Young People's Contributions in the Co-Design of an App to Promote Online Safety and Wellbeing

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Background & Theoretical Framework

Background

- Adult-centric digital safety education can be *counterproductive* (Third et al., 2017)
- Much digital safety education is unaligned with the evidence base (Finkelhor et al., 2021)
- Cyber/bullying can be positioned within a broader landscape of online harms and risks
- It is paramount to centre CYPs views in the design of technologies for digital safety and wellbeing education

When CYP are involved…

We understand how differently CYP interpret phenomena such as cyber/bullying

We consider the intricate processes involved in disclosing and telling

We learn about CYP attitudes and intentions towards interventions

Co-Design & Human Rights

- CYP as co-facilitators in the research (Green et al., 2022).
- CYP as "experts" of their own lived experiences (Hamilton et al., 2020)
- Research becomes more like a partnership (O'Brien, 2019)
- Multidisciplinary role of organisations, civil societies, local communities, and industry (O'Higgins Norman et al., 2022; Smith & O'Higgins Norman, 2021)

The United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC, 2021)

All children have equal and effective access to digital environments that are meaningful to them

Responsible parties must consider the best interests of the child

Responsible parties should make digital spaces as free from cyber-aggression and other online risks that can harm children

Children should have a say in the design and development of policies, programmes, and solutions that affects them legislation,

Background & Theoretical Framework

Qualitative Study: To investigate the perspectives that underpin CYP's digital safety practices and wellbeing promotion

High Level Co-Design Research with CYP

Qualitative   Workshops   User

Experience

LF/Demos   Surveys   Content Validation

Feedback   Effectiveness   Analytics

Psychological Theory

Symbolic Interactionism

CYP act in accordance with how other CYP act towards symbols & phenomena

Personal Construct Theory

CYP construct their own ideas of what "online safety" is & other phenomena

Study Methodology

7 in depth individual interviews on Zoom
CYP aged between 11-15 yrs, 4 boys 3 girls
Convenience sampling

2 on-site focus groups in Schools
9 Post Primary pupils
Shown design & content ideas

Informs the early development of an App to a minimum viable product (MVP) stage

Study compliant with speed of industry needs, development sprints & ethical clearance

Questions derived from cyberpsychology, education, communication & media research

Why Reflexive Thematic Analysis? (Braun & Clarke, 2006; 2022)

Can incorporate epistemological ideas: children's rights, symbolic interactionism, and personal construct theory… in an **active reflective process**

The active reflexive process allows us to actively consider some of the known research issues such as **social desirability**

A repeated and dynamic coding process **complements an iterative design approach**

Select Questions to Participants

Tell me about yourself. Walk me through a typical day in the life of [Name]

Tell me about how you chat with your friends online.

How should people behave online?

If drama happens in your group, how does it get resolved?

What is your favourite thing to do on your phone and why?

If you were giving advice to your younger brother/ sister about being safe and well online, what advice would you give them?

What would you tell your sibling to do about mean comments under their TikTok videos?

Do you use Apps to help you relax or feel good online?

We want to make an App for you and other young people to be safe and well online, what things are important for us to know?

This App that would make the online world safer and better for all young people. What would you imagine it to be?

Reflexive Thematic Analysis

Five Reflexively Generated Themes

Knowledgeable of drama, banter, and other online performative interpersonal behaviour

"If I were talking with my friends, insulting them would be fine, it would be resolved in like 10 seconds, but if I was talking to a complete stranger, and they insulted me, now that would be a problem." (Boy, 13yrs)

Sense of psychological "maturity" as a determinant of digital competency

"And if you are mature, you wouldn't overshare your information, you wouldn't tell people what they don't need to know… If you're mature, you know how to handle situations, you know what to do, stuff like that" (Girl, 12yrs)

Restrictive mediation is for my younger siblings. Not for me

"[My Dad] has a parental control thing on my phone that locks out most things that involve email. So that's great fun [sarcastically]. (Boy, 13yrs)

"I wouldn't let [Sister] download certain games like Roblox, they all like Roblox... All the strangers are talking to you, in each server, and you don't know what's happening." (Girl, 13yrs)

Interplay of self-management strategies for ensuring digital safety and authenticity

"Like, say if they're faking themselves, like not saying who they are… try your best to stay away from something like that. And if you do find out about it, tell others. Make sure they don't go near it." (Boy, 15yrs)

Be respectful, not disrespectful. No "Karens" please

"[Karen] someone who is very entitled in the way they treat other people, and it usually accompanies racism and homophobia… It's like someone who is a buzzkill. Someone who ruins the fun." (Girl in a focus group).

Discussion

Implications & Limitations

CYP can articulate **nuanced perspectives** relating to their:
- Attitudes towards digital safety
- Dynamics of interpersonal behaviour online
- Strategies deployed to promote wellbeing and safety
- Navigating various online spaces with social norms

CYP make distinctions between their online and offline experiences

Contradictory attitude Stricter mediation practices for younger siblings is OK

Being perceived as authentic might determine online trust and true self

Does authenticity trump online safety practices? *More research needed*

Approach enabled to "*really understand*" what CYP are saying

Theoretical approach advantageous for human rights & involvement

Strike a balance between academic practices and complying with industry needs

CYP are busy and have fulfilling lives. Co-designers should consider CYP time

Thank you!

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