



# Youth Online and their Community's Preparedness to Protect Them:

Mapping Youth Online Social Norms and Community Risk  
Preparedness for Online Sexual Exploitation and Abuse of  
Children (OSEAC) cases in the Philippines

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## Abstract

Youth are increasingly online and so are those who seek to exploit and abuse them. This study explores the social norms of youth online and the risk awareness and preparedness of the Sorsogon City community for cases of Online Sexual Exploitation and Abuse of Children (OSEAC). A complementary mixed-methods approach was applied. A survey was distributed among students at the local national high school and received 407 responses. Two focus groups were conducted with a total of 49 youth. Interviews were then conducted among a few selected key members in the community. The results revealed that the social norm for youth online includes befriending people online and meeting them in person. Youth are likely to be exposed to inappropriate content online. Youth have also become better at securing their privacy online. The community's risk awareness for OSEAC is low. Though the perceived harm of OSEAC is high, the community does not believe it is at-risk for OSEAC cases. Key actors are recommended to develop comprehensive sexuality education modules and internet safety models alongside targeted media interventions that can educate both the youth and the community based on current data and trends of youth online.

\*Author's note: this paper contains language related to sexual abuse and may be distressing for some readers.

Keywords: Online Sexual Exploitation and Abuse of Children, Social Norms Theory, Risk Preparedness, Risk Perception Theory

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I, the undersigned, declare that this dissertation is my original work, and has not been presented in fulfillment of other course requirements at any university.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Dorothy L. Wang'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial 'D' and a long, sweeping tail on the 'g'.

Dorothy L. Wang

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## VI. List of Acronyms

CSAM	Child Sexual Abuse Material
CSE(A)	Child Sexual Exploitation (and Abuse)
CPS	City Police Station
CSE	Comprehensive Sexuality Education
DOH	Department of Health
DOJ	Department of Justice
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction
DSWD	Department of Social Welfare and Development
ESP	Electronic Service Provider
GBV	Gender-based Violence
IACACP	Inter-Agency Council Against Child Pornography
ICT	Information Communication and Technology
IJM	International Justice Mission
IWF	Internet Watch Foundation
NCMEC	National Center for Missing and Exploited Children
NSPCC	National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children
OGBV	Online Gender Based Violence
OSE(A)C	Online Sexual Exploitation (and Abuse) of Children
PNP	Philippines National Police
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
VAWC	Violence Against Women and Children
WCPD	Women and Children Protection Desk



## VII. Definition of Terms

The following definitions have been based on the Terminology Guidelines for the Protection of Children from Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse which was adopted by the Interagency Working Group in Luxembourg, 28 January 2016; UNICEF’s Ending Online Sexual Exploitation and Abuse; and the Philippines Senate Bill no. 2209 (Greijer & Doek, 2016; 18th Congress of the Philippines, 2021; UNICEF East Asia & Pacific, 2020). There is no international agreed upon definition of online sexual exploitation and abuse of children (henceforth referred to as OSEAC as defined by the author) and other related terms. Each region and state determine their own definitions to guide their laws and policies for OSEAC related crimes.

### *Child Sexual Abuse Material (CSAM)*

Any representation (photo, video, audio, text) of a child engaged in or victim of scenarios intended to arouse the viewer’s interest.

### *Information Communications and Technology (ICT)*

The infrastructure, tools, and resources used to communicate, store, process, create, and share information over a distance. This can include telecommunications (mobile networks, TV, Radio), the internet, broadcasting, and devices such as computers and mobile phones.

### *Sexual grooming*

The process by which a perpetrator manipulates and prepares a child for sexual abuse or exploitation to be more readily committed. This may be done through trust building, emotional manipulation, separation from friends and family, gaslighting, and others.

### *Online Sexual Exploitation and Abuse of Children (OSEAC)*

The use of ICT to facilitate the manipulation, exploitation, and abuse of minors sexually; the production of photos, videos, or live streaming of sexual abuse or exploitation of a minor for themselves or a third party, not in the physical presence of the victim, in exchange for compensation which may, in turn, lead to sextortion and trafficking. This can mean in-person child sexual abuse that was facilitated through ICT, or child sexual abuse which has been recorded for personal use or sharing. The use of “exploitation” is distinctly used to mark the notion of exchange; this could be monetary, affection, basic needs such as food and housing, or others.

Also referred to as: ICT or technology facilitated child sexual exploitation (and abuse), online child sexual exploitation (and abuse).

# 1. Introduction

As internet communication technologies (ICT) develop and become faster and more accessible to the general population, humans spend more time online. Predictably, exploitative, criminal, and malicious behaviors move to online spaces as well. Lack of digital literacy, especially regarding internet safety and privacy protections (of for example, personal data and media) may leave consumers more susceptible to the victimization of internet crimes (Purnama et al., 2021). More children are being born as digital natives every year and they will face many dangers online that did not exist just a decade before. Technology is also becoming more user-friendly, allowing children to become exposed to it and learn how to use it at even younger ages (Department of Social Welfare and Development – Inter-Agency Council Against Child Pornography and UNICEF Philippines [DSWD- IACACP & UNICEF], 2021a). Though online sexual exploitation and abuse of children (OSEAC) has certainly existed since the birth of the internet, it has only garnered more global attention and concern in the past decade, as evident by the amount of research which has been conducted and when<sup>1</sup>. This may be due to OSEAC becoming more conspicuous and alarming as livestreaming developed and gained popularity within the same period (IWF, 2022; IJM, 2021). Mobile devices also continuously offer newer and more efficient means for perpetrators to target, groom, and exploit children anonymously (CRC Coalition, 2020; Brown, 2016). For this paper, OSEAC is used and defined as the use of ICTs to facilitate the manipulation, exploitation, and abuse of minors sexually in exchange for compensation. This includes both child sexual abuse that was facilitated through ICT (for example, a predator contacted a child on an online space with the intention of meeting them in person), as well as child sexual exploitation, which uses ICT to record or share sexual abuse through the use of cameras and communication software (for example, a parent who has recorded their child to send to a buyer abroad). Often, the consumers and sharers of Child Sexual Abuse Materials (CSAM) online are located in the global north (Internet Watch Foundation [IWF], 2021).<sup>2</sup> The victims and perpetrators of abuse often live in the global south, with the Philippines at the top of the list for victims (IWF, 2021).

The COVID-19 pandemic has only aggravated this issue. One brief published in April 2021 by the International Justice Mission (IJM), focusing on the global pandemic's effect in Southeast Asia, described OSEAC as a "crime of opportunity" (2021, p.1). The IJM surmised that due to lockdowns, both child sex offenders and child victims along with their traffickers were spending more time online. They also noted that new forms of online exploitation, such as livestreaming, were being utilized more often (2021). Children are also spending more unsupervised time online and may be feeling lonelier and more isolated, leaving them more exposed and at risk to be contacted by predators (Donovan & Redfern, 2020). Earlier studies by the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) discovered that lonely children were more than twice as likely to be contacted by online groomers (Lilley, Ball, & Vernon,

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<sup>1</sup> A search for "Online sexual exploitation of children" on Google scholar from 1950-2000 pulls up 7,190 results. From 2000-2010, 18,700 results are found. 2011-2021 has 25,7000 results.

<sup>2</sup> 89% of reported CSAM was found being hosted in Europe and North America according to the Internet Watch Foundation (IWF) and the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children (NCMEC) who track reports of CSAM (IWF, 2021; NCMEC 2021).

2014). From February 2020 to March 2020, known child sexual abuse forums saw a 200% increase of CSAM. Noticeably, 89% less CSAM was being removed from the internet within the same time frame due to restrictions on organizations who work against OSEAC during “work from home” policies (Donovan & Redfern, 2020). According to the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC), where all U.S. Social Media companies are required to report CSAM, the number of global cases has almost doubled from 2019-2021 (The National Center for Missing & Exploited Children [NCMEC], 2021)<sup>3</sup>. The Internet Watch Foundation (IWF), an independent non-profit organization based in the UK, also recorded a 16% increase in reported URLs containing CSAM materials in 2021, each report consisting of upwards of thousands of CSAM in one location (IWF, 2022).

## 1.1 The Context of the Philippines

According to Woan (2008), the white sexual imperialism framework holds that the history of white colonization and imperialism in Asia and the Pacific Islands through political, military, and economic domination forced and compelled the women of these nations into sexual submission by White men. These men then brought their experiences back to their home countries which led to the sexual perversion and stereotypes surrounding Asian women today (p. 280)<sup>4</sup>. During the US occupation of the Philippines (1898-1946), in a country decimated by two back-to-back wars against imperial powers, a sex industry developed to cater to American GIs, offering them “a girl for the price of a burger” (Woan, 2008, p. 283). Since then, the Philippines has become known globally for its commercial sex industry, underground reputation for sex trafficking, and as a popular destination for traveling sex offenders (Jackson et al., 2020). The industry consumes both women and children and the remote aspect facilitated by ICT adds a new category of exploitation.

The Philippines is an ideal destination for predators as the country boasts cheap or free internet, easy widespread access to smart phones and internet cafes, as well as a higher comfort level with spoken English in comparison to other destinations for sexual exploitation (Brown, 2016; Jackson, Gehring, & Russell, 2020). Around 2.2 million Filipinos work abroad as Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs) (Mapa, 2020). Because of this, Filipino people are very familiar with money remittance centers and online payment methods which allow them to send and receive money from abroad which can be difficult to trace<sup>5</sup>. Children may also lack parental supervision especially if they have parental figures working abroad as OFWs (Council for the Welfare of Children & UNICEF, 2016). Furthermore, there is a cultural norm of secrecy and a general lack of awareness on the issue in the general population (Ramiro, et al., 2019). When there are clear reported cases of OSEAC, there is a notable gap in resources and funding to both investigate and prosecute the perpetrators, and rescue and rehabilitate the victims (CRC Coalition, 2020; Jackson, Gehring, & Russell, 2020). All these factors result in global law enforcement data solidifying the Philippines as the largest known source of CSAM in the world (NCMEC, 2021). While international

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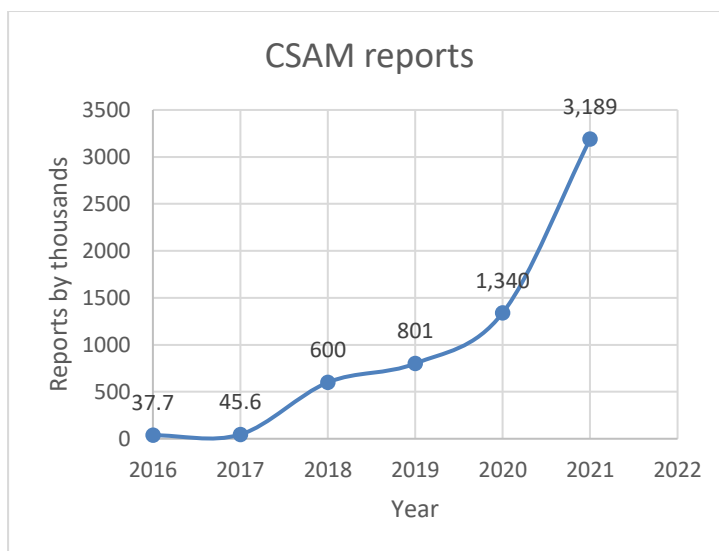
<sup>3</sup> Almost 30 million cases were reported in 2021, compared to 21 million in 2020 and 17 million cases in 2019

<sup>4</sup> Asian women are often stereotyped as being hyper-sexual and at the same time submissive, timid, and demure.

