FACTORS INFLUENCING THE DIGITAL PARENTING STYLES OF MALAYSIAN PARENTS

Shafizan Mohamed
Department of Communication
AHAS KIRKHS
International Islamic University Malaysia
Email: shafizan@iium.edu.my

Saodah Wok
Department of Communication
AHAS KIRKHS
International Islamic University Malaysia, 53100 Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
Email:drsaodah@gmail.com

Wan Norshira Wan Mohd Ghazali
Department of Communication
AHAS KIRKHS
International Islamic University Malaysia, 53100 Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
Email: wannorshira@iium.edu.my

Shakira Nasir
Department of Communication
AHAS KIRKHS
International Islamic University Malaysia, 53100 Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
Email:shakira@iium.edu.my

ABSTRACT

When it comes to their children's digital use, today's parents are frequently at a loss. There are no hard and fast rules or guidelines to tell them how to digitally parent effectively. The abundance of news coverage and stories about cybercrime and improper digital use, such as pornography and fake news, exacerbates parents' concerns. Regardless, parents have little choice but to embrace digital technologies because the world is rapidly changing, and the future will inevitably be digital. Traditional parenting methods may no longer be sufficient to help children grow into successful adults. Parents must ensure that their children can benefit from digital technologies while also being prepared to tackle digital threats. According to studies, the enabling digital parenting style is the ideal since it provides a technique of balancing the risks and benefits of children's digital use. Parents' digital parenting approaches are frequently influenced by their demographic background and local customs. As a result, this study investigated how factors like parental role, ethnicity, age, educational background, household income, and work position affect the skills that parents need to become enabling digital parents. A total of 654 Malaysian parents from various demographic backgrounds were surveyed. According to the findings, parents with greater incomes, better employment, and educational statuses are likely to have more enabling digital parenting styles. The finding shed light on the potential problem of inequality in the digital dimension. It reveals the possible direction to which the digital divide may structurally discriminate between members of the society from different classes, as socio-economic background is proven to influence digital parenting styles which in turn, differentially affects children's digital resilience and development for the future. This implies that equitable and just initiatives promoting enabling digital parenting approaches must be uniquely designed to respond to parents' contextual circumstances.

Keywords: Digital Parenting Styles, Enabling Digital Parenting, Digitally Resilient Children, Digital Future

INTRODUCTION

The Malaysian government projected that by 2030, Malaysia will become a developed country. In addition, the Education Blueprint 2013-2025 clearly asserts that the government wants to ensure that socio-economic status would not hamper the less privileged from accessing the right technology in attaining education. The attainment of all these national ambitions is very much dependent on the effective adoption of digital technologies. Malaysian from all walks of life must be able to exploit the fruits of digital technologies. More specifically, the Malaysian children are the most important group that needs to be carefully developed into digitally savvy future generations that will realize the country's aspirations. While Malaysian children nowadays are very much exposed to digital media, it does not necessarily mean that they are effectively using the technology. Proper guidance needs to come from all parties. While schools and other related institutions offer multiple training and educational opportunities for the children, effective digital adoption must be normalized in everyday life, and this ultimately means that digital experience must come from home.

Parents especially must be a step ahead and be able to guide their children to positively exploit the advantages of digital technologies. However, there seems to be a challenge to this ideal especially when parents are themselves struggling to understand the nature of digital technologies. To most parents, their main role is to control their children's digital media usage, mostly fearing the threats and risks of digital technologies without realizing that digital technologies can offer more benefits than harm if wisely used. It is not easy for parents to become effective digital parents simply because they did not have a generational example to

follow. Digital technologies were not something their parents had to deal with. Thus, with very minimal knowledge and training, these parents would automatically put on a protective mode over their children such as banning the technology or telling their children off when a problem occurs. Such limiting approach towards children's digital use can be detrimental in the long run as it may lead children into having contested perceptions and attitudes towards digital technologies especially when children are going to grow into a future that will be inevitably digital.

