. Araştırmanın çalışma grubunu ölçüt örnekleme göre seçilen 15 ebeveyn oluşturmaktadır. Veri toplama aracı olarak yarı yapılandırılmış görüşme formu kullanılmıştır. Verilerin analizinde içerik analizi kullanılmıştır. Araştırma sonucunda ebeveynlerin büyük çoğunluğunun dijital ortamları güvenli bulmadığı tespit edilmiştir. Ebeveynler dijital teknolojilerin çocuklar üzerindeki olumsuz etkilerini çeşitli bağımlılıklar geliştirme, sağlık sorunları, akademik başarıda düşüş, yüz yüze iletişim becerilerinde azalma, gerçek yaşam deneyimlerinden uzaklaşma ve kültürel değerlerden uzaklaşma olarak belirtmişlerdir. Araştırmada ebeveynlerin çoğunluğu, çocuklarının dijital ortamlarda yaşadığı olumsuz bir olaya tanık olmadıklarını ifade etmişlerdir. Bir diğer önemli sonuç ise, çocukların büyük çoğunluğunun dijital ortamlarda karşılaştıkları sorunlarla ilgili olarak ebeveynlerinden yardım istememeleridir. Ebeveynlere çocuklarının yaşadıkları olumsuz durumları paylaşabilecekleri bir güven ortamı oluşturmaları ve çocuklarıyla güçlü bir iletişim kurmaları önerilmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Dijital Çağ, Dijital Çağ Ebeveynleri, Dijital Teknolojiler, Dijital Teknoloji Kullanımı, Ortaokul Öğrencileri

1. Introduction

The opportunities and conveniences offered by digital technologies increase the use of these technologies day by day. Particularly individuals born in the middle of the technology age are exposed to intense technology and internet use. In the "State of the World's Children" report, in which UNICEF (2017) examines the effects of digital technologies on children and what awaits children in the future, it is stated that children access the Internet from an increasingly younger age, and that children and adolescents under the age of 18 make up one-third of all internet users worldwide. In the study conducted by the Turkish Statistical Institute, it is stated that internet usage is 82.7% for children in the 6-15 age group. 90.1% of children using the Internet declared that they use the Internet almost every day, 8.5% at

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least once a week, and 1.4% less than once a week. (TÜİK, 2021). The figures obtained show that children's use of digital technology is at a rate that should be monitored and supervised by their parents.

Developing digital technologies not only makes children's lives easier, but also cause them to face many risks and security threats in the unlimited and uncontrolled environment they offer. Hasebrink et al., (2008) stated the risks that children may encounter in digital environments as content, communication, and behavioral risks. In content risks, children are exposed to unwanted or inappropriate content. Contact risks include risky communications involving children or peers. Finally, in behavioral risks, children are active actors who contribute to risky content or communication.

In addition to online risks, excessive use of digital technologies can cause various health problems (headache, fatigue, etc.), psychosocial problems such as social isolation, depression, and self-esteem concerns (David et al., 2021; Pandya & Lodha, 2021). Negative symptoms such as loss of appetite, insomnia, feeling unhappy, and hopeless can be seen with prolonged usage periods (Yang et al., 2013). Technological devices prevent the development of children's imaginations as they encourage passivity and sedentary behavior (Plowman et al., 2010).

According to various studies, excessive use of technological devices hinders the development of children's cooperation and sharing skills, reduces their motivation and affects their ability to take responsibility. Thus, the emotional development of children is at risk (Plowman et al., 2010). In addition, it has been stated in some studies that an increase in the use of digital technology increases in musculoskeletal system problems in children (Harris et al., 2015; Jacobs et al., 2009; Kelly et al., 2009). In this context, it has become an important necessity to monitor the use of digital technologies by children, who are faced with different risks in the process of using digital technology, and to prevent and reduce their problematic use (Gómez et al., 2017).