<sup>5</sup> Examples of these include WesternUnion, MoneyGram, Remitly, Transferwise, LBC Home, Xoom. WorldRemit. Using cryptocurrencies through apps such as Binance.

cases of CSAM materials almost doubled from 2019-2021, the Philippines saw its number of cases almost quadruple within the same time period. In the year 2019, 801 thousand cases of CSAM from the Philippines was reported to the NCMEC CyberTipline. Just two years later, that number has jumped to almost 3.2 million cases (The National Center for Missing & Exploited Children [NCMEC], 2021).

*Figure 1 Scatter plot of CSAM reports 2016-2021.  
Data retrieved from: NCMEC CyberTipline Report (2021), graph created by author*



A comprehensive study by the IJM in 2020 found that between 2014 and 2017, there was a consistent sharp rise in IP addresses used for Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) in the Philippines, growing more than 12-fold in that time (Jackson et al., 2020). This means that consistently within the country, more and more CSE is being conducted and then distributed online to buyers. Unfortunately, the majority of CSAM in the Philippines is produced by authoritative, adult figures, related to the child victims: 41% of victims' abuse is facilitated by biological parents, and 42% by other relatives (IJM, 2021; DSWD- IACACP & UNICEF, 2021a). This was exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic and aggravated further by the strict pandemic restrictions. The loss of job security and extreme poverty caused many families in the Philippines to resort to OSEAC for income (International Justice Mission [IJM], 2021).

## 1.2 Internet Use in the Philippines

The increasing access and speed of internet communication technologies (ICT) further exacerbate the problem of exploitation online by increasing children's exposure to OSEAC-related activities and streamlining the process for perpetrators. This section will explore how improvements in technology and access to the internet in the Philippines influences OSEAC cases in the country.

By January 2021, over 73 million people, or 67% of the population, actively used the internet in the Philippines (DataReportal, 2021).<sup>6</sup> This is a 4.2 million increase from just the previous year. The speeds of downloads (mbps) have also greatly improved, increasing 163.5% for mobile data and 670% for fixed

<sup>6</sup> This was a 7.3% jump from the previous year.

broadband from July 2017 to May 2022<sup>7</sup> (Ookla, 2022). The Republic Act No. 10929, “Free Internet Access for All,” required all public places in the Philippines to provide free internet services.<sup>8</sup> Since it became law in 2017, over 11,400 hotspot sites have been established nationwide (Department of Informations and Communication Technology [DICT], 2021). These improvements in ICT make it much easier for perpetrators worldwide to target and groom children online; upload or livestream CSAM; or seek and consume CSAM online (Inter-Agency Council Against Child Pornography [IACACP] & the National Strategic Plan of the Inter-Agency Council Against Trafficking [IACAT], 2017). Though CSAM content can be spread a variety of ways throughout the internet, 92% of the 23 million collected reports from public and online electronic service providers (ESPs) were from Meta owned ESPs (NCMEC, 2021)<sup>9</sup>. However, a report by the Tech Transparency Project found that from 2013-2019, only 9% of 366 US cases where Facebook was used as a medium of child sexual exploitation were alerts to authorities initiated by Facebook (TTP, 2020). This shows that while Meta may be able to use its technology to analyze and remove CSAM, it fails to stop predators from contacting, grooming, and exploiting children on its platforms. The company has a significant influence in the Philippines with mobile internet providers offering data-free access to Facebook and Facebook messenger. Unfortunately, it is difficult to accurately measure the prevalence of OSEAC as ESPs are inconsistent in their reporting (Equality Now, 2021). More importantly, there is no technology developed yet that could quickly identify livestream abuse. Presently, livestream abuse is only uncovered when law enforcement officials identify and investigate offenders for different charges (IJM, 2021).

Recent trends in ICT have focused on improving user privacy. While this can be very beneficial for individual users, it may put victims of OSEAC at even further risk. Functions such as the ability to delete messages and send messages or photos that vanish soon after the recipient views it, ensure that CSAM may be easily shared without being recorded or reported. Meta has also promised to apply end-to-end encryption on all its services by 2023. If they do so, an estimated 70% of CSAM cases currently being detected could be rendered invisible (Proxy Impact, n.d.). Meta’s CEO has even admitted that “Encryption is a powerful tool for privacy, but that includes the privacy of people doing bad things... some of them are going to misuse it for truly terrible things like child exploitation, terrorism, and extortion.” (Proxy Impact, n.d.). It remains to be seen how encrypted services will change OSEAC tracking in the future.

The complexity and continuous evolution of technology make OSEAC difficult to fully understand. However, there is a clear connection between the increasing access online and the growing number of OSEAC cases. All stakeholders (NGOs, IOs, government bodies), at all levels (international, national, and local),

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<sup>7</sup> Percent increase was calculated by pulling the most recent data from the Speedtest website (<https://www.speedtest.net/global-index/philippines>, retrieved June 2022) and comparing it to data from the internet archives’ saved capture of the same website in July 2017 <https://web.archive.org/web/20170813114148/https://www.speedtest.net/global-index/philippines>

<sup>8</sup> As of November 2021, Sorsogon Province, where this study was conducted, has been 100% connected with 397 hotspots in 253 locations (DICT, 2021).

<sup>9</sup> Percentage calculated to include all Meta social media services: WhatsApp, Instagram, and Facebook. Facebook had the majority of all reports with a total of 22,118,952 reports in 2021.

must participate in combatting OSEAC at all stages (prevention, reporting, identifying, rescue, prosecution, and after care). Otherwise, OSEAC will continue to thrive globally. The existing body of research is not enough to fully comprehend this fast-growing phenomenon. This research seeks to understand the current environment in which OSEAC occurs and adds to the existing research on the topic. The focus will be to study student social norms online and the risk awareness and preparedness of the community for combatting OSEAC in Sorsogon City.

### 1.3 Structure of the research

The paper proceeds in the following four chapters. Chapter 2 is a literature review on the measurement and prevalence of OSEAC. It is further divided into sections with the first detailing how OSEAC has been defined and described, existing research about the market for OSEAC, as well as what we know about who the victims are. The second part of the literature review details the theoretical background behind the research as possible explainers for OSEAC. The research objectives and questions are derived from the literature review and will thusly be laid out and explained as the last part of this chapter. In chapter 3, the methodology of the research is described with the quantitative portion first, followed by the qualitative. The paper then presents the key findings of the research in chapter 4 and further discusses the results and implications of the research in chapter 5. Finally, in chapter 6 the research will be concluded alongside policy recommendations and possible avenues for further research.

## 2. Literature Review

The online sexual exploitation and abuse of children is an international issue (International Justice Mission, 2021). Still, each country has in place its own laws and policies with different definitions of OSEAC terminology. OSEAC has also been referred to as ICT facilitated (or technology-facilitated) childhood sexual exploitation, online child sexual exploitation and abuse (OCSEA), the sexual exploitation of children online, and different combinations and variations of the aforementioned. For this paper, OSEAC is mainly used. There are three phases to OSEAC: the initial engagement and grooming of the victim; the actual exploitation and/or abuse; and finally, the post-engagement, when the perpetrator acts or communicates their desire to continue OSEAC activities or end them (DSWD-IACACP & UNICEF, 2021a). This is true for cases where physical sexual abuse is facilitated through ICT and cases where the child is exploited using ICT and the CSAM is sent to a third party. A typical case of sexual grooming occurs in stages. First, the perpetrator identifies the victim based on traits such as physical attractiveness, perceived age, opportunity, ease of access, and perceived vulnerabilities as well as “perceived neediness or submissiveness” (Winters, Kaylor, & Jeglic, 2017, p. 2). This may happen in online spaces such as social media websites, chat forums, or online games. Upon initiating contact, the perpetrator then manipulates and coerces the child through core grooming strategies such as relationship building, risk assessment, and building exclusivity and isolation of the child (O’Connell, 2003). There are few differences between grooming cases online and in-person. Once the perpetrator feels secure, they may begin to introduce sexual content and persuade the victim to engage in sexual activities while recording and transmitting through the internet (DSWD-IACACP & UNICEF, 2021a). Because grooming relationships are intentionally built off of trust and friendship and often do not involve physical harm, victims may not report or acknowledge harm done (Craven et al., 2006). This is especially true for victims who have been abused by their own family members or family friends due to cultural filial piety (UNODOC, 2015; NCMEC, 2021; IJM, 2021; DSWD-IACACP & UNICEF, 2021a).

### 2.1 Measurement and Prevalence

#### 2.1.1 The Growing Market

The prevalence of OSEAC cases grows because the demand for CSAM continues to proliferate and the market continues to expand. The demand for content currently outweighs the supply as evidenced by a Terre des Hommes study which saw over 20,000 predators around the world contact a single virtual 10-year-old Filipina created by the research team (2013). As public and private organizations work around the clock to take down URLs and CSAM materials throughout the internet, new content is popping up even faster. From 2001-2004, the number of websites devoted to child pornography doubled to reach over almost half a million; it is estimated that during this time, thousands of new materials were put into circulation every week and hundreds of thousands of searches for CSAM took place daily (M’jid, 2011). More recently, in 2021, the Internet Watch Foundation assessed and removed a record-breaking 252,000



unique URLs, the highest number to date (IWF, 2022)<sup>10</sup>. Reports from 2009 and 2011 by the UN and the FBI estimated that 750,000 sexual predators are active online at any given time (IJM, 2021). The overall increase in CSAM circulating online is alarming, but the increase in shocking and violent themes has become an even higher concern. Between 2003 and 2007, images of “serious child sexual exploitation” quadrupled, and more children have since been subjected to serious forms of sexual abuse (M'jid, 2011).

### 2.1.2 The Victims

While all children are at risk of exploitation online, there is a difference in how the age of the victims leads to differences in exploitation. Children solicited directly by offenders are often older, while younger children are often exploited by a third-party (NCMEC, 2017). Younger children are prone to this type of exploitation since they are responsive and obedient to their authority figures. (United Nations Office on Drug and Crime [UNODC], 2015). Key actors have also noted that the child victims are getting younger (DSWD-IACACP & UNICEF, 2021a). In 2015, the median age for children in CSAM was 15 years old (NCMEC, 2017). Recent victim profile analysis has found that the median age for children in CSAM is now only 11 years old, with the youngest victim being less than one year old (IJM, 2021). Of the confirmed CSAM materials removed by IWF in 2021, 97% of the victims were female children (IWF, 2022). Recorded cases of OSEAC in 2015 found that, 78% of child victims were girls, 13% were boys, and 9% were of undetermined gender (NCMEC, 2017).

The production of sexual abuse materials primarily occurs in poorer neighborhoods with high population density. Reports often come from the Metro-Manila area, in more impoverished slum areas (DSWD-IACACP & UNICEF, 2021a, p. 5). The parents of the victims were likely to be unemployed or work informal jobs. Cybersex dens have also been increasingly reported in Cebu (Brown, 2016).