Research by Byrne and Livingstone (2018) shows that instead of being protective, parents should become enablers to their children's digital experience. As enablers, parents move from simply monitoring their children to mentoring as well as motivating digital use. However, while there is increasing awareness on more enabling forms of digital parenting such as sharing some online experiences with their children and guiding them in the use of privacy settings, advice services and critical evaluation of online content and behaviour, such positive shift is often hampered by digital divides that mostly come in the forms of socio-economy and culture. Studies show that parents from affluent environments are better equipped as they have had exposure with modern technologies growing up and they tend to be more liberal in their parenting style. On the other hand, parents from middle- and lower-income backgrounds tend to be more restrictive as they feel the need to protect their children from something they are not familiar with. This is evident in Malaysia where the gap in digital access, use and literacy between the T-20, M-40, and B-40 is still significant. In addition, Malaysian parents come from different ethnic, religious, and cultural backgrounds that also determine their approach to parenting and acceptance of new technologies. Therefore, there needs to be a concerted effort so that all parents regardless of socioeconomic and cultural background can become enabling digital parents that will develop digitally savvy future generations.

On that note, this study explores the influence of demographic factors on parent's digital parenting skills. By uncovering the differences in parents' level of digital parenting skill, one would be able to identify the problem of inequality that extends into the crossover between the digital and familial dimension. The demographic indicator of parent's socio-economic background holds great influence on their parenting styles, which consequently would give rise to different impacts of development for the children's digital future. As such, there emerge the necessity for more effective and inclusive recommendations and initiatives to support the unique experiences of parents while creating a digital environment that is safe and conducive for children. In addition, since digital parenting partakes the wider structure of the society, the aforesaid initiatives cannot be reduced into the narrow dimension parenting. Instead, it should be seen as constituting wider practical discourses dealing with issues of gender justice, economic inequality, and equitable education attainment. This is particularly important considering the digitalization that Malaysia is progressing into, "a digitally-driven, high-income nation and a regional leader in the digital economy" (Economic Planning Unit, Prime Minister's Department, 2021, p.10). In this sense, inequality in digital parenting would reflect wider inequality in other aspects and dimension of a would-be digital society.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Digitally Resilient Children
When considering children's digital engagement, it is necessary to adopt a holistic view of potential outcomes from digital technologies. Much academic research has focused on the avoidance of negative outcomes. Whilst there is a strong existing research base dedicated to understanding how digital risks and harm might be predicted, less is known about positive outcomes and how to achieve them.

Indeed, most baseline academic research charting how digital technologies can be beneficial for children explores only 'what' children do digital rather than the outcomes or benefits of this usage. Only recently has there a shift in focus towards helping children take advantage of new digital opportunities – such as boosting digital skills and the importance of coding.

When exploring the positive and potentially negative aspects of digital engagement both must be considered when looking at how to support children to get the most from the digital world. As technology continues to develop quickly, and our understanding of its effects follows at a slower pace, it remains an ongoing challenge to both ensure positive outcomes and guard against the potential risks children might face.

Experts suggests resilience is a core objective of supporting children's ability to manage the risks to which they may be exposed to in the digital world, alongside efforts to reduce the availability and accessibility of harmful material online (Byron, 2008). Resilience can be understood as an individual's ability to accurately adapt to changing and sometimes stressful environments and to feel empowered to act instead of reacting in the face of both novel and threatening challenges. Digital resilience more specifically, is a dynamic personality asset that grows from digital activation through engaging with appropriate opportunities and challenges online, rather than through avoidance and safety behaviors. Digital resilience is a more effective approach to helping children thrives in the digital age. While resilience cannot simply be taught, it can and should be developed and nurtured

Whilst it is increasingly acknowledged that resilience cannot be not fostered through complete avoidance of risk (Vissenberg & d'Haenens, 2020), the focus on the type or amount of harmful content children are potentially exposed to online persists. It is more important to ask the 'why' of media use, rather than the traditional metrics of 'how much' or 'exposure', provides a more complete picture of online engagement and is a better predictor of outcomes from media use. Understanding what motivates and encourages children's online engagement – rather than focusing only on how they use the internet or what they might see - can support our understanding of how resilience might be fostered, ultimately encouraging positive experiences because of more empowered users

Digital Parenting

While governments and institutions acknowledge the need to create digitally resilient children that will grow into digitally successful citizens, it is important that digital education starts at home. The UNICEF (2017) report titled The State of the World Children: Children in a Digital World suggest that parents should serve as examples to their children as responsible and respectful ICT users themselves. This requires parents to not only be much more proficient and aware of risks in ICT use than their children, but also to stay up to date with new products and trends in order to prevent the formation of a so-called digital divide between parent and child.