In order for children to use digital technologies safely and effectively, they need support from all stakeholders. One of the most important of these stakeholders are parents (Guernsey et al., 2014; Rosen et al., 2008). Digital parenting plays a key role in raising children in accordance with the digital age. Huang et al., (2018) conceptualized the concept of digital parenting as finding information and resources, providing protection, monitoring social media use, and establishing relationships. Behaviors of digital-parenting are complex and multifaceted, such as, rule provision, the technology use monitoring, promotion and teaching of digital skills, enforcement, navigation of online education, and taking advantage of online opportunities (Odgers, 2019). According to Rode (2009), ethical behavior in the virtual world as well as children's online safety and privacy are the main concerns of digital parenting. Digital parents must be eager to learn and curious about the rapidly changing nature of digital technologies. It is not regarded as the right strategy to think of digital parents as people who can only use computers and the internet (Canbek & Sağıroğlu, 2007). Digital parents should be able to set rules and limits regarding their children's use of digital devices, as well as embody the parent profile that can be exemplified as good role models (Akbaş Zeybekoğlu & Dursun, 2020). In order to raise socially, emotionally, and psychologically healthy individuals, parents need to be aware of the risks their children may face in digital platforms, have the competencies to protect them against these risks, and ensure that they can benefit from the opportunities offered by digital platforms (Hark Söylemez, 2021).

In order to do this, families should first closely monitor their children's digital technology use processes and be aware of the negativities experienced in digital technology use processes. In this way, they will be able to contribute better to the social, emotional and psychological development of their children. Cognitive, social and mental development of children of parents who do not adequately supervise their children's digital technology use processes are at risk. Hasebrink et al., (2008) stated that if parents guide their children while surfing the internet, they reduce the risks that children may face. The fact that parents do not have enough information about their children's digital technology usage processes will also make it difficult for them to give correct guidance against the risks they may encounter.

Literature on this field includes studies on, stakeholder views on the risks of the internet (Racz et al., 2017; Sorbring, 2014; Wisniewski et al., 2017), parents' use of digital media (Anderson, 2016; Livingstone & Helsper, 2010), parent type (Eastin et al., 2006), parents' views on the use of digital technologies by

their children (Lampard et al., 2013; Wartella et al., 2013), children's competence and levels of use regarding the use of digital media (Aksoy & Fırat, 2016; Dağhan et al., 2015), digital parenting roles (Kurtoglu Erden & Uslupehlivan, 2021; F. Yaman et al., 2020) and internet parenting styles (Alvarez et al., 2012; Kenley, 2011).

The developments in digital technologies and their widespread use among children day by day bring the need to investigate the processes of children's use of digital technologies. The quantitative research method has been found to be widely used in studies conducted in the literature. Within the scope of this study, we examine the processes of children's use of digital technologies by benefiting from the views and experiences of their parents. The subject is discussed in detail by using the qualitative research method. Considering the role of families in raising children in accordance with the requirements of the digital age and protecting them from the negative effects of digital technologies (Levine & Stekel, 2016; Martínez-Domínguez & Mora-Rivera, 2020; Rodríguez-de-Dios et al., 2018), it is considered essential to evaluate the issue from the perspective of the parents. Parents who carefully follow their children's individual technology usage experiences will be able to guide their children in accordance with the requirements of the digital age. Examining the use of digital technologies by children in adolescence, which includes critical periods in terms of development, also makes the study meaningful.

Within the scope of the research, answers to the following questions were sought:

1. According to parents, for what purposes do children use digital technologies?
2. What are the views of parents on the safety of digital environments for children?
3. According to parents, what are the negative effects of digital technologies on children?
4. What are the issues that children seek help from their parents regarding the problems they encounter in digital environments?
5. Do parents witness the negative events their children experience in digital environments?