Recent years have seen a dramatic increase in “self-generated” CSAM, with the majority of victims being 11- to 13-year-old girls (IWF, 2022; IJM, 2021). This type of content first emerged six years ago and is now extremely prevalent in CSAM reports (Milmo, 2022). From 2019-2020, the IWF recorded a 77% increase in self-generated content followed by an additional 117% increase in 2021. They report that self-generated CSAM now make up over two-thirds of reported CSAM that are assessed and removed, a 374% increase compared to pre-pandemic levels (IWF, 2022). Children are being exploited into generating their own content online, often for the purpose of financial gain. They may even lure their friends into creating self-generated CSAM with the promise of earning money, thereby starting a cycle of OSEAC (DSWD-IACACP & UNICEF, 2021a). Young children aged 7-10 have seen a two-thirds increase in self-generated content in 2021 (Milmo, 2022). According to the IWF, some of the children were between the ages of three and six years old. More than half of the cases with very young children involved an older sibling or friend of the child (IWF, 2022). In 2021, underage students in the Philippines were flagged for making an "online Christmas sex sale," where they sold self-generated CSAM to raise funds for distance learning-related expenses (Senate of the Philippines, 2021). There is also the risk of children who have self-

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<sup>10</sup> Each URL consists of thousands of CSAM, putting the number of CSAM removed at much higher.



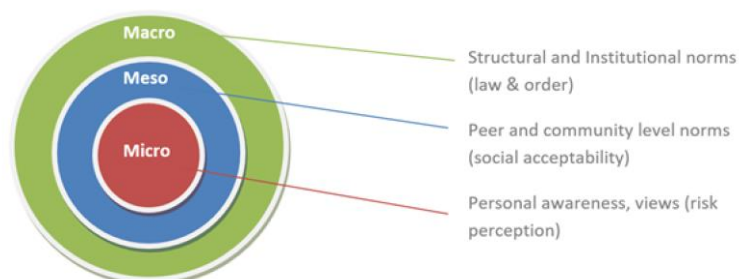
generated content being hacked, blackmailed, coerced, or solicited into sharing with an online predator (Milmo, 2022; National Crime Agency , n.d.).

## 2.2 Explaining OSEAC

### 2.2.1 Risk Perception theory

Environmental and intrapersonal factors largely influence each initial onset of OSEAC within the context of the Philippines. Why individuals participate in perpetrating OSEAC or why children may be more susceptible to victimization could be explained through risk perception theories. Factors influencing risk perception are divided into three levels: macro, meso, and micro (Inouye, 2017). The macro-level is structural and institutional. In the Philippines, police rarely catch perpetrators of OSEAC, especially those who exploit children within their own family structures and within their own homes (UNICEF East Asia & Pacific, 2020). The legal framework has gaps and weaknesses that allow for few prosecutions of perpetrators once caught. There are not yet any specific offenses of OSEAC that perpetrators can be charged with (Torregoza, 2022). If individuals do not believe there will be consequences in response to high-risk behaviors, they will be more likely to take part in those behaviors (Shreve et al., 2016). Meso-level factors are those at the peer and community level, the social acceptability of a behavior. Finally, the micro-level factors are the individual's own perception and knowledge of the situation. Individual risk perception has three types: perceived likelihood (the chance of something happening), perceived susceptibility (the personal impact or vulnerability), and perceived harm (how much harm would be caused) (Brewer et al., 2004). The inability to accurately perceive risk can lead to higher risk tolerance levels.

Figure 2. Risk Perception Factors, created by author. Based on theory by Inouye (2017).



For youth, adolescence is a period of exploration of their identity and sexuality. Those who are internet natives will go online to satisfy these curiosities and seek new experiences and connections. This curiosity ultimately leads to risky behaviors online (Doornwaard et al., 2015). Their propensity for taking risks can vary depending on biology, the social environment, the perceived environment, and the personality and behavior of the individual (Jessor, 1992). For example, when viewing photos online that show “risky behaviors,” youth show less activity in cognitive control parts of the brain (Sherman et al., 2016). This may indicate that the risk avoidance of youth is biologically inhibited. This impulsivity-irresponsibility also helps to explain the risks youth take online. Compared to adults, adolescents are more likely to post personal information online, make friends online, and meet online friends in person (White et al., 2015; Gámez-Guadix et al., 2016). They conduct these risky behaviors without fully understanding or

considering the consequences. Rather, they enact these behaviors based on emotional rewards from thrill-seeking, novelty seeking, and attention seeking (Gámez-Guadix et al., 2016). When youth see their own pictures on social media are “liked” by others, reward circuitry in the brain is activated. This creates a dopamine feedback-loop where users feel the rush of dopamine and seek it out, keeping them engaged and constantly connected online (Sherman et al., 2016; Burhan & Moradzadeh, 2020). The victims who self-generate CSAM in order to receive positive feedback online exemplify this. Minors believe that these behaviors online, including posting sensual selfies and sending pictures to strangers, may be harmless or consider them to be the social norm (Ramiro, et al., 2019).

For a community, risk preparedness is crucial for disaster risk reduction (DRR), a term that has expanded to include medical and social crises (Shreve, et al. 2016). In the case of OSEAC, community risk preparedness can be critical in helping to prevent, recognize, report, and prosecute cases of OSEAC. Unfortunately, risk preparedness can be hindered by the community’s social norms and the individual’s psychological biases (Shreve et al., 2016). Various sources show that in the Philippines, 70-85% of cases of CSAM being traded or distributed were “facilitated by someone within the child’s ‘circle of trust,’ such as a family member, guardian, or family friend” (IJM, 2021, p. 23; NCMEC, 2017; DSWD-IACACP & UNICEF, 2021a). The offense and offender are too often excused or justified due to being less extreme than alternatives such as physical human trafficking or physical abuse. In the Philippines, highly publicized cases about online predators garner media attention and form the basis of the public’s knowledge surrounding OSEAC. These cases are often very scandalous and dramatic (DSWD-IACACP & UNICEF, 2021a). Parents can be misled into thinking that engaging in OSEAC at home is an accepted social norm, or that their actions are less damaging to their children because it is less harmful than contact offenses (CRC Coalition, 2020; Ramiro, et al., 2019). Their perception of OSEAC may be distorted by the dramatic retellings or re-enactments common in Filipino media, leading to false interpretations as to what qualifies as OSEAC.

### 2.2.2 Social Norms Theory

Both the meso-level factors (peers & community) and micro-level factors (personal awareness) relate to the social norms theory and the social action theory (Berkowitz, 2005; Inouye, 2017). The social norms theory posits that human behaviors are influenced by how we perceive our peers to act. These perceived norms and resulting peer pressures lead to increases in problematic behavior (Berkowitz, 2005, p. 3; Berkowitz, 2003). When we overestimate problematic behavior in our peers, that tends to cause an increase in our own problematic behaviors (Berkowitz, 2005). In Berkowitz’s example, youth overestimated drinking problems among their peers. Their assumption was that their peers drank excessively, and that drinking was a social norm (2005). Their own actions seemed less drastic or poor when compared to these perceived social norms. When the expected behavior and norms are set high, there is no shame as the behavior feels less problematic or similar compared to the perceived social norm.

Similarly, the social action theory posits that individuals engage in high-risk behaviors because of peer pressure or when an entire community perceives that activity to be low-risk (Inouye, 2017). In the context of the Philippines, peer participation in OSEAC is the problematic behavior being overestimated since it is normalized (Ramiro, et al., 2019). People also falsely believe that OSEAC only entails very extreme cases (Ramiro, et al., 2019). On the other hand, healthy behaviors may be underestimated. The added stigma surrounding OSEAC in the Philippines, and the lack of open conversation and education among the public, results in a gap between the perceived norm and the actual norm (DSWD-IACACP & UNICEF, 2021a; ECPAT, INTERPOL, & UNICEF, 2022). According to the social norms theory, this is what leads to further participation and rationalization of problematic behavior, while also contributing to the suppression of healthy behaviors. When there is a perceived social acceptance of problematic behavior, it can also lead to situations in which individuals refrain from confronting the problematic behaviors of the people around them (Berkowitz, 2003). Community members may not report incidences of OSEAC because of this (Ramiro, et al., 2019). The risk engagement of youth can be correlated with their perception of the scale of involvement in the behavior by their peers, as well as their perceived invulnerability to negative consequences (Baumgartner et al., 2010). Victims who already engage in OSEAC invite their peers to join them and entice them with the promise of money (DSWD-IACACP & UNICEF, 2021a). OSEAC is thus normalized and advertised as an effortless way for students to get money (Ramiro, et al., 2019). It also seems to be not-too-bad and not risky because victims see their peers participating as well (Baumgartner et al., 2010). The effective intervention method using the social norms theory is to correct the misperceptions and show the target audience what actually constitutes bad behavior and what the actual, healthier norm may be (Berkowitz, 2003). To design this intervention, the culture of the issue, the culture of the message delivery system, and the culture of the target population are all important factors.

Changing risk perception at the micro-level, or through individuals, further improves the meso-level. The collective belief that working together will accomplish social change is critical to real progress (Shreve et al., 2016). This can only happen when community members understand the actual risk and there is no gap between actual and perceived risk. This community understanding forms the meso-level of risk perception. Understanding how people characterize and evaluate risks in their community helps key stakeholders to anticipate behavioral responses and guide risk communication.

### 2.3 Previous Research on OSEAC in the Philippines

Currently, there are two previous studies often cited regarding children in the Philippines and their experiences online and exposure to online sexual exploitation. The first is a survey conducted in 2015 by Cybersafe Asia in which over two thousand children in various regions throughout the country participated. In the survey, children are asked about their internet usage, their privacy online, their experience with sexual content, contact with strangers online, online relationships, cyberbullying, and whom they would report to (Stairway Foundation Inc. & Department of Education Philippines, 2016). The second is a national study conducted in 2017 by the Department of Social Welfare and Development – Inter-Agency Council Against Child Pornography and UNICEF Philippines based on research guides

developed by Global Kids Online (DSWD-IACACP & UNICEF, 2021b). The pilot study Global Kids Online Philippines was conducted two years prior (Tan et al., 2016). The study used a concurrent triangulation mix methods approach adapted from a research toolkit provided by Global Kids Online, a multinational research initiative headed by UNICEF. Both studies were conducted with a focus on online experiences, with a few OSEAC related questions included. Though they did not use risk perception or social norms as theories by which to analyze the data, one can visualize the online social norms of students using data which described their behaviors online. For example, both surveys described how students connected to the internet. The Global Kids Online survey found that “majority of children connect through free Wi-Fi” (Tan et al., 2016, p. 3). The Cybersafe Asia survey found that four out of 10 children connected to the internet through “home connections” (Stairway Foundation Inc. & Department of Education Philippines, 2016, p. 5). There have not been any recent studies which contain data on student internet use since the COVID-19 pandemic began.

Ramiro et al., in 2017 studied the drivers of OSEAC in Metro-Manila. The study emphasized community social norms and found that the community “tolerated” these online practices and did not consider them to be harmful towards the children (Ramiro, et al., 2019, p. 1). The results were limited to two communities that were perceived to be hot spots for OSEAC activity. There needs to be more research on community social norms, especially in different, diverse, contexts. This study focuses on a province of the city where reported OSEAC cases are low. It focuses equally on the connection between online social norms and OSEAC risk awareness, combining these two concepts to determine how student behavior online may impact their risk for OSEAC.