Mascheroni, Ponte, & Jorge (2018) explain that digital parenting predominantly involves the online safety and privacy of children in the virtual world, as well as ethical behavior therein. Whereas Siibak (2019) establishes the tenets of digital parenting as protection, social media monitoring, finding of information, and resources and building relationships with the child, Tosun & Mihci (2020) breaks down skills involved in digital parenting into the categories of digital literacy, digital safety, and digital communication. Fidan and Seferoğlu (2020) on the other hand, explains five dimensions to digital parenting as efficient use, risk aversion, being a role model, digital non-neglect, and open-mindedness. In short, digital parenting encompasses all aspects of digital life and this can be utopian considering that not all parents can achieve this.

While it is undeniable that parents have the best opportunity to nurture digitally resilient children, not all parents can do so. Unfortunately, parents have few places to turn to get advice on digital parenting. And it is no help that parents are often pressured to always be in control of their children's actions. Digital safety campaigns and digital parenting modules are often focused on reducing the availability of harmful material and restricting children's access. This mostly tells parents that the best way to digitally parent is to restrict and control.

This rigid understanding of the parental role will only limit children's digital usage without effectively guiding children to become digitally resilient. Therefore, there needs to be a transformation in the understanding what of constitutes digital parenting. Instead of restricting, parents should be enabling. Developing children's digital skills and pro-active online engagement, as well as supportive and enabling parenting, have a more positive impact on resilience than strategies that only restrict or monitor internet use and limit children's digital skills.

Enabling Digital Parenting

As implied above, the approach of digital parenting can be classified as restrictive and enabling. This reflects the more general mediation practices in which parents differ within the spectrum of involvement and control regarding their children. Some parent emphasized control over autonomy for their children's behavior, whereas others are more deeply involved in their children's subjectivity. Out of these parenting variations, psychologist, Wendy Grolnick(2003) argued, only some will yield a more desirable outcome on children's development, and they are those that prioritize children's autonomy, parental involvement and behavioral structure. She further elaborated that when an individual's environment enables their agency in action, provide tangible as well as intangible resources for their self, and also provide practical exposition necessary for self-agency, "motivation, adjustment and well-being result" (Grolnick, 2003, p.13). This style corresponds to what Healy, Iyer and Sander (2015) conceptualized as facilitative parenting, which they deem important for the cultivation of social and emotional intelligence in children. In the context of family in digital age, the issue of digital parenting appropriate for positive development of children must adapt the core spirit of facilitative parenting suggested by Healy, Iyer & Sander, as well as Grolnick. As such, enabling parenting is arguably representative of the said core spirit.

Byrne and Livingstone (2018) proposed that enabling digital parents encompasses a set of mediation practices (including co-use, active mediation of internet safety, monitoring, and technical restrictions such as parental controls) that are aimed at empowering children and supporting their active engagement with online media. It serves as strategies specifically and actively enacted to harness children's potentiality in digital skills, education, and commonsensical practicality (Smahelova et al., 2017). It embodies the five-core principle of digital parenting role, namely, to foster secure lineal bond within virtual realm, to regulate children's digital usage, to acknowledge children's agency through respect and guidance, to be a proper digital model for children's emulation and to ensure secure digital provisions accessible to children (Byrne and Livingstone, 2018). The supportive element of high-level responsiveness that characterizes this digital parenting style understandably renders it to be most promising approach out of all.

Challenges to effective digital parenting

However, becoming a digitally enabling parent is not an easy task. It is not merely a question of digital access and usage. Instead, it is in relation to many other important influences on family life. Recent generations have seen many transformations – in demography, stratification, job security, welfare provision, family structure, migration, identity politics, and more. It is these that predominantly shape parental expectations and fuel their anxieties. It is these that imbue everyday technological decisions and conflicts with such emotional intensity. And it is these, far more than screen time or social media habits that influence the ways parents understand, accept and respond to digital technology. It is, therefore, these major societal transformations that have resulted in parents being unequally positioned when faced with the challenge of nurturing their digital-by-default children (Livingstone & Blum-Ross, 2020).