2. Method

2.1. Research Pattern

Phenomenology design, a pattern of qualitative research method, is used in the study. Phenomenology is described as a theory of the unique that gives an adaptive response and competent to each individual in each context, place, and particular time (Errasti-Ibarrondo et al., 2019). It identifies problems from experiences of the meaningful sense, which occurs in personal consciousness separately and then collectively in the interaction between consciousnesses (Hammersley, 2019).

2.2. Study Group

The criterion sampling method was used to determine the study group. Criterion sampling enables researchers to select participants of the study according to certain criteria (Patton, 2014). It provides a convenient way to study an in depth concept, situation, or subject needs to be better revealed and understood (Johnson & Christensen, 2019). Parents of the study group were selected according to the following criteria: parents and their children actively use digital technologies, their children go to secondary school, and the parents and their children have at least one digital technology of their own.

Research data were collected in 2022. 15 parents (7 fathers, 8 mothers) participated in the study. The parents participating in the study live in the city center of Diyarbakir. The average age of the parents participating in the study is 43. Of the parents working in different occupational groups, 2 parents are high school graduates, 8 parents are undergraduate, 3 parents are graduate, and 2 parents are doctoral graduates. The information about the duration of digital technologies usage of the parents and their children participating in the study is given in Table 1.

Table 1. Parents and Their Children's Use of Digital Technologies

	Average time spent on a day	f
Average time spent on a day by parents with digital technologies	Less than an hour	-
	1-2 hours	3
	3-4 hours	5
	5-6 hours	6
	More than 6 hours	1
Average time spent on a day by children with digital technologies	Less than an hour	-
	1-2 hours	2
	3-4 hours	6
	5-6 hours	6
	More than 6 hours	1

Table 1 shows that the majority of parents and their children spend an average of "5-6 hours" a day with digital technologies. The American Academy of Pediatrics (2001), however, agrees that children between the ages of six and eighteen should use technology for 2 hours per day.

2.3. Data Collection Tools and Data Collection

We collected the data of the research through a semi-structured interview. The interview form was created by reviewing the relevant literature. Then, in line with expert opinions, the questions were examined in terms of clarity, suitability, and adequacy, and the necessary corrections were made and finalized. In the first part of the interview form, there are questions about learning descriptive information about parents, and in the second part, 5 questions about examining the processes of children's use of digital technologies in detail.

Ethics committee approval dated 25.08.2022 with decision number 217 was obtained from Dicle University Social and Human Sciences Ethics Committee for the research. Interviews were conducted with 15 parents who voluntarily agreed to participate in the study. The participants were informed about the risks and benefits of participating in the study. We informed the participants that they have the rights to withdraw from the study at any time and that the confidentiality of the data is guaranteed. Interviews were conducted face-to-face, via e-mail, and video-conferencing, depending on the parents' preference. Interviews of approximately 30-45 minutes were held with the participants to capture their detailed views on digital parenting.

2.4. Analysis of Data

Content analysis was used in the analysis of the data obtained in this study. It is mainly used to analyze data such as the one from observations and interviews, to systematize and often quantify data (Fraenkel et al., 2012). Content analysis allows the objective characteristics of messages to be determined. (Neuendorf, 2017). In content analysis, related data are organized and interpreted by bringing them together within the framework of certain themes and concepts (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2021).

In order to ensure the consistency of the results obtained after the analysis of the data, the coding was reviewed 10 days later (Flick, 2014). The reliability coefficient between the two codings was calculated by Miles & Huberman's (1994) formula (consensus / consensus + disagreement), and the coding consistency was found to be 92%. In addition, the research questions were supported by direct quotations from the interview texts where necessary (Johnson & Christensen, 2019). The names of the participating parents were coded as "P+Number" so that direct quotations from the students participating in the study do not reveal their identity within the framework of research ethics.

3. Findings

In this section, the findings obtained by analyzing the research data are presented.