The Philippines' governing bodies and the public form their beliefs about OSEAC based on cases reported to government organizations, non-governmental organizations, and the media. These cases often form a limited picture of the large diverse country and its various regions. This study seeks to add to existing OSEAC research by providing a provincial focus, whereas previous studies were conducted in large metropolis' and in locations where OSEAC was previously known to be prevalent, such as Manila. This study also comprehensively reviews and maps a provincial city's risk perception and preparedness for OSEAC through key informants (such as youth, teachers, principals, social workers, and police) in the community. The growth of OSEAC within the past two years has been unprecedented and more research is necessary to record and understand the complexities of this fast-growing, ever-evolving crime. The global COVID-19 pandemic left children more vulnerable to OSEAC, allowed perpetrators easier means of conducting OSEAC, and pushed families towards OSEAC as a means for financial security. Students were also online more, often due to school obligations. This means that schools need to take on more responsibilities for student safety and well-being online. Any added literature during this time period helps policymakers, government officials, CSOs, and other stakeholders to gain a better understanding of this dangerous trend to better fight and prevent these cases. This is necessary for all institutions in the Philippines including the police, the justice system, and the education system.

## 2.4 Research Objectives

This study seeks to add to previous research on social norms of OSEAC in the Philippines as well as youth behavior online. The author aims to understand the social environments of youth, specifically as it relates to OSEAC and the behaviors leading up to OSEAC (exposure to explicit content, normalization of pornographic content and behaviors, etc.) and its changes over time in provincial areas. Throughout currently existing studies on OSEAC, the objective of this study is first to use risk perception and preparedness theories as tools to inform policymakers for evaluation and disaster risk management. It is also the first study to be conducted since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic in early 2020. By understanding the current social norm and perceptions of OSEAC in the Philippines, social norms intervention can be used to address misconceptions of social norms and decrease the climate of tolerance in order to decrease participation in OSEAC.

## 2.5 Research Questions

*RQ1:* What are the behaviors of minors in online spaces in Sorsogon City and how do they compare to the perceived social norms of online behavior?

Hypothesis: Student behavior online will lack safety and privacy precautions. Minors will engage in normalized risky behaviors online.

*RQ2:* What is the risk perception of key informants in the Sorsogon City community with regards to OSEAC and what is the preparedness of community members for OSEAC cases?

Hypothesis: Key informants will underestimate the prevalence and dangers of OSEAC. They will not be prepared for OSEAC cases.

### 3. Methodology

This study uses a complementarity mix-methods approach. This section will be organized as follows: first, the mix-method approach will be justified and explained. Then, the quantitative portion will be discussed followed by the qualitative portion and concluded with the data analysis.

#### 3.1 Data Collection Methods

The quantitative portion is a survey in which students were asked about their internet habits. The goal of this portion was to determine actual youth social norms online. The qualitative portion consisted of focus groups and interviews to determine perceived online social norms of students and their risk perception using the respective theoretical bases. This helped visualize the online space in which youth frequent, their knowledge of internet safety, and how they usually behave with strangers or their peers. The complementarity mixed-methods approach was necessary as qualitative and quantitative methods were used to put together the whole picture of actual vs. perceived social norms. One complemented the other.

#### 3.2 Quantitative portion

##### Description of the school

The survey was conducted at Sorsogon National High School (SNHS). This high school services the students in the Sorsogon City area, as shown below.



Figure 3. Map of Sorsogon showing the location of Sorsogon City. By Gonzalez, M., 2005. [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Ph\\_locator\\_sorsogon\\_sorsogon.png](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Ph_locator_sorsogon_sorsogon.png)

SNHS is located in the central city area. According to the SNHS Vice Principal, Rowena Borja, there were 10,531 students enrolled at the beginning of the 2022 school year, as summarized in Table 1., below. This high school was chosen as it is the largest school in Sorsogon City with the greatest number of students. It is the most representative for the local population of youth and was easy to access as it is centrally located.

Table 1. Student enrolment for the 2021-2022 school year, categorized based on gender and grade level. Provided by the assistant principal of SNHS (Sorsogon National High School, 2022).

Grade Level	BOSY Enrolment			End of Quarter Enrolment		
	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL
7	784	848	1632	783	848	1631
8	827	862	1689	815	861	1676
9	946	970	1916	937	970	1907
10	955	1002	1957	952	1004	1956
subtotal	3512	3682	7194	3487	3683	7170
11	838	987	1825	833	983	1816
12	668	880	1548	665	880	1545
subtotal	1506	1867	3373	1498	1863	3361
TOTAL	5018	5549	10567	4985	5546	10531

A sample size of at least 371 was necessary to be statistically significant for this population<sup>11</sup>.

Table 2. Sample size calculation

Margin of error	5 %
Confidence level	95 %
Population size	10531
Sample size	371

### Access to participants

Permissions to conduct research was given by the school district superintendent (SDS) and the school principal<sup>12</sup>. Survey dissemination was coordinated with the school's vice-principal. At the time, SNHS just began to open for in-person classes. During this transition period, there were three types of teaching modalities: (i) in-person, (ii) online, (iii) printed modules. The online version of the survey was conducted via google forms. The link was given to students by their research subject teachers who were conducting online classes.<sup>13</sup> For in-person students, 100 paper copies were distributed to students.<sup>14</sup> Unfortunately, there was not enough time to distribute printed copies among students who were taking home modules.

Approximately 450 students responded to the survey both online and on paper. Upon removing students who were over 18 years old, 407 responses remained.

Survey respondents were 11-17 years old. The ages of respondents were quite diverse. 60% of respondents identified as female and 37% identified as male.

<sup>11</sup> The number was calculated using the standard sample size formula with a margin of error (e= 0.05) of 5%, a confidence level of 95% (z= 1.96), and a population size of 10,531 (N). Standard deviation was set at 50% (p=0.5).

<sup>12</sup> Appendix A.I.1

<sup>13</sup> Appendix A.II.1

<sup>14</sup> Appendix A.II.2

Figure 5. Age of Respondents in years

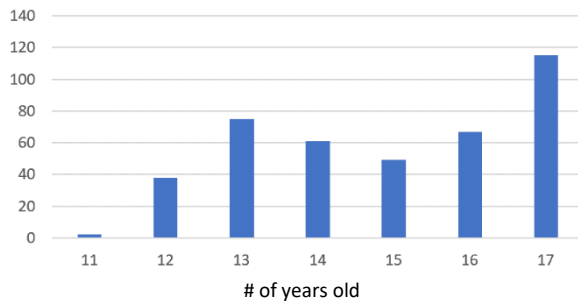
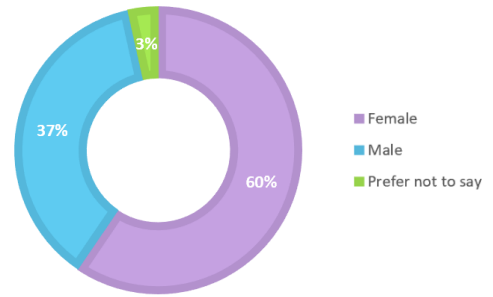


Figure 4. Gender of respondents

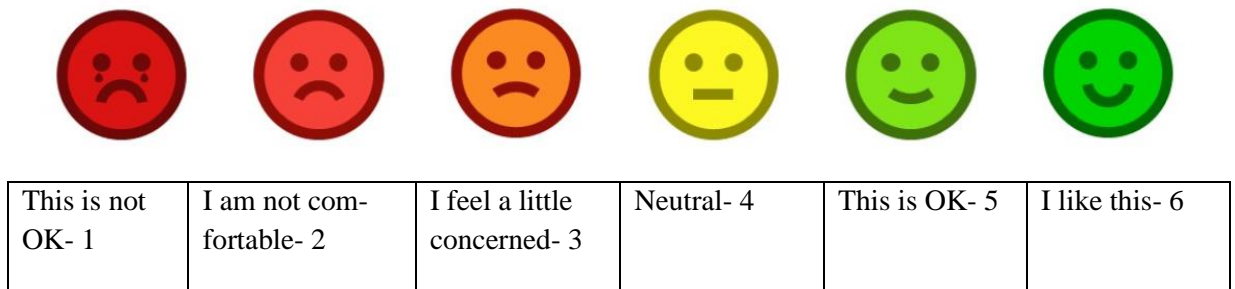


### Survey structure

The survey consisted of a total of 38 questions.

The first section obtained general information and determined student access to online spaces. The second section went into detail about social media accounts and determined social norms online. Finally, student emotions were measured using Likert’s scale of attitudes (Jamieson, 2004). This helped determine the social norms for those specific scenarios, outside of individual experiences. Questions were situational and based on realistic examples<sup>15</sup>.

Figure 6 Likert scale of attitudes



These emotions were quantitatively measured; the discomfort of the person was numbered lower, while enjoyment was measured higher. 1-3 were considered disagreement while 4-6 were considered acceptance or agreement with the statements.

Upon advice from teachers, the survey was predominately conducted in English with some portions in Filipino to help students understand difficult concepts and terms.

### Data Analysis

Data was analyzed using Stata using descriptive statistics and bi-variate analysis. Data was then visualized using Excel.

### 3.3 Qualitative portion

For this research, two focus groups were held and four interviews were conducted. Focus groups consisted of students while interviews consisted of local stakeholders.

<sup>15</sup> Appendix A.II.3



### 3.3.1 Focus Groups

#### *Access to Participants*

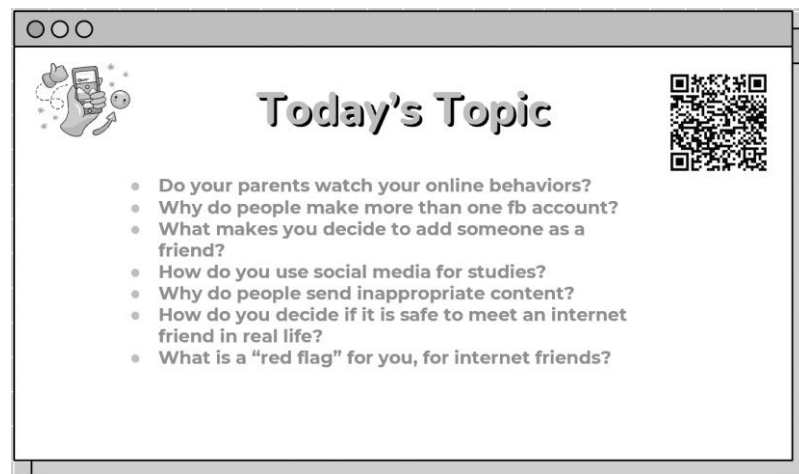
The first focus group was coordinated with the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) office of Sorsogon City. Participants were beneficiaries of the Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program (4Ps) which provides cash grants to families in exchange for their participation in community health and education programs. A total of 11 students attended the session, 7 boys and 4 girls.<sup>16</sup>

The second focus group was held in coordination with the Ph462 EAGLE CDC program of a local church. A total of 38 students participated.<sup>17</sup>

#### *Focus group structure*

Students were placed into smaller groups and asked initial questions about their perceptions of social media use. These were different from the survey questions as they sought perceptions and opinions.