At the same time, society has preferred to treat parents as a homogenous group, criticizing their digital parenting without acknowledging the fundamentally unequal difficulties that beset them. The Covid-19 pandemic has exposed that that not all families can afford the technology or connectivity to support home-schooling, or that at-risk children are vulnerable to intensifying levels of offline and online abuse, or that children with special educational needs or other needs cannot be reached online by the systems of care that previously supported them offline. The inability to recognize that parents have unique experiences leads to the failure of providing them with the right digital parenting skills. Real parents are likely finding it difficult to locate, evaluate and

select resources and guidance appropriate for their child and their family's circumstances. As such to better understand the influence of culture and context on how parents deal with their children's digital usage, this study asks:

Do factors such as parental role, age, marital status, ethnicity, employment, educational level and income influence parent's digital parenting styles?

METHODOLOGY

The research population is Malaysian parents with children aged 7 to 12 years old. The survey questionnaire would require a sample set that is representative of the Malaysian population. Thus, stratified sampling procedures was conducted in which respondents were selected based on certain demographic characteristics of the average Malaysian parents such as age, ethnicity, and educational background. At the end, 654 survey questionnaires were collected from all the all the states in the peninsular Malaysia as well as Wilayah Persekutuan Kuala Lumpur.

The survey questionnaire consists of two parts: (1) contextual and demographic questions and (2) digital parenting questions. Item formats employed were selected response, which were in multiple-choice format of the standard type. Parents are required to check the items that correspond with their information from a set of options in the corresponding area. For the section on digital parenting styles, parents were asked 11 questions related to the way they manage their children's digial usage. Table 1 below lists these questions.

13 survey enumerators were hired and trained to conduct the survey. They were informed about the research objectives and process. They were equipped with a manual (refer appendix) detailing the survey procedure. A mock survey was also conducted so that the enumerators become familiar with the style needed for the survey. In addition, the enumerators were informed about the ethical way to approach the respondents. The enumerators are reminded to respect the respondents' privacy and intention to complete the survey.

RESEARCH FINDINGS

Enabling digital parenting style

The study explores the digital parenting styles of Malaysian parents by asking 11 questions that measures the way they approach their children's digital usage. These questions asked whether parents adopted active parenting activities such as co-use, active mediation of internet safety, monitoring and technical restrictions such as parental controls (Byrne and Livingstone, 2018). Table 1 below lists parenting activities considered as enabling. Parents who score high on each activity is adopting a positive approach.

Table 1: One sample *t*-test for Enabling Digital Parenting Style

No.	Digital Parenting Style	M*	SD	%	t**	p
1.	5a11: I remind my child about the dangers of digital technology.	3.843	1.086	76.9	19.831	.000
2.	5a10: I enforce strict and clear rules to my child	3.598	1.115	72.0	13.717	.000
3.	5a9: I set the amount of time my child spends online.	3.580	1.158	71.6	12.800	.000
4.	5a1: I talk to my child about how to use technology, the Internet, or specific websites/applications responsibly.	3.520	1.094	70.4	12.155	.000
5.	5a2: I research about specific programs, devices, or applications I am considering for my child.	3.454	1.086	69.1	10.694	.000
6.	5a7: I discuss with my husband/wife about our child's digital usage and habits.	3.424	1.100	68.5	9.850	.000
7.	5a8: I know all the apps, social media, programs that my child subscribed to.	3.414	1.196	68.3	8.857	.000
8.	5a3: Show my child articles, programs, videos, or specific resources to help them learn about technology.	3.191	1.131	63.8	4.322	.000
9.	5a5: Teach my child how to use new computer programs, apps or websites.	3.054	1.143	61.1	1.197	.232
10	5a4: I enrol my child in camps, classes, or programs to improve their digital skills.	2.731	1.204	54.6	-5.716	.000
11.	5a6: I play computer games with my child.	2.554	1.224	51.1	-9.332	.000
	Overall Enabling Digital Parenting Style (N = 654)	**3.681**	**0.950**	**73.6**	**18.346**	**.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

Results show that the parents claimed that they are enabling digital parents where 8 of 11 items are highly rated. The overall rating is high with Mean of 3.681 (*SD*=0.950) and *t*=18.346 (*p*=.000).

