



Baseline Assessment of Digital Literacy Among Parents in the Ashanti Region

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Abstract

This study, conducted by the Ghana Internet Safety Foundation, assesses the level of digital literacy among parents in the Ashanti Region of Ghana and their ability to protect their children from online risks. The survey utilized a mixed-method approach, combining quantitative data from structured questions and qualitative insights from open-ended responses.

A total of 600 parents participated, providing data on their awareness, knowledge of online risks, and use of digital safety tools. Findings reveal significant gaps in parents' understanding and practices. Key recommendations include digital literacy workshops, awareness campaigns, and collaborations with schools to address these gaps and improve child online safety.



Introduction

The digital age presents numerous risks for children, ranging from exposure to inappropriate content to threats like cyberbullying and online predators. Parental digital literacy plays a critical role in safeguarding children from these risks. However, socio-cultural factors in Ghana, such as traditional parenting norms and limited access to digital education, can hinder parents' ability to engage effectively in child online protection. This study, conducted by the Ghana Internet Safety Foundation, evaluates the knowledge levels of parents in the Ashanti Region concerning digital safety and their ability to implement protective measures for their children.



Baseline Thematic Areas

The thematic areas of this research study Assessing Digital Literacy Among Parents in the Ashanti Region include:

1. Parental Awareness and Knowledge of Online Risks:

- ⊙ Familiarity with online risks such as cyberbullying, sextortion, and inappropriate content.
- ⊙ Awareness of digital safety practices and tools.

2. Use and Effectiveness of Digital Safety Tools:

- ⊙ Parental use of parental control tools and monitoring practices.
- ⊙ Challenges faced in implementing these tools effectively.

3. Parental Supervision and Online Safety Practices:

- ⊙ Frequency and quality of conversations between parents and children about online safety.
- ⊙ Strategies employed by parents to monitor and manage their children's digital activities.

4. Socio-Cultural and Educational Influences:

- ⊙ Impact of socio-cultural norms and education levels on digital literacy and online safety.
- ⊙ Influence of traditional parenting styles in Ghana on digital engagement.

5. Role of Schools and Community in Digital Literacy:

- ⊙ Collaboration between schools, parents, and external organizations to promote digital literacy.
- ⊙ Recommendations for integrating digital safety education into school curricula.

6. Recommendations for Improvement:

- ⊙ Implementation of workshops and awareness campaigns targeting parents.
- ⊙ Building partnerships with schools to provide practical digital literacy and safety training.



Data Collection Tool

Our baseline data collection was conducted using assessments created and administered both online through Zoho Survey and offline via printed copies

SECTION A: DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

* 1. Location

* 3. Occupation

* 2. Age

* 4. Highest level of education

* 5. Number of children

SECTION B: AWARENESS OF ONLINE RISK

* 6. How familiar are you with the potential risks children may face online?

- ☐ Not at all familiar
- ☐ Slightly familiar
- ☐ Very familiar

* 7. Which of the following online risks do you believe your child(ren) could encounter? (Select all that apply)

- ☐ Cyber bullying
- ☐ Inappropriate content (violence, sexual content etc)
- ☐ Online Predators (sextortion)
- ☐ Identity theft
- ☐ Scam or fraud
- ☐ Addiction to gaming/screen time

* 8. How often do you discuss online safety with your child(ren)?

- ☐ Never
- ☐ Sometimes
- ☐ Very often

* 9. Are you aware of the age restrictions for social media platforms?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

* 10. Do you know how to use parental controls on devices or applications?

- ☐ Yes, and I actively use them
- ☐ Yes, but I don't use them
- ☐ No, I don't know how

SECTION C: PARENTAL SUPERVISION AND MITIGATION STRATEGIES

* 11. How do you monitor your child(ren)'s online activity? (Select all that apply)

- ☐ I do not monitor
- ☐ Use of parental control software
- ☐ Checking browsing history
- ☐ Regular discussions about their online activities
- ☐ Limiting screen time
- ☐ Using a shared family account

12. Do you set specific rules for your child(ren)'s internet use?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

13. If yes, what are some of the rules you have set? (Select all that apply)

- ☐ Time limits for internet use
- ☐ Restricted access to certain websites or apps
- ☐ No internet use without supervision
- ☐ No sharing of personal information online
- ☐ Other _____

* 14. How confident are you in your ability to protect your child(ren) from online risks?