*Figure 7. Questions about social media use*



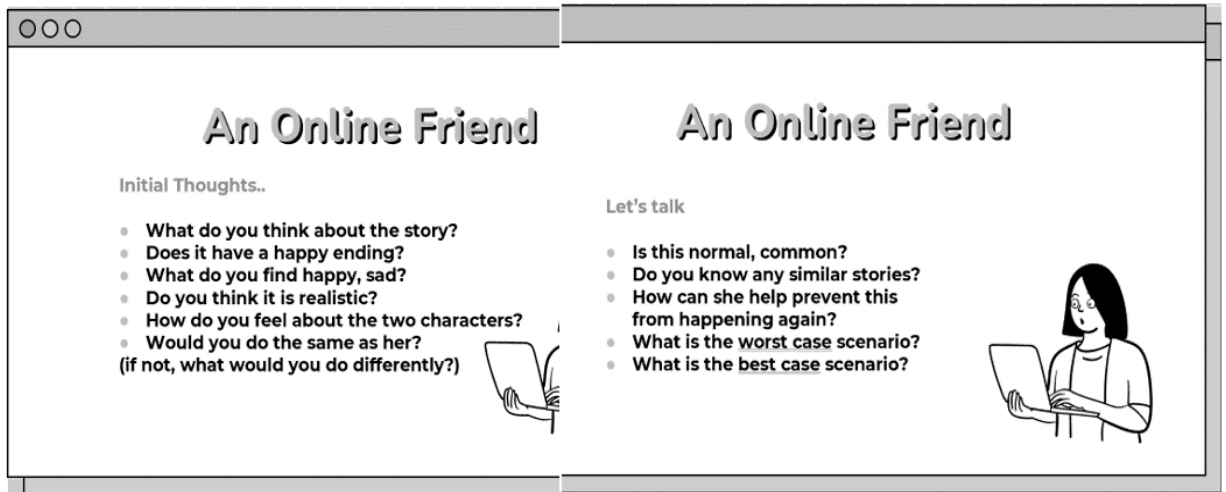
The students were then given a short story, in Filipino, about a girl who began a relationship online and was exploited.<sup>18</sup> They were then asked a few more questions about the story to determine the perceived social norm regarding the scenario.

<sup>16</sup> Appendix A.I.3

<sup>17</sup> Appendix A.I.4

<sup>18</sup> The story was written by a local university student specifically for use during the focus groups. Appendix: A.III.2

Figure 8. Questions about short story



Students answered these questions in their small groups and presented their responses.

### Data Analysis

Data from the focus group consisted of student responses written during the session as well as written notes by the researcher. Data was analyzed with deductive and inductive coding. The codes were then categorized by variable, theme, and social norm level. First, deductive coding of the data was applied based on the following listed variables:

Table 3. Variables used in deductive coding, developed by author

Variable	Dimensions
Online Behaviors	Access to online Day to day use
Risky behaviors	Privacy online Friends online
OSEAC exposure	Explicit content Real consequences
OSEAC perception	Risk awareness for OSEAC

The variables aimed to build a comprehensive description of perceived norms. From the focus groups, student opinions on these variables were discussed. The variables could then be compared with the quantitative data compiled from the survey to determine if perceived norms matched actual norms. The codes were then further categorized into meso, micro, and macro levels (Inouye, 2017). Inductive coding was applied afterward to find similar patterns throughout the data.

### 3.3.2 Interviews

#### Access to Participants

During fieldwork, several offices were visited in preparation for the interviews and to receive written consent for research. This includes: Sorsogon National High School (SNHS), Sorsogon East Central Elementary School (SECS), the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) city office as

well as the provincial office, and the Sorsogon Police Provincial Office. Notes were taken during casual conversations with the people in the respective offices. Short interviews were conducted with one teacher, one principal, and the police chief of the provincial Women and Children Protection Desk (WCPD). Unfortunately, the recordings have since been lost and will not be included in this research. Data used comes from interview notes taken by the researcher which included main points and several quotes recorded during the interview. Later, interviewees were contacted by the researcher on Facebook messenger if there were any follow-up questions that needed clarification.

### Interview Structure

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with pre-determined variables. Questions were prepared in advance to guide the interview, but the interview changed depending on the interviewee and their experiences or expertise.

### Data Analysis

The interviews were transcribed and coded. The notes taken were also coded. Both deductive and inductive thematic coding were applied to both.

This is an example of the coding and resulting categorization.

Figure 9. Coding of interview

W: Yeah. Um, I think accepting friend request from strangers, uh, is already dangerous. That one, sending nudes to someone, uh, you actually didn't know. Yeah. Like that. It's very strange. That's very dangerous for me.

Accepting friend requests can be dangerous

DL Dorothy Luting Wang (Teams)  
Personal Safety (micro)  
Privacy & Risk Awareness

Important quotes were translated into English by the author.

## 3.4 Ethical Considerations

All respondents received a detailed explanation on the purpose and mechanics of the research. Participants had full knowledge of their role in the research, their anonymity, and their rights which include: the right to leave, the right to withhold information, and the right to request certain information to be kept anonymous or redacted from the record. Any information that may be identifying was not recorded. Under-age participants in focus groups were asked for parental signatures on consent forms. Permission to conduct research was obtained by all relevant parties.

## 3.5 Methodological Limitations

The study was conducted during the COVID-19 pandemic, from March to April 2022. Although restrictions were easing, access was a little difficult as the students had not yet fully returned to face-to-face classes.

The selection of youth participants was made to gather data representative of the city with students from different socio-economic groups of various ages and backgrounds. However, because the group of students receiving paper modules was not represented in the survey data, it is possible that students from

low economic status families were unable to participate in the survey. The second focus group being conducted in a church also means that there may be religious bias in how students responded to the questions asked. The focus groups and the interviews were conducted in Filipino and English. However, the responses from participants often mixed Bikol-Sorsogon in Filipino and English. The mix of three languages made it difficult to transcribe, code, and translate the data. This may have caused some nuance and meanings to be lost in the process.

Unfortunately, my cellphone was stolen from me twice and much of the data was unable to be retrieved. This included all original audio from initial interviews and focus groups. Interviews were able to be re-conducted online with adult participants, but due to ethical concerns, were not re-conducted with the youth. Because of time and resource limitations, there were a limited number of interviews conducted with stakeholders and the results may not be representative of the population.

### 3.6 Positionality and reflexivity

Though I worked in Sorsogon City in a public elementary school (SECS) for two years prior to conducting this research, I still consider myself an outsider to the location. This is due, in part, by how I am viewed by the city's local population. The "foreigner" label/association assigned to me allowed access to different offices and interviewees. I was also immediately viewed as a subject matter expert. This may have impacted how people responded to me during focus groups and interviews. This phenomenon, also known as the Hawthorn Effect, occurs when participants give responses that were not indicative of their true perceptions, but rather what they thought I wanted to hear (McCambridge, Witton, & Elbournec, 2014). The focus group sessions were also conducted before an internet safety session, where students were taught how to stay safer on the internet. The Hawthorn effect may be more present for students as they may not have revealed their behaviors online that they suspected may be considered "bad behavior".

My prior experience as a teacher in Sorsogon City also built biases in how I viewed this topic. I personally witnessed students' social media norms as they constantly sought to friend me on Facebook. I could often see their public posts, photos, and how they engaged with one another. This initial bias may have influenced how I conducted the interviews and focus groups, and impacted the questions created in the survey.

## 4. Key Findings

The following chapter presents the findings of the research. First, student online access and a description of their general use of the internet is provided. The social media use of students is then explored in more detail with topics such as online friends, privacy settings, and exposure to inappropriate content online. The second half of the chapter deals with the risk preparedness of the community and the knowledge of key actors on OSEAC.

### 4.1 Youth Internet Use

Students most used wi-fi/broadband to access the internet at 85.5%, while 37.35% used data. Only five students reported going to an internet café or “Pisonet.” This was unexpected, as the 2015 Cybersafe survey found that two out of 10 students accessed the internet through an internet café, compared to the four out of 10 who accessed internet at home and three out of 10 through mobile data (Stairway Foundation Inc. & Department of Education Philippines, 2016). This change may be due to families requiring internet access at home to work from home or students choosing to join online classes during the COVID-19 pandemic lockdowns. Of the number of students surveyed, 91.65% used smartphones to access the internet, whereas 67.32% used a computer or laptop. The internet was in large part paid for by the parents (97%).

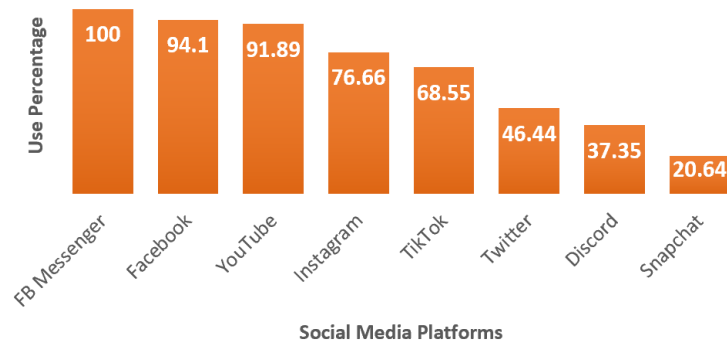
Table 4. Summary of student internet access

Internet	Use percentage	# of students
Wi-fi/Broadband	85.5	348/407
Data	37.59	153/407
Internet Café	1.2	5/407
Device	Use percentage	# of students
Smartphone	91.65	373/407
Computer/Laptop	67.32	274/407
Tablet	10.7	41/407
Who pays?	Percentage	# of students
Parents	97.05	395/407
Other family	9.09	37/407
Myself	8.6	35/407

More than half of the students (236/408) surveyed self-reported that they spend more than seven hours on the internet per day. Almost a quarter (86/407) spent 10 or more hours on the internet per day. According to DataReportal, in 2021, the average internet user in the Philippines spent 10:56 hours online per day, much higher than the worldwide average of 06:43 (DataReportal, 2021). For social media platforms, 100% of students reported using Facebook Messenger as a means of communication. This makes sense as 94.1% of students also reported that they use FB Messenger more than regular text messaging.

National data shows that 97% of internet users in the Philippines used a Facebook account in 2021 (DataReportal, 2021). The survey showed 94.1% of students used Facebook, less than the national average. Surprisingly, 36.63% of students had more than one Facebook account. One student had eight total accounts and was able to state how many friends they had on each account. The average amount of friends for students' main accounts was 1033.7, with three students hitting Facebook's limit of 5000 friends.

Figure 10. Most common social media platforms



During focus groups, students gave the following reasons for having multiple Facebook accounts: for school purposes, for businesses/online selling, for cheating on their partners, to find new friends, or to “avoid toxic people.”

Nine out of 10 students use social media for their studies. When asked how, one student wrote, “I used media platforms like Google for searching about my study, I also use social media to communicate to my teachers in terms of my schoolwork.” They also noted using social media to communicate with their classmates outside of scheduled online classes. Teachers use social media to post about school-related activities or ask students to submit assignments on Facebook Messenger. Of those who had several Facebook accounts, some students explained that they had one “private” or “main” account, and another for school purposes. One student, for example, had a personal account with their chosen name and one account with their birth name. The account with their birth name was used mainly for school and to communicate with their teachers and classmates. The personal account had 2,500 friends, while the school account had just 150. Teachers at the high school also mentioned using Facebook to contact both students and parents. They believed there was a necessity for communication via Facebook. One teacher stated,

*“Sometimes there's a need for the student to be connected to the teacher and classmates because sometimes they have questions based on what is stated in the module and it will be easier for them to find the answer if they are connected to both. But having multiple accounts of the students, that is according to their wishes.”<sup>19</sup>*

In fact, classes often have one group chat on Facebook messenger that the teacher set up. As all students are on Facebook, it made it easier for teachers to communicate effectively to all their students at once

<sup>19</sup> Interview translated by author from Filipino

during the lockdown. For students living in areas with bad signal, or who did not have a cellphone, it was more difficult to receive an education at that time.