3.1. According to parents, for what purposes do children use digital technologies?

Parents were asked about their children's usage purposes of digital technologies and the findings are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Children's Usage Purposes of Digital Technologies

Theme	Code	f
Children's usage purposes of digital technologies	Playing or downloading games	12
	Doing homework	8
	Watching videos	8
	Browsing social media	8
	Doing research for learning purposes	5
	Communicating with friends	4
	Watching movies	4
	Listening or downloading music	3

According to Table 2, children mostly use digital technologies for playing or downloading games (f=12). Furthermore, children use digital technologies for doing homework (f=8), watching videos (f=8), browsing social media (f=8), doing research (f=5), communicating with friends (f=4), watching movies (f=4), and for listening or downloading music (f=3). Parents P4, P7, P9 and P11 expressed their thoughts as follows:

P4: "He/she usually uses it to play games or watch videos on social media. He/she also says he/she is doing research from time to time..."

P7: "He/she does his/her homework and spends the rest of the time surfing social media..."

P9: "He/she is constantly seeing his/her friends, talking or texting and sometimes playing games..."

P11: "He/she does homework if he/she has, and starts to gaming right away..."

3.2. What are the views of parents on the safety of digital environments for children?

Parents were asked of their views on the safety of digital environments for their children and the findings are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Views of Parents on the Safety of Digital Environments

Theme	Code	f
Views on the safety of digital environments	Not safe	10
	Safe except for some apps	3
	Safe if necessary precautions are taken	2

According to Table 3, the majority of the parents stated that they do not find digital environments safe (f=10). Some parents stated that they find it safe except for some apps (f=3) and safe if necessary precautions are taken (f=2). Parents P3 and P12 expressed their thoughts as follows:

P3: "I do not find it safe at all, I am so restless when my child is in front of the computer..."

P12: "In fact, it is a safe environment without some of the harmful applications and if we can take the necessary precautions..."

3.3. According to parents, what are the negative effects of digital technologies on children?

Parents were asked about the negative effects of digital technologies on children and the findings are presented in Table 4.

Table 4. Negative Effects of Digital Technologies on Children

Theme	Code	f
Negative effects of digital technologies on children	Development of different addictions (internet addiction, phone addiction, game addiction etc.)	9
	Health problems (headache, posture disorders, sleep disorders, dry eyes, etc.)	8
	Decline in academic achievement	8
	Decline in face-to-face communication skills	6
	Increase in negative behaviors (cursing, lying, emulating others, etc.)	6
	Getting away from real life experiences	5
	Alienation to cultural values	3

According to Table 4, parents stated the negative effects of digital technologies on children as development of different addictions (internet addiction, phone addiction, game addiction etc.) (f=9), health problems (headache, posture disorders, sleep disorders, dry eyes, etc.) (f=8), decline in academic achievement (f=8), decline in face-to-face communication skills (f=6), increase in negative behaviors (cursing, lying, emulating others, etc.) (f=6), getting away from real life experiences (f=5), and alienation to cultural values (f=3). Parents P2, P6, P10, P11, and P13 expressed their thoughts as follows:

P2: "I think the most negative effect is addiction, children have become unable to live without using these technologies, they feel the need to look at the internet all the time, they feel the need to play games all the time, of course, the constant use of technological devices brings health problems, my little girl has a bad posture, and her eyes started to dry..."

P6: "He/she sleeps late at night to sit by the technological devices more and he/she has sleep problems, his/her classes are not the same anymore, he/she gets low grades in the exams..."

P10: "He/she does not even welcome the guests, he/she has become asocial. He/she does not play with his/her friends on the neighborhood, he/she talks with his friends on social media, he/she wants to emulate people in virtual environments and live like them..."

P11: "It's like he/she is addicted to the phone, he/she looks at the phone even while eating, it makes me very sad to see him/her get away from real life..."

P13: "He/she tells different lies to spend more time on the Internet. While he/she says that he/she always has homework and does research, his/her teacher says that he/she is not interested in his/her lessons..."