Specifically, seven in ten of the respondents rated them as performing the following items, namely, (a) they remind their child about the dangers of digital technology (76.9%); (b) they enforce strict and clear rules to their child (72.0%); (c) they set the amount

of time their child spends online (71.6%); and (d) they talk to their child about how to use technology, the Internet, or specific websites/applications responsibly (70.4%).

In addition, six in ten of the respondents also rated highly on enabling digital parenting style. The items are (a) they research about specific programs, devices, or applications taht they are considering for their child (69.1%); (b) they discuss with their husband/wife about their child's digital usage and habits (68.5%), (c) they know all the apps, social media, programs that their child subscribed to (68.3%); and (d) they how their child articles, programs, videos, or specific resources to help them learn about technology (63.8%).

Two items are not fully practised as enabling digital parenting style are (a) they enrol their child in camps, classes, or programs to improve their digital skills (54.6%) and (b) they play computer games with their child (51.1%). These items are significant but negatively rated.

The only insignificant item for the enabling digital parenting style is "teach their child how to use new computer programs, apps or websites".

Generally, it can be said that all parents perform enabling digital parenting style to a certain extent. However, this study is also interested to understand how demographic categories influence parenting styles. A T-test was done on the data to identify whether there are significant differences in digital parenting styles according to unique demographic characteristics.

Demographic Categories Used in Differentiating the Digital Parenting Styles of Malaysian Parents

Table 2 below captures the relationship between demographic and parenting styles. The demographic characteristics of the parents are looked at in terms of (a) role, (b) age, (c) marital status, (d) ethnicity, (e) employment status, (f) highest completed education, and (g) total household income.

Table 2: Independent Sample *t*-test for Enabling Parenting Style by Demographic Characteristics

No.	Demographic Characteristics	Category	*N*	*M**	*SD*	*t***	*df*	*p*
1	Role	Mother	432	3.755	0.916	2.743	652	.006
		Father	218	3.539	1.003			
2	Age (years old)	Less than 40	318	3.781	0.892	2.612	652	.009
		41 and above	332	3.587	0.997			
3	Marital status	Married	597	3.704	0.948	1.912	652	.056
		Divorced/ Widowed	53	3.443	0.964			
4	Ethnicity	Malay/Bumiputra	489	3.696	0.964	0.654	652	.513
		Other Ethnicity	161	3.640	0.912			
5	Employment status	Employed	563	3.721	0.915	2.689	652	.007
		Unemployed	91	3.434	1.116			
6	Highest completed education	Diploma and below	391	3.606	1.029	-2.474	652	.014
		Bachelor degree and above	263	3.793	0.807			
7	Total household income	RM5000 and below	411	3.579	1.002	-3.610	652	.000
		RM5001 and above	243	3.854	0.827			

* 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 strongly agree (81 – 100%). (1 mark)

Results show that mothers (*M* = 3.755, *SD* = 0.916) practiced more of the enabling parenting style than the fathers (M = 3.539, SD = 1.003). Their difference is significant (*t* = 2.743, *p* = .006). The younger parents (*M* = 3.781, *SD* = 0.892) exhibit more in enabling parenting style than the older parents (*M* = 3.587, *SD* = 0.997). The results are supported by *t* = 2.612 (*p* = .009). However, marital status does not differentiate between married (*M* = 3.704, *SD* = 0.948 and divorced/widowed (*M* = 3.443, *SD* = 0.964) despite the fact that married parents have a higher mean, their difference is not large enough. In terms of ethnicity, there is no difference between Malaya/Bumiputra (*M* = 3. 696, *SD* = 0.964) and the other ethnicities (*M* = 3. 640, *SD* = 0.912). However, the employment status does show the differences. Employed parents (*M* = 3.721, *SD* = 0.915) tended to be enabling parents then the unemployed parents (*M* = 3. 434, *SD* = 1.116). Their difference is significant (*t* = 2.689 (*p* = .007). On the contrary, the highly educated parents (Bachelor degree and above) where the mean is higher (*M* = 3.793, *SD* = 0.807) and they do practice enabling parenting style than less educated parents (*M* = 3. 606, *SD* = 1.029). Their difference is significant (*t* = -2.474, *p* = .014). Total household income also indicated that parents with the higher income level (*M* = 3.854, *SD* = 0.827) tend to practise the enabling parenting style than those with the lower income level (*M* = 3.579, *SD* = 1.002), and their difference is significant (*t* = -3.610, *p* = .000).