Most students in the focus groups stated that their parents did not watch their online behavior. One of the students who said their parents did check their behavior said that the parent did so by looking over their shoulder occasionally to ask them what they were doing. Nevertheless, the consensus made by students in each focus group was “No,” their parents did not monitor their use.

When asked if they had ever been influenced by social media content, 70% of students answered “yes”. This included situations such as buying something they saw online, wanting to try a dance they saw on TikTok, or having their opinions swayed by an online post or video.

In the Philippines, established networks of disinformation are credited for pushing Rodrigo Duterte into an unexpected victory (Ong & Cabañes, 2018). Empirical studies have also previously found a correlation between belief in fake news and a person’s confidence level (Deinla et al., 2021, p. 4). Students were overwhelmingly sure (95%) that they could differentiate between fake news and real news. One student in the focus group said that they determined the validity of news by the engagement of the post on Facebook. Others said that they check other news sites, preferably reputable ones.

#### 4.1.1 Online Friends

It is hard to imagine that students with several thousand friends on Facebook know all of them in real life. According to the survey, approximately half of all students responded that they did not know all their Facebook friends in real life. Students were thus asked whether they had become good friends with someone they met online with 67% responding positively.

Figure 12. Results for the question: "Do you know all your FB friends in real life?"

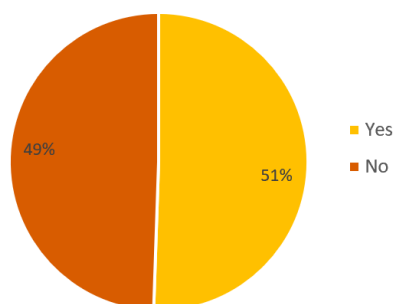
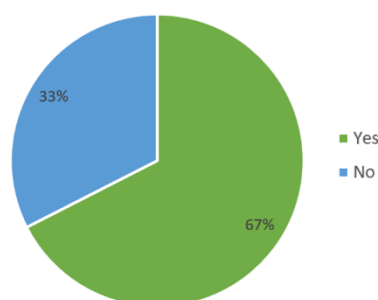


Figure 11. Results for the question: "Have you become good friends with someone you met online?"



When asked, all focus groups said they believe it is common to make friends online. They stated they are more likely to accept friend requests from or make friend requests to people who share mutual friends. Three groups mentioned “popularity” or “famous” as a reason to befriend someone. Students also look at the perceived attractiveness of the person online. Several students mentioned “looks”, “good profile”, and “attracted to profile picture” as reasons to befriend someone. Some students mentioned playing online games with strangers then later becoming friends with them on other social media platforms. One group also said that people would “add people to make more friends” with the idea that they would add someone

they did not know with the intention of later becoming friends, or to just add to the number of friends that they have on Facebook.

In order to learn more about students who may have initially met someone online, and then met them in real life, students were asked, “Have you ever met someone face-to-face that you met online?” Fifty-one percent responded yes. Those who responded affirmatively were then asked to give the reasons for why they met with someone in person. Ninety-two percent of respondents met with someone they had already become friends with online. Having a group activity with mutual friends was also a common response. A few students also mentioned working together with classmates that they had not yet met in person, or to purchase something from Facebook marketplace or other online local buy and sell groups.

Figure 14. Results for the question: "Have you met a real person face-to-face that you met from online?"

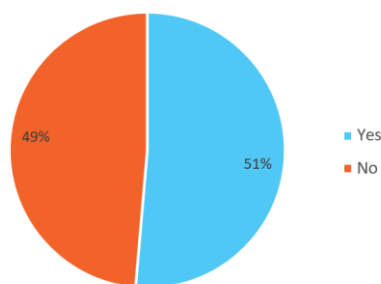
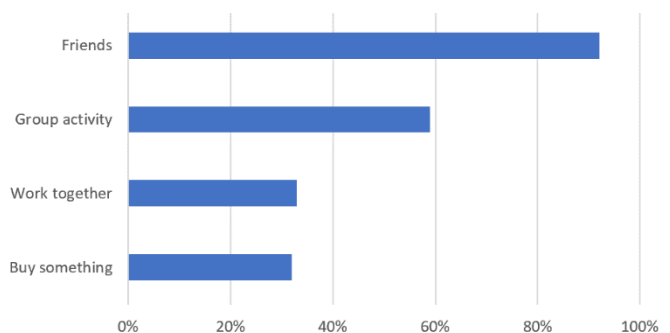


Figure 13. Reasons to meet someone in person



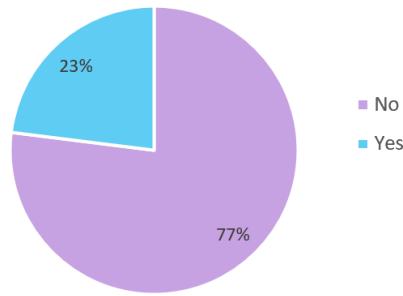
In focus groups, students mentioned that they were likely to meet with someone online if the other person was good at communicating and seemed to “have a nice character.” When discussing safety strategies, a solution suggested was to video call the person before meeting them in real life. Two groups even mentioned doing a “background check,” though what that entailed was never clear. Students felt that red flags that would discourage them from meeting someone included “toxicity” and “cyberbullying.” In general, students all agreed that it was quite common to meet people online and then in-person. As there are more students who have met good friends online than those they have met in person, it can be said that students can consider someone a good friend, even if they have never met in-person.

Twelve percent of students surveyed said that they have been in a relationship with someone they met online. This is higher than the previous Cybersafe survey, which found that 5-7% of students had experience with online relationships (Stairway Foundation Inc. & Department of Education Philippines, 2016). Two students in the focus groups met their current partners online. One partner lived in a neighboring city. The student had sent a friend request to the partner because they thought the profile was attractive. The two have since met several times in person.

Though the questions thus far seem to show a familiarity with befriending new people online, the students largely responded (77%) that they do not add strangers as friends on Facebook.



Figure 15. Results for the question: "Do you add strangers as friends on FB?"



There are several possible explanations for this discrepancy. Students who responded “yes” to knowing all their Facebook friends were much more likely to answer that they did *not* add strangers. Those 123 students were confident in their social media use and their privacy. However, when comparing “students who know all their Facebook friends” to the question “have you become very good friends with someone you only met online”, the opposite appears to be true. Students *have* met people online *and* become friends then possibly met with them in-person later.

Table 5. Tabulation to compare students who *know* all their FB in real life to previous questions

		Key							
		frequency		row percentage					
Do you know all of your FB friends in real life?	Do you add people you don't know in real life on social media? (i-iadd mo bang t)	No	Yes	Total	Do you know all of your FB friends in real life?	Have you become very good friends with someone you met online?	No	Yes	Total
		Yes	123 86.62	19 13.38			142 100.00	Yes	56 39.44

Pearson chi2(1) = 26.8194 Pr = 0.000  
Cramér's V = -0.3100

Pearson chi2(1) = 9.6478 Pr = 0.002  
Cramér's V = -0.1853

When analyzing students who admitted to not knowing all their Facebook friends in real life, an equally contradictory result appears. Most of the students (n=81) are certain they do not add strangers to their social media accounts. This seems absolutely implausible if they don't know all their Facebook friends in real life, especially when the majority also admit to have become very good friends with people they have met online. Students who do not know all their Facebook friends in real life are more likely to find friends online.

Table 6. Tabulation to compare students who *don't know* all their FB in real life to previous questions

		Key							
		frequency		row percentage					
Do you know all of your FB friends in real life?	Do you add people you don't know in real life on social media? (i-iadd mo bang t)	No	Yes	Total	Do you know all of your FB friends in real life?	Have you become very good friends with someone you met online?	No	Yes	Total
		No	81 59.12	56 40.88			137 100.00	No	31 22.30

Pearson chi2(1) = 26.8194 Pr = 0.000  
Cramér's V = -0.3100

Pearson chi2(1) = 9.6478 Pr = 0.002  
Cramér's V = -0.1853

This a great indication of a difference between the perceived social acceptability of making friends online and the reality of their online experience and social norms among their peers. Students may have felt the need to answer that they did not add strangers as friends because the question itself seems to hold a negative connotation. Their answer reflects how they believe they should be responding. The response bias becomes evident once compared with other questions that were worded differently but had a similar message. One other possibility may be that a student may interpret the phrase “people you don’t know (*tao hindi mo kilala*)” differently. For example, a student may consider a classmate they never met in person, but through online modules and classes, someone they “know.” However, other questions using the word “know” did not have similarly contradictory results.

Generally, most students have met people online and become friends with them. Students in focus groups believed that this type of behavior was common. About half eventually go on to meet their online friends in person. For the most part, students also are confident that the people they friend online are real people and that they would be able to tell if an account was a *catfish*. A catfish is a colloquial internet term used to describe a fake profile that a person uses to conceal their true identity or appearances for the purposes of scamming or socially misleading others (Simmons & Lee, 2020).

Figure 16. Results for the question, "Do you know how to tell if a FB account is fake or real?"

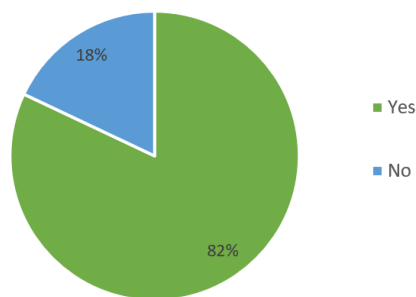
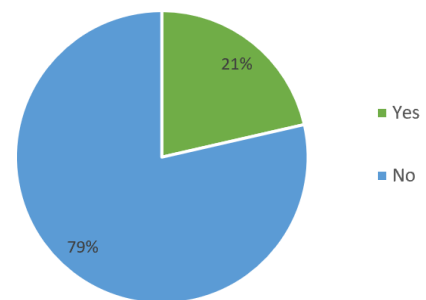


Figure 17. Result for the question "Have you ever been catfished?"



Eighty-two percent of students said they would know if a profile was fake. Similarly, 79% of students say they have never become friends with someone with a fake profile. Nevertheless, 87 total students have been catfished, and have experienced fake profiles on social media. In focus groups, three groups brought up “dummy accounts” or “fake accounts” during discussions, finding them to be concerning.

#### 4.1.2 Privacy Awareness

Students were asked about their privacy settings on two different social media accounts, Facebook and Instagram. For Facebook, default post privacy setting is important as those who have posts set to “public” have content that anyone can view or save, even people who do not have a Facebook account. There are then several different types of audience settings that allow the user to change the privacy of their posts for within their friends. The different settings are shown below.

Figure 18. Facebook's audience selection options. Reprinted from Facebook.com.