- ☐ Not confident at all
- ☐ Somewhat confident
- ☐ Very confident

SECTION D: KNOWLEDGE OF ONLINE RESOURCES

* 15. Are you aware of any online resources or organizations that offer guidance on child online safety?

- ☐ Parental control apps (e.g., Qustodio, Norton Family)
- ☐ Educational websites on online safety (e.g., Common Sense Media)
- ☐ Privacy settings on social media platforms
- ☐ Internet filtering software
- ☐ None of the above

* 16. Would you like to receive more information about online safety for children?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

SECTION E: OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS

* 17. In your opinion, what are the biggest online risks facing children today?

Biggest Online Risks for Children

Please describe what you believe are the biggest risks children face when using the internet today.

* 18. What actions do you believe could further enhance your child(ren)'s online safety?

Actions to Enhance Online Safety for Children

Please share what steps or actions you think can improve the online safety of your child(ren).

Methods

The study employed a survey methodology, targeting 600 parents across the Ashanti Region of Ghana. Participants were selected using a stratified sampling method to ensure representation from both rural and urban areas. The survey included both quantitative and qualitative components to capture a comprehensive understanding of parents' digital literacy and online safety practices. Structured questions gathered measurable data on awareness levels and digital tool usage, while open-ended responses provided insights into parental perceptions and challenges.



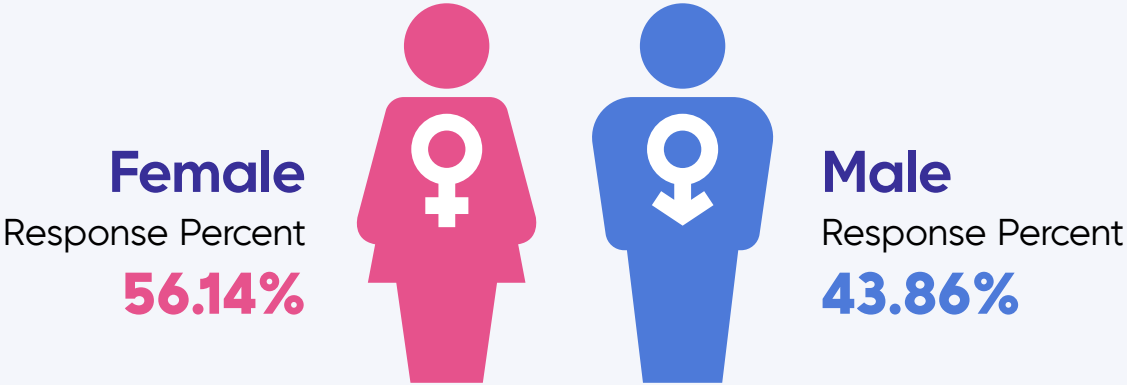
Summary of Findings

Demographic Analysis

The majority of respondents (63.16%) were between 30-44 years, with a slight predominance of female respondents (56.14%). Most participants held a Bachelor’s degree (78.95%), indicating a relatively well-educated respondent pool.

Age Range	Response Percent
18 - 29	17.54%
30 - 44	63.16%
45 - 59	17.54%
60 - 75	1.75%

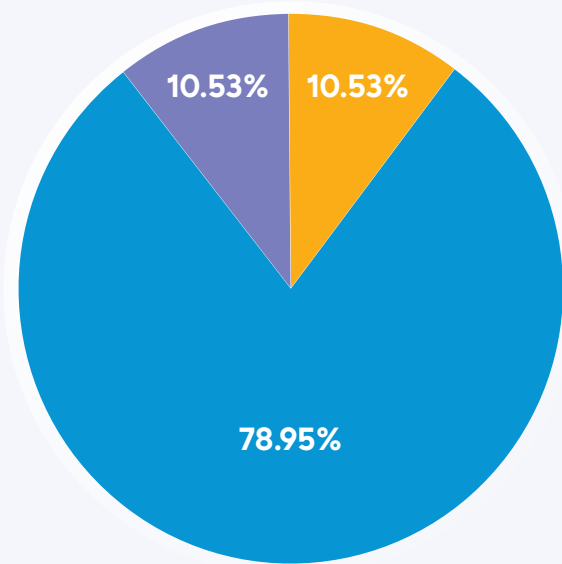
Gender representation showed a higher number of female respondents compared to male participants.