3.4. What are the issues that children seek help from their parents regarding the problems they encounter in digital environments?

The issues that children seek help from their parents regarding the problems they encounter in digital environments were examined and the findings are presented in Table 5.

Table 5. Issues That Children Seek Help from Their Parents Regarding the Problems They Encounter in Digital Environments

Theme	Code	f
Issues that children seek help from their parents in digital environments	On nothing	1
		0
	In educational activities	3
	When faced with different notifications	2

According to Table 5, the majority of children do not seek help from their parents in digital environments (f=10), while some children ask for help in educational activities (f=3) and when they face with different notifications (f=2). Parents P1 and P8 expressed their thoughts as follows:

P1: "He/she has not asked for help with anything so far. I think he/she has not encountered any negative situations..."

P8: "Sometimes he/she asks for help with his/her homework. Sometimes when he/she comes across different notifications, he/she consults us before continuing..."

3.5. Do parents witness the negative events their children experience in digital environments?

Parents are asked whether they witness any negative events that their children experienced in digital environments and the findings are presented in Table 6.

Table 6. Witnessing of Parents to Negative Events That Their Children Experience in Digital Environments

Theme	Code	f
Witnessing of parents to negative events that their children experience in digital environments	No	11
	Yes	4

According to Table 6, the majority of the parents stated that they did not witness to a negative event that their children experienced in digital environments ($f=9$). However, some parents answered the question as “yes” ($f=4$). Parents P7 and P13 expressed their thoughts as follows:

P7: “I have not witnessed any negative events so far, I feel lucky...”

P13: “Unfortunately, we experienced a negative event. We learned that a stranger pressured our child to share some personal information. After that day, I realized that we should be more careful, we banned at first, but we gave up when we thought that this was not a good method...”

4. Discussion and Conclusion

We conducted this study to examine children's use of digital technologies from the perspective of digital age parents. We found that children mostly use digital technologies for playing and downloading games. In addition, they use digital technologies to do homework, watch videos, browse social media, do research, communicate with friends, watch movies and listen to music or download. In another study, it is found that the internet usage purposes of adolescents are generally “having fun/spending time”, “communicating” and “obtaining information” (Günlü & Ceyhan, 2017). In the study by Aksoy & Ünübol (2021), it was found that the majority of adolescents use the internet for entertainment (such as gaming, watching TV) and communication purposes. Öztürk (2021), on the other hand, stated in his study that students mostly use the internet to access social media. These results show that it is necessary to focus on the negative effects of the use of digital technologies and their beneficial function, since children use technology mostly for purposes such as games, entertainment, and communication.

Today's parents are expected to take on responsibilities appropriate to the requirements of the digital age. Digital age parents are expected to be equipped in areas such as digital ethics, digital communication, digital literacy, digital access, digital security, and digital health (Fatih Yaman et al., 2019). In this age, taking advantage of the opportunities offered by digital environments and keeping their children safe against the risks they may encounter have been added to the responsibilities of parents (Appel et al., 2014; Clark, 2011; Lupton et al., 2016).

This study reveals that the majority of parents do not find digital environments safe (Table 3). The widespread use of the internet among children brings with it various risks due to their limited self-regulation capacity and sensitivity to peer pressure (O’Keeffe et al., 2011). The main risks for the next generation could be specified as the lack of confidentiality and privacy, inappropriate use of technology, excessive sharing of personal information, socially inappropriate use, and inadequacy and inexperience in digital literacy (O’Keeffe et al., 2011; Picazo-Vela et al., 2012). Studies also emphasize the fact that texting and messaging with sexual content are quite common among children (Drouin & Landgraff, 2012; Houck et al., 2014; Mark et al., 2014).