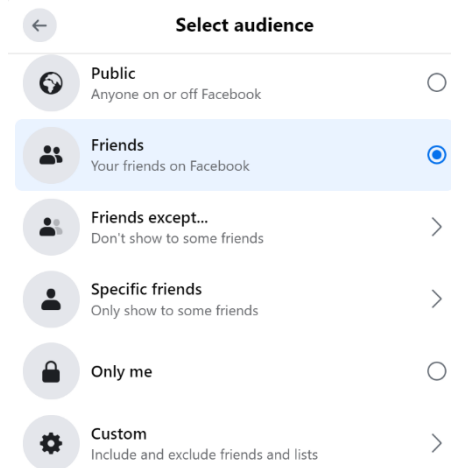
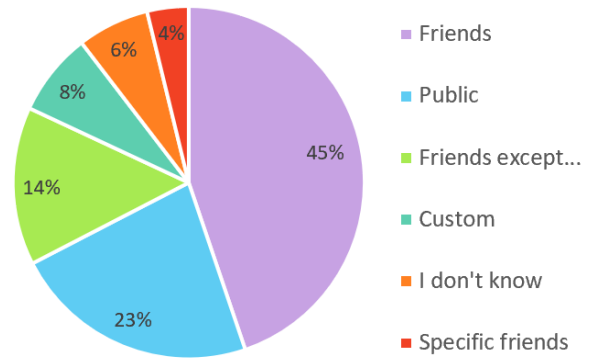
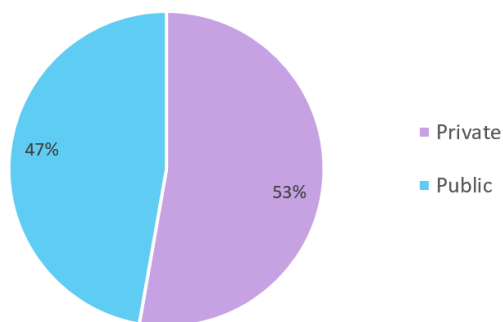


Figure 19. Respondent's Facebook post privacy settings



About a quarter of students set their Facebook privacy settings to public. Just 6% did not know what privacy setting their posts were set at. This is an improvement from 2016 when 20% of students did not know their privacy settings (Stairway Foundation Inc. & Department of Education Philippines, 2016). Many students have their posts only viewable by friends or a variation of people within their friend list. Students were much more likely to have public posts visible on Instagram, with 47% of students opting to make their profiles and photos public for anyone on the internet to view. Girls were slightly more likely to have private accounts, but the difference was not statistically significant. These results align with the Cybersafe survey, which found that half of the children had public accounts on social media (Stairway Foundation Inc. & Department of Education Philippines, 2016).

Figure 20. Respondent's Instagram privacy setting



In general, there were no noticeable gender differences in how youth approached social media privacy settings. The red flags noted by the focus groups were relatively similar, regardless of the gender make-up of the group. One teacher interviewed felt that her students were responsible internet users, stating,

*“Maybe my students are responsible internet users because maybe they only use internet for gathering information as far as their lesson is concerned and also to connect with their loved ones working far from them. I often told my students to always be a responsible internet user and not to trust people they only meet online. And if reading an article, there is a must for them to look for the author and check the site if it is legit to avoid scam and hackers.”*

This mirrors how students also approached internet safety during focus groups. When students were asked to list online dangers, the following themes were repeated:

Table 7. Reported "online danger" themes

"Online Dangers" themes	# of mentions
Fake news	5
Cyberbullying	4
Scams/scammers	4
Hacker	2

There is concern and awareness from students regarding these topics, which might be due to hearing stories or experiencing themselves online security threats that encourage them to enact safety precautions. For example, it was mentioned that someone might make a new Facebook account due to their previous account being hacked. Students are aware of the dangers of scams and hacking, and so most students avoid posting personal information online. They also did not use location tags on their photos or posts. The percentage of students who posted personal information or used location tags has decreased slightly since the 2016 Cybersafe survey which saw 2-3 out of ten students doing such things (Stairway Foundation Inc. & Department of Education Philippines, 2016).

Figure 22. Respondents who have used a location tag

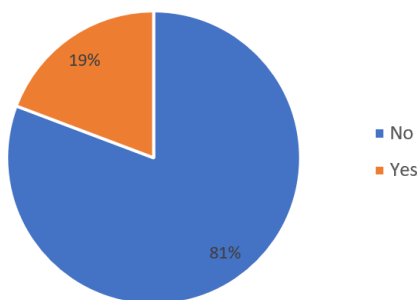
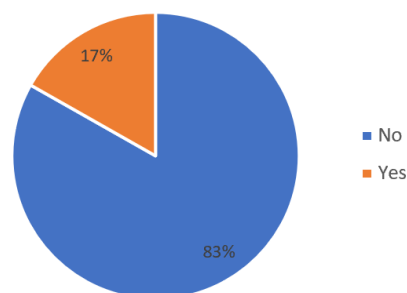


Figure 21. Results for the question: "Have you ever posted information such as: your full name, phone number, age, location, address, information about your family and friends?"



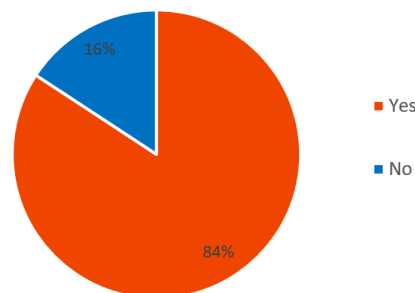
The different safety precautions had no noticeable gender differences. All students were equally as likely to enact privacy settings and refrain from posting private information. Prior research by Boyd and Hargittai also found no gender differences in how youth approached their Facebook privacy settings or their confidence to do so (2010). They also found that teenager's rhetoric about online safety and privacy mirrored public discussions and media narratives that take place around the same time. In the Philippines, hacking and malware attacks increased a whopping 2,324% in 2020 from the year before, and other phishing and scams increased by 302% (Hilotin, 2022). Local government units (LGUs) have also published warnings and advisories cautioning residents to be aware of "fake news scams" (Yalao, 2022). It is very possible that the public discourse and media inform Filipino students of online dangers as well.

### 4.1.3 OSEAC Exposure and Awareness

Several questions in the surveys focused on student exposure to OSEAC and related behavior that increases the risk for OSEAC, such as exposure to explicit content and the normalization of pornographic content and behaviors.

Without proper parental restrictions or other protective applications, it is difficult to navigate the internet without being exposed to explicit content. Youth often come across pornographic content through paid pop-up advertisements or in their social media feeds (Lewis et al., 2018). The 2016 Cybersafe survey found that six out of 10 children were exposed to pornographic content on social media (Stairway Foundation Inc. & Department of Education Philippines, 2016). A 2011 study by EU kids online found that just 14% of children had seen explicit content online (Livingstone et al., 2011). While some students do seek out this type of content, literature shows that the exposure is often accidental and unsought (Lewis et al., 2018).

*Figure 23. Exposure to inappropriate content.  
Results from the question: "Have you ever seen inappropriate content (hindi kanais-nais) online?"*



Of the students who responded to this survey, 84% had been exposed to pornographic content online. One student provided the example of watching anime with her younger cousin and being unable to avoid the pornographic advertisements at the bottom of the page.

Direct exposure of pornographic content through messaging applications differs from general exposure in that someone has messaged directly explicit photos or videos to another person. These messages may be consensual or unsolicited. There was a total of 154 (38%) of the students surveyed who received inappropriate content. Girls were slightly more likely to have received inappropriate content, but the difference is not enough to be statistically significant.

Figure 24. Results for the question: "Have you ever been sent inappropriate content online?"

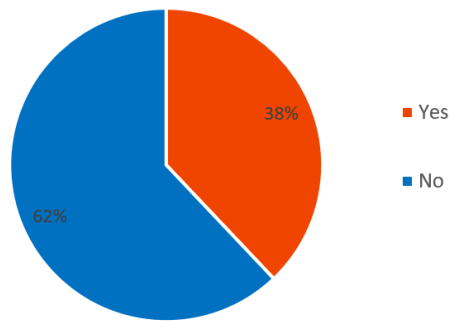


Table 8. Gender comparison for receiving inappropriate content

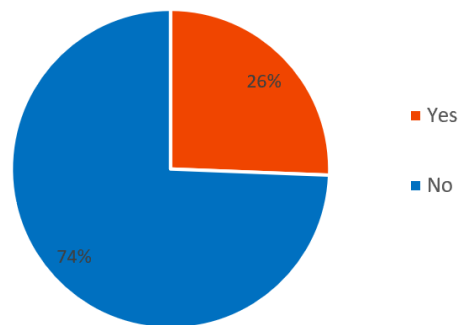
What is your gender?	Have you ever been sent inappropriate content online?		Total
	No	Yes	
Female	142 58.68	100 41.32	242 100.00
Male	103 68.21	48 31.79	151 100.00
Prefer not to say	8 57.14	6 42.86	14 100.00
Total	253 62.16	154 37.84	407 100.00

Pearson chi2(2) = 3.7488 Pr = 0.153  
Cramér's V = 0.0960

It is unclear if these messages were solicited or not, but the percentage of youth receiving them has increased compared to previous studies. The 2014 Cybersafe survey found that just 1-2 out of ten children were sent “sexy selfies” (Stairway Foundation Inc. & Department of Education Philippines, 2016).

On the other hand, 26% of students know someone who has sent inappropriate content. When asked why someone might send “sexy selfies” or “sensual photos,” most focus groups replied some iteration of, “for fame or popularity.” Other reasons included “bored, money purposes, boasting, hacked accounts, victims of chain messages.”

Figure 25. Results for the question: "Do you know anyone who has sent inappropriate content?"



Most students do not know anyone who has sent inappropriate content, and many were uncomfortable with the discussion. There were lots of awkward laughs and jokes around the subject matter. During the focus group, one girl told a story about one of her friends, who is also underage. The friend’s older (now-ex) boyfriend was “very kind and generous,” and he would sometimes send her money and gifts. She loved him so much that during their intimate conversations the guy asked her to send him her nude photos and she would do it. At first, she was reluctant, but then she “got used to it.” The boyfriend lived in a different province on a different island in the Philippines, so the relationship mostly took place online.

After reading the story provided during the focus group, in which a young girl is pressured to send private photos online, many groups said that blackmailing and threatening the main character with releasing their

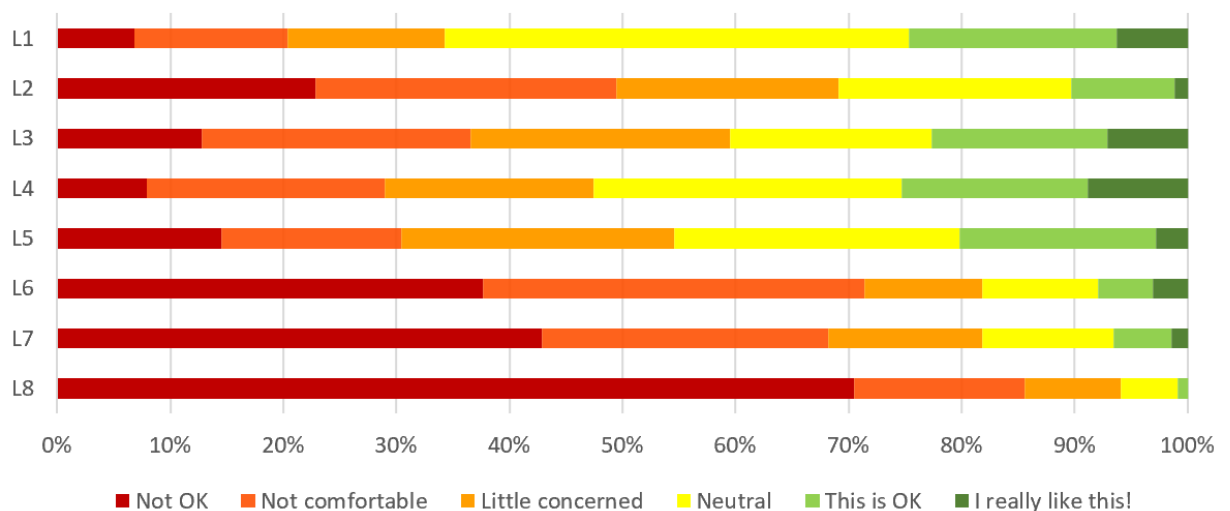
private photos was one of the worst-case possible scenarios. This was something several groups produced on their own, which indicates awareness and familiarity with this possibility. Generally, the students understood that there was risk involved with sending inappropriate photos or videos of themselves. One female student wrote that she would not do the same as the character because “I won’t lose my dignity!” There seemed to be feelings of shame and also judgement towards those who sent sexual photos.