In summary, the demographic characteristics of parents practising enabling parenting style can be described as mothers, younger in age, employed, with Bachelor Degree and above, and earning a higher total household income.

DISCUSSION

As indicated in the result section, gender relates in varying patterns the parenting styles where mothers are likely to be more digitally enabling than fathers. A possible explanation for this is the gendered dimension of family sustained by the synthesis of patriarchal and capitalist culture in Malaysian society. Such culture reserves the burdens and loads of familial domestic care onto mothers disproportionately, rendering mothers an experience of modern precarity (Wilson & Yochim, 2017). Women negotiate motherhood within the modern precarity through the mediation of digital platform. Particularly in the period of covid-19 pandemic, digital technology has been argued to be the fourth familial burden tethering mothers, after the loads of commercial, domestic, and emotional responsibilities (Orton-Johnson, 2021). As a natural consequence, the digitalization of mothering experiences influences their positive outlook on digital technologies. This matters, as study shows that positive digital outlook of parents is more likely to make them be more digitally enabling (Sanders, Parent, Forehand, Sullivan, & Jones, 2016).

This study also illustrated that socio-economic background does influence the variability in digital parenting styles. Particularly, enabling parents are those better educated with higher income level. Literature emphasizing the socio-economic factor on parenting styles have indicated the propensity of socio-economic status to predict parenting styles pattern. In general, parenting that values children's autonomy is associated with higher socio-economic status, whereas children's obedience is more expected among lesser affluent parents (Park & Lau, 2015). Education figures centrally in this equation of interacting factors, where those who fare better in income, are also more likely to be better educated, which also means that they have better material and psychological capacity to plan for their children's development (Roubinov & Boyce, 2017). This applies, in corresponding terms, to digital parenting where various research affirmed the link between income level, digital literacy and digital parenting failure (Ishak et al, 2021; Tang, 2015).

Socio-cultural factor is addressed as important in mediating the impact of socio-economic status on parenting styles. In this regard it is important to acknowledge that educational institution inculcates and engender positive value regarding digital technology in people. Findings by Fox, Diezmann, & Grieshaber(2010) demonstrated the importance of institutional influence in shaping the optimistic outlook on digital technologies among teachers who adopted a proactive and reflective use of the technology for children. This stood in contrast against parents who espoused pessimistic view towards digital technology and instead, resorted to limit its influence in their children's life. This encapsulates what Pavić & Černja (2020) proposed as secondary digital divide, in which educational level gap does not only result in differential access towards the technology, but also in skills and motivation of its use. In addition, the result displays significant correlation between age and digital parenting style, wherein the younger parents are more likely to be enabler, while the older one more restrictive. A plausible explanation of great relevance perhaps can be found, again, in Malaysian family culture. Malaysians, upholding collectivist culture, partakes in the wider Asian ethos of high demand parenting with varying level of responsiveness (Keshavarz & Baharudin, 2009). As such, traditional parenting styles in the country ranges from authoritative to authoritarian. This style fits in the historically large family structure size typical of early modern southeast Asians (Yeung, Desai, & Jones, 2018). Therefore, this alludes to the notion that digitally restrictive parents may constitute the earlier cohort raised in traditional family composition and incumbent cultural milieu. Recent demographic changes in southeast Asian families includes household size reduction owing to greater female participation in work force and education (Yeung, Desai, & Jones, 2018). It might be the case that younger parents are from the cohort affected by this demographic change, and thus lesser tied to the tradition of high demand parenting.