Education levels revealed a highly educated sample, with most respondents possessing a Bachelor's degree.

Education Level

- High School Diploma 10.53%
- Bachelor's Degree 78.95%
- Other 10.53%



Response Percent

Awareness and Knowledge of Online Risks

Only 39.47% of parents indicated being 'very familiar' with online risks, while 50% were 'slightly familiar.' This suggests a lack of in-depth understanding of the potential online dangers their children may encounter.

Familiarity Level	Response Percent
Not at all familiar	10.53%
Slightly familiar	50.00%
Very familiar	39.47%

Identified Online Risks

The survey highlights addiction to gaming/screen time as the most recognized online risk (60%), followed by inappropriate content (55%). However, awareness of critical risks like sextortion (30%) and cyberbullying (40%) remains low, indicating a need for more targeted education efforts.

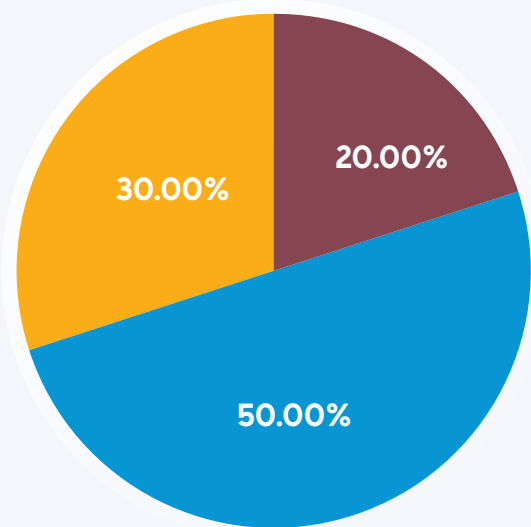
Online Risks	Response Percent
Addiction to gaming/screen time	60.00%
Inappropriate content (e.g., violence, sexual)	55.00%
Scam or fraud	45.00%
Cyberbullying	40.00%
Online predators (sextortion)	30.00%
Identity theft	20.00%

Parental Supervision Practices

The data reveals that only 30% of parents frequently discuss online safety with their children, while 50% engage in such discussions occasionally. This indicates that conversations about online safety are not consistent across households.

Discussion Frequency

- Very Often 30.00%
- Sometimes 50.00%
- Never 20.00%



Response Percent

Use of Parental Control Tools

Only 25% of parents actively use parental control tools, with 35% lacking knowledge on how to use these tools effectively. This finding underscores a critical need for training on digital safety tools to enhance parental monitoring capabilities.

Use of Parental Controls	Response Percent
Yes, and I actively use them	25.00%
Yes, but I don't use them	40.00%
No, I don't know how	35.00%

Monitoring Practices

While some parents engage in monitoring practices, the low usage of parental control software (40%) and discussions about online activities (30% very often) suggest that many rely on passive oversight rather than active digital engagement.

Monitoring Practice	Response Percent
Checking browsing history	55.00%
Limiting screen time	45.00%
Using parental control software	40.00%
Regular discussions about their online activities	50.00%
Using a shared family account	20.00%
I do not monitor	15.00%

Recommendations



Digital Literacy Workshops

Organize workshops that focus on emerging online risks, including sextortion and cyberbullying. These workshops should also cover practical skills like setting up parental control tools, monitoring children's online activities, and fostering open communication.



Awareness Campaigns

Launch campaigns targeting parents to enhance their understanding of online risks and provide actionable advice on creating safer online environments. These campaigns could leverage community centers, schools, and social media to reach parents across rural and urban areas.



Collaboration with Schools

Develop partnerships with schools to offer regular digital safety training sessions for parents. Schools can serve as hubs for sustained engagement, providing resources and practical demonstrations on digital safety tools and strategies.





Conclusion

The survey results reveal significant gaps in parental digital literacy in the Ashanti Region of Ghana, underscoring a critical need for increased education and support. While some parents are proactive, a large majority lack the skills and knowledge necessary for effective child online protection. Addressing these deficiencies through targeted educational programs, awareness initiatives, and school collaborations is essential for building a safer digital environment for children.



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