Within the study, parents stated the negative effects of digital technologies on children as developing different addictions (internet addiction, phone addiction, game addiction, etc.), health problems (headache, posture disorders, sleep disorders, dry eyes, etc.), decline in academic achievement, decline in face-to-face communication skills, increase in negative behaviors (speaking abusive, lying, emulating others, etc.), moving away from real life experiences, and moving away from cultural values (Table 4).

It is claimed that a virtual life has emerged with the advantages of computer hardware, software and communication options for people of the Internet age (Cohen-Almagor, 2018). Digital technologies cause

changes in our social practices and affect the lives of individuals in every aspect (Teo, 2016). Surrounded by new technologies, digital natives are in constant interaction with these technologies (Prensky, 2001). Growing up in the cyber age, digital natives have had earlier and greater exposure to various digital technology activities such as surfing the web, playing online games, and following social networking profiles (Salajan et al., 2010). This situation raises concerns about the addictive use of information technologies (Hahn et al., 2017). In particular, it is claimed that the social and emotional development of the majority of the new generation occurs on the internet or mobile phones (O'Keeffe et al., 2011). Various studies have proven that internet addiction is one of the psychological problems that reduces academic achievement and social interaction (Stavropoulos et al., 2013).

Game addiction is another negative effect of digital technologies on children. Game addiction is an important issue that worries parents. One of the most important features of these games is that they provide social interaction between the players with their voice or written communication features. It is stated that these features increase the potential of these games to cause internet addiction (Billieux et al., 2015). Online games generally allow children to interact with other people and play games via mobile devices wherever they are (Willett, 2017). This situation raises the concerns of parents about controlling their children.

According to Griffiths et al., (2012), the concept of game and accordingly the concept of addiction has recently expanded with massively multiplayer online role playing games. Compared to older computer games and online internet games, these environments are more stimulating, have wider visual and auditory effects, have motivational elements that encourage continuous use and have faster event flow, which their users describe as second life. This situation has caused the condition regarding digital game addiction to be alarming. Many studies has reported that, electronic games have reached the level of addiction in today's children, also called the game generation (Carstens & Beck, 2005; Griffiths, 2002; Peng & Liu, 2010). In general, it is emphasized that all types of addiction cause problems that will affect the daily lives of individuals (Cheever et al., 2014; Kwon et al., 2013).

Another issue mentioned in the study regarding the negative effects of digital technologies on children is the decline in their academic achievement. Digital technologies support children's education and school success. However, their excessive use of digital technologies for gaming and social media causes a decline in their academic achievement (Livingstone, 2002). Results of many studies point out that the educational life can be negatively affected because of the misuse use of digital technologies (Anderson, 2001; Ceyhan, 2008; Frangos et al., 2010; Young & Case, 2004). In the study by Cengizhan (2005), it was also stated that psychological, physical, and social negativities that may arise due to the frequency of internet use may affect the academic success of individuals, especially those ones at school age.

In the current study, parents stated that digital technologies may negatively affect their children's health. Similarly, O'Keeffe et al., (2011) state that young people spare less time for physical activities due to the time spent on the virtual environments. Moreover, many studies that show that individuals have difficulties in establishing face-to-face relationships that their social interactions are negatively affected (Anderson, 2001; Bonetti et al., 2010; Niemz et al., 2005; Seo et al., 2009; Suhail & Bargees, 2006). Douglas et al., (2008) stated that the misuse of digital technologies may lead to the gradual deterioration of one's social and family life.

The World Health Organization (WHO, 2015) has defined the excessive use of the internet and related technological tools as a public health problem. It has been stated that as a result of excessive use, physiological difficulties such as sleep, nutrition, hearing, hygiene problems and bodily pain, along with psychological problems such as weakening of the connection with external reality, deterioration in social functionality (problems in the family, decline in academic achievement, deterioration in emotional relations), introversion and avoidance can also be experienced.