Scrutiny over the factors enlisted above reveal the centrality of education in determining a more enabling digital parenting style. Recognizing the significance of enabling digital parent then requires utmost attention paid to the way education can be used to create actual impact in people's behavior. As mentioned previously, education is instrumental in imparting and instilling positive values of digital technology, effectively. Therefore, digital parenting education with broad and comprehensive approach is proposed to undertake the matter. An educational framework should be drafted which must entail consideration of every other factor addressed here. It must also partake the broader grassroot effort of social reformation happening in all sectors of society, like gender equity, just economic distribution, as well as continuity of cultural dynamics for they are all intimately related. In other words, the endeavor to encourage enabling digital parenting should partake the broader scheme of societal development for the wellbeing of everyone.

CONCLUSION

This study perused the way certain demographic factors like gender, ethnicity, economic status, educational background, and age in their impact upon Malaysian digital parenting styles. Most of the parents are digitally enabling to a certain extent, with mothers, more educated, more affluent, and younger people more likely to be one. The implication of the findings pervades discourses on gender, social structure, cultural milieu and most importantly education. An educational framework building upon these discourses must then be drafted as part of the initiative towards cultivating digital enabling parents across the nation.

Ultimately, creating a future generation that is digitally resilient is the responsibility of all adults, particularly parents and policymakers. Policymakers must support and encourage parents to become more aware of their ability to nurture their own children, while parents must have the determination to become digital enablers for their children.

LIMITATION OF RESEARCH

Survey research such as this is instructive in identifying the socio-demographic pattern of digital parenting that enables the understanding of its underlying factors. However, to this extent, it is merely descriptive wherein it falls short of providing deeper insight to all these determining factors. Thus, while this study correctly identified factors like gender, education, and employment as significant, their precise interaction with digital parenting is still not truly unravelled. As such, further study, of qualitative nature is desirable to understand further each of the said factor. Focus group discussion, in-depth interview and ethnography may be employed for this purpose. Another limitation lies in the fact that the finding is representative of a certain sample in a certain period. It does not capture shifts and changes that are to happen to the patterns of digital parenting. The periodic aspect of this phenomena can be further investigated through methodology of longitudinal nature. Thorough observation on parents as subject over the course of months or years would be able to yield understanding of digital parenting in terms of phases and stages. This brings attention to the third limitation, which is generality of sample. The study cover samples of parent without discriminating and classifying the age stage of children. Therefore, much is not known about digital parenting for children below 13 years of age, teenagers, and adolescents. In addition to the longitudinal case study of parents, other modes of research may focus on parents with specific age classification of their children as well.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

REFERENCES

Blum-ross, A. & Livingstone, S. (2020) *Parenting for a Digital Future: How Hopes and Fears about Technology Shape Children's Lives*. Oxford University Press.

Byron, T. (2008). *Safer children in a digital world: The report of the Byron Review: Be safe, be aware, have fun.* Retrieved from: http://dera.ioe.ac.uk/7332/7/Final%20Report%20Bookmarked_Redacted.pdf. Accessed July 10, 2017.

Byrne, J. & Livingstone, S. (2018) Parenting in the Digital Age. The Challenges of Parental Responsibility in Comparative Perspective p. 19-30 in Giovanna Mascheroni, Cristina Ponte & Ana Jorge (eds.) *Digital Parenting. The Challenges for Families in the Digital Age*. Göteborg: Nordicom.

Economic Planning Unit, Prime Minister's Department. (2021) *Malaysia Digital Economy Blueprint*. Putrajaya, Malaysia: Author.

Fidan, A., & Seferoğlu, S. S. (2020). Online Environments and Digital Parenting: An Investigation of Approaches, Problems, and Recommended Solutions. *Bartin Üniversitesi Egitim Fakültesi Dergisi*, *9*(2), 352-372.

Grolnick, W. (2003). *The Psychology of Parental Control: How Well-Meant Parenting Backfires*. Lawrence Earlbaum Associate.