It is stated that young people can disrupt their sleep patterns and stay awake to check their accounts, follow the agenda and learn what their friends are doing (Newsom & Rehman, 2020). Lemola et al., (2015) stated that the use of media and smartphones by adolescents is associated with sleep disorders and depressive symptoms. It is reported that due to spending most of their time without physical activity,

people may encounter health problems such as obesity (Li et al., 2014). In addition, spending time with electronic games problematically can create negative physical, psychological, and social effects on individuals (Griffiths & Davies, 2005).

Another significant result obtained from the study is that most children do not ask their parents for help regarding the problems they encountered in digital environments. In contrast, some children only ask for help for educational activities and when faced with different notifications.

The parent-child relationship is critical to prevent online risks. It is thought that this relationship will enable children to communicate directly with their parents when they make mistakes in online environments and not hesitate to tell their experiences (Paul, 2015). However, the negative attitudes of families to protect their children can sometimes lead to major problems and less sharing of children with their families (Hawk et al., 2009). Kenley, (2011) states that, the possibility of losing digital technologies in their hands when they share negative situations with their parents, drives children away from their families. According to the results of EU Kids Online II Turkey, (2010), children prefer their friends instead of their families and get help from them when faced with negativity while using the internet. In addition, the fact that children use digital technologies better than their parents may cause children not to share it with their parents when they encounter a situation where they are uncomfortable on the Internet, or to ignore the suggestions made by the parents for the use of digital technologies. As a matter of fact, Kadli et al., (2010) state that children obtain information about internet use through their own efforts or through their friends because they cannot get enough support from their parents or educators.

Parents are the most important stakeholders in reaching a solution when children encounter digital risks and threats (Palfrey & Gasser, 2008). In the study, the majority of parents stated that they did not witness a negative event that their children experienced in digital environments. This result supports that most parents are not aware of their children's negative experiences on the internet (Symantec, 2014). Wisniewski et al., (2017) show that most of the children communicate little with their parents when faced with an online risk. However, according to the EU Kids Online (2020) report, 9% of individuals aged 9-17 have experienced an uncomfortable situation online. The inability of the parents to adequately guide the child in using digital technologies may cause the child to show hiding behaviors from the family while using digital media tools (Ateş & Durmuşoğlu Saltalı, 2019). Therefore, it can be said that parents are not aware of negative situations because children do not ask for help.

5. Suggestions

- The fact that children can use technology better than parents has a negative effect on parents' control over their children. Therefore, it is recommended that parents improve themselves in this regard.
- Websites and digital technologies where children spend time must be followed.
- Strong communication should be established with children. Children should be provided with a safe environment where they can share their negative situations.
- Children should be informed by parents about the security of passwords they use on the internet.
- Parents should talk to their children about the dangers they may encounter in digital environments and how they can cope with them.
- The vast majority of parents stated that they have not witnessed any situation their children's experience in digital environments, but despite this, they do not find digital environments safe. The reason for this situation can be investigated in future studies.
- This study was conducted using a qualitative research method. Different studies can be conducted using the quantitative research method.
- The reasons why children do not seek help from their parents regarding the problems they encounter in digital environments can be investigated.
- Negative events experienced by children in digital environments can be investigated.

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Arařtırmacıların Katkı Oran Beyanı / Contribution of Authors

Yazarların alıřmadaki katkı oranları (Nesrin Hark Syilemez)%100 řeklinde dir.
The authors' contribution rates in the study are (Nesrin Hark Syilemez)%100 form.

ıkar atıřması Beyanı / Conflict of Interest

alıřmada herhangi bir kurum veya kiři ile ıkar atıřması bulunmamaktadır.
There is no conflict of interest with any institution or person in the study.

İntihal Politikası Beyanı / Plagiarism Policy

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Bu alıřmada Yksekğretim Kurumları Bilimsel Arařtırma ve Yayın Etięi Ynergesi kapsamında belirtilen kurallara uyulmuřtur.
In this study, the rules specified within the scope of the Higher Education Institutions Scientific Research and Publication Ethics Directive were followed.