Healy, K., Sanders, M., & Iyers, A. (2014). Facilitative Parenting and Children's Social, Emotional and Behavioral Adjustment. *Journal of Child and Family Studies*, *24*(6), 1762–1779. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10826-014-9980-x

Ishak, N. A., Syed Idrus, S. Z., Saraih, U. N., Osman, M. F., Prasetiyo, W. H., Hidayat, O. T., & Ayasrah, F. T. M. (2021). Exploring Digital Parenting Awareness During Covid-19 Pandemic Through Online Teaching and Learning from Home. *International Journal of Business and Technopreneurship*, *11*(3), 37–48. Retrieved from http://dspace.unimap.edu.my/xmlui/bitstream/handle/123456789/74552/Exploring%20Digital%20Parenting%20Awareness%20During%20Covid-19%20Pandemic.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y

Keshavarz, S., & Baharudin, R. (2009). Parenting style in a collectivist culture of Malaysia Development Of A Cognitive Vulnerabilities Model For Psychological Problems In Adolescents: Attachment And Negative Life Events As Predisposing Factors. *European Journal of Social Sciences*, *10*(1), 66.

Mascheroni, G., Ponte, C., & Jorge, A. (2018). *Digital parenting: The challenges for families in the digital age*. Nordicom, Norway.

Mohamed, S., Wok, S., Nasir, N. S. M., & Ghazali, W. N. W. M. (2021). B40 Income Earners' Digital Literacy: A Focus on Children at Projek Perumahan Rakyat (PPR). *MEDIA MATTERS VOL. 4*, 53.

Mohamed, S., Wok, S., Ghazali, W. N. W., & Nasir, N. S. M. (2022). Factors Influencing Digital Problem-Solving Skills Among B40 Children Living At The Pusat Perumahan Rakyat (PPR). *e-BANGI*, *19*(1), 31-46.

Orton-Johnson, K. (2021). Digitally Mediated Motherhood during the COVID-19 Pandemic. In A. O'Reilly & F. Green (Eds.), *Mothers, Mothering, and COVID-19: Dispatches from a Pandemic* (pp. 291–302). Ontario, Canada: Demeter Press.

Park, H., & Lau, A. S. (2015). Socioeconomic Status and Parenting Priorities: Child Independence and Obedience Around the World. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, *78*(1), 43–59. https://doi.org/10.1111/jomf.12247

Pavić, D., & Černja, I. (2020). How to measure digital literacy?: a case of Croatian adult learners. *International Conference the Future of Information Sciences INFuture*. https://doi.org/10.17234/infuture.2019.27

Roubinov, D. S., & Boyce, W. T. (2017). Parenting and SES: relative values or enduring principles? *Current Opinion in Psychology*, *15*, 162–167. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.copsyc.2017.03.001

Sanders, W., Parent, J., Forehand, R., Sullivan, A. D. W., & Jones, D. J. (2016). Parental perceptions of technology and technology-focused parenting: Associations with youth screen time. *Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology*, *44*, 28–38. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.appdev.2016.02.005

Siibak, A. (2019). *Digital parenting and the datafied child.* https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/sites/313a9b21-en/index.html?itemId=/content/component/313a9b21-en

Smahelova, M., Juhová, D., Cermak, I., & Smahel, D. (2017). Mediation of young children's digital technology use: The parents' perspective. *Cyberpsychology: Journal of Psychosocial Research on Cyberspace, 11*(3).

Tang, J. (2015). *Family Socioeconomic Status and Personal Media Technology Use* (MSc Thesis; pp. 1–31). Middle Tennessee State University.

Tosun, N., & Mihci, C. (2020). An Examination of Digital Parenting Behavior in Parents with Preschool Children in the Context of Lifelong Learning. *Sustainability, 12*(18), 7654. MDPI AG. Retrieved from http://dx.doi.org/10.3390/su12187654

Unicef. (2017). Children in a digital world. Retrieved from https://www.unicef.org/media/48601/file

Vissenberg, J., & d'Haenens, L. (2020). Protecting youths' wellbeing online: Studying the associations between opportunities, risks, and resilience. *Media and Communication, 8*(2), 175-184

Wilson, J., & Yochim, E. (2017). *Mothering Through Precarity: Women's Work and Digital Media*. United States of America: Duke University Press.

Yeung, W.-J., Desai, S., & Jones, G. (2018). Annual Review of Sociology Families in Southeast and South Asia. *The Annual Review of Sociology*, *44*. https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-soc-073117-