#### 4.1.4 Attitudes

The Likert scale used in this research was based on a 1-6 scale. Students were asked to consider how they felt about a given situation and select one of six smiley faces. 1-3 were considered feelings of distaste and disapproval of the scenario. 4-6 were considered acceptance and enjoyment towards the scenario. Although 4 is written as “neutral”, in these situations, neutral may be interpreted as acceptance or indifference towards the behavior. Hence, it is categorized together with 5 and 6. The questions were as follows:

- L1. A young boy/girl from England wants to be your friend on Facebook
- L2. Your online friend texts you every day and gets upset if you do not respond
- L3. You receive multiple messages from the same person every day, even if you do not respond
- L4. A friend online wants to meet in person.
- L5. A friend online likes to talk on the phone but is never available for video call
- L6. Your online friend wants you to send them selfies every day
- L7. Your online friend wants to know more personal information
- L8. Your friend online gets mad if you don’t do what they want you to.

Figure 26. Determining student attitudes for online behavior



Similar to the survey results, questions L1 and L4 show that more than half of the students find making friends online acceptable. In fact, about a quarter of students would enjoy befriending student from another country online or meeting online friends in person.

According to people who have been catfished, L5 is usually considered a red flag (Corcione, 2020). The survey showed that a surprising number of students do not see it that way. This might be attributed to the fact that the Philippines still falls behind in terms of equitable access to internet access. People may not have enough “load” (money loaded onto cellphones to purchase phone services such as texts, calls, and data) or have poor cellphone service, which make it challenging to have video calls. As a result, there is more social acceptability and acknowledgement that video calls are not always possible.

L2 described a close relationship with an online friend who wants to talk daily and is upset if their requests are not met. This is a bit similar to L3, the difference being that L3 details being contacted non-stop by the “same person,” which could be a friend or a stranger. They do not get upset. Students seem to prefer the L3 option, with the mean result of 3.2 being higher than L2’s 2.7.

L6, L7, and L8 had students overwhelmingly find the scenarios unacceptable.

## 4.2 Risk Preparedness

In the province of Sorsogon, reported cases of OSEAC are not common. The highest number of reported cases occurred in 2020 during the lockdown periods. However, six cases are exceptionally low considering the number of 1.3 million cases of CSAM reported by the NCMEC. Half of the ten cases were filed in the central city at the Sorsogon City Police Station (CPS).

Table 9. Data on reported OSEC cases in Sorsogon province. Provided by the Sorsogon City Police Station.

Data on Online Sexual Exploitation of Children								
Covered Period: 2016 to 2021								
Sorsogon Police Provincial Office	Number of CICL Incidents Handled/Served by PNP						Status of the Case	
	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	Filed	Under Investigation
Barcelona								
Bulan					2		2	
Bulusan								
Casiguran								
Castilla								
Donsol								
Gubat					1		1	
Irosin					1		1	
Juban								
Magallanes								
Matnog								
Pilar								
Prieto Diaz								
Sta Magdalena					1		1	
Sorsogon CPS	1		2		1	1	5	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>0</b>
Prepared by:							Noted by:	
PSMSgt Arlene L Divina Asst WCPD PNCO							PCMS Jinky Aguilar Latagan Prov I WCRD PNCO	
<b>CERTIFICATION</b>								
This is to certify that all data/information appearing in this matrix, sourced from the submitted reports of all lower units under this Pol reviewed and validated by this office and found to be true and correct.								



All interviewees felt that OSEAC cases were not common in Sorsogon. In fact, several would point to other cities as examples where OSEAC is known to have taken place<sup>20</sup>.

This is the process for filing an OSEAC case as explained by the police chief for the woman and children's protection desk (WCPD): First, the police will take the statements and evidence provided by the victim or the person making the report. The case is handled jointly by the WCPD and the Anti-Cyber Crime unit. If evidence has been deleted from the device, the police chief stated that the cyber-technology and security office in the Sorsogon CPS would not have the capabilities to resolve the issue and would have to take the case to the regional office in Legazpi. If there is enough evidence, the police will enact an entrapment rescue operation at the perpetrator's location. The victims would then be handed over to DSWD.

The police receive annual training which updates them on recent laws regarding violence against women and children (VAWC), gender-based violence (GBV), and OSEAC. They also learn the protocols for how to handle victims. The training aims to “develop and impart among its members the appropriate VAWC-related knowledge, attitude, and practices; and mobilize individual members to spearhead in their respective communities and organizations on the advocacy against VAWC, among others” (Bulan Mps Sorsogon Ppo, 2022). Flyers about OSEAC have also been handed out to community members, including to students in schools.

The DSWD office lacked immediate information on the topic. They acknowledged an increase in the number of OSEAC cases and noted that many of them remain unreported. They felt the issue was similar to the issue of human trafficking and stated that in the event an OSEAC case was given to them, they would refer the case to the WCPD.

The principal of the school stated that teachers are required to refer OSEAC cases to the WCPD. They all receive training on handling these cases. The principal also noted that modules about internet safety are taught to students, however the teacher interviewed said she had no such modules.

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<sup>20</sup> Namely Manila, Cebu, and Mindanao were cited as example cities.

## 5. Discussion

Following these results, this paper will now discuss the extent to which the findings support or refutes the hypothesis. The implications and recommendations by the author will follow.

### 5.1. Social norms online

*RQ1:* What are the behaviors of minors in online spaces in Sorsogon City and how do they compare to the perceived social norms of online behavior?

The average youth can be described as an avid internet user who connects through broadband on their smartphone at home. They use Facebook and Facebook Messenger and watch videos on YouTube. Facebook Messenger is their preferred method of contact. They have just over one thousand friends on Facebook and use it for their studies. They have made good friends online either through playing online games or through social media. Most of them do not have public accounts on Facebook, but half do on Instagram.

Students felt that adding strangers as friends on their social media accounts has a negative connotation. However, the discussions during focus groups showed that making friends online is the social norm. The surveys showed that the actual norm aligned with perceptions in that 67% of students befriended people online and half had met with online friends in-person. It is possible that students perceive making friends online as the norm and this influences their decision to do so.

The hypothesis that minors engage in normalized risky behaviors cannot be completely confirmed<sup>21</sup>. There are students who do take risks online such as befriending strangers online, keeping their accounts public, or posting their locations and personal information online. However, most students do have good privacy settings on their accounts and do not post personal information online. This can be attributed to their awareness for online dangers such as scams, hackers, fake news, and cyberbullying. Their own perceptions of online dangers are based on their personal experiences in online spaces and influence from media news and the people around them (Boyd & Hargittai, 2010). The visibility of scams and hacking cases can be seen by students on the social media websites they frequent. This is supported by Tsai et al. (2016), who found that online safety behaviors could be positively predicted by prior experiences with the threat, subjective norms, and feelings of personal responsibility (p. 145). If someone has seen their friend's account get hacked on Facebook, they are more likely to enact safety behaviors. Students know of security risks associated with social media which leads to a consideration of privacy settings as a social norm for young internet users to protect themselves. The perceived risk matches the actual risk, and so there is less risk-taking.

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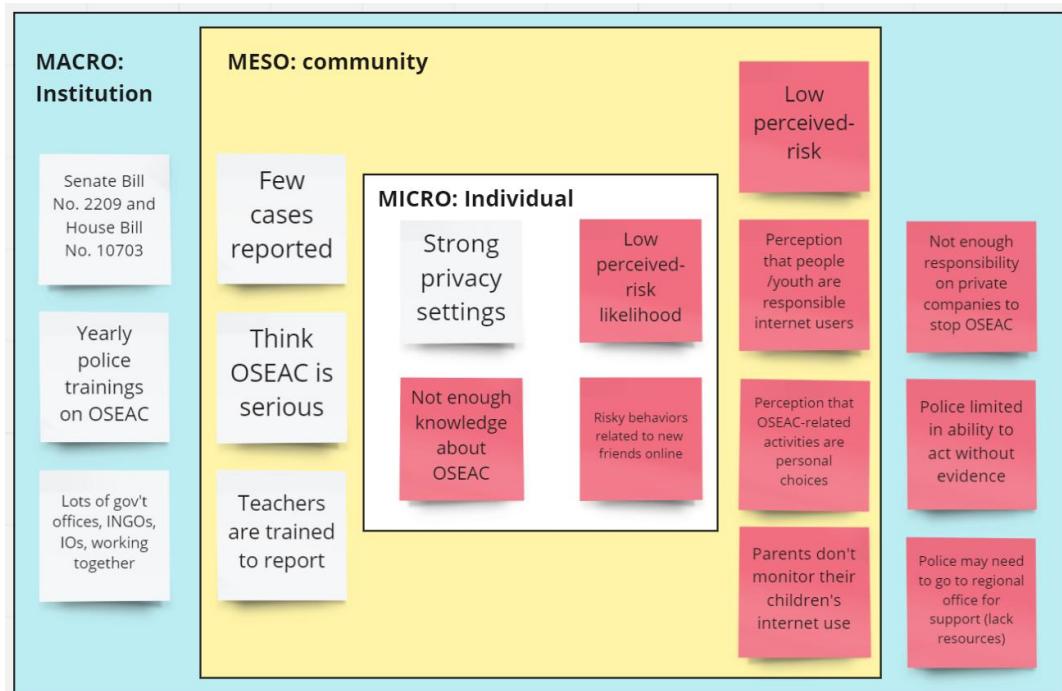
<sup>21</sup> Hypothesis: Student behavior online will lack safety and privacy precautions. Minors will engage in normalized risky behaviors online.

The increase of self-generated content by youth in the Philippines is cause for concern. However, students in the focus groups often associated this type of OSEAC related behavior with “attention-seeking” and “clout-chasing.” They claimed that people do it “to satisfy personal and sexual desires.” The behavior is seen as the individual’s choice and out of a desire to get the attention and praise of others. This perception was held in contrast to the story that was heard by the students during the focus group session in which it was clear that sending sexual photos was a very private situation and that the victim felt pressured to do so. The real story shared by one of the students also reflected this. The students in the focus groups did not believe this type of behavior was common and they almost always blamed the victim in the story for sending the photos and state they would not have done the same. Here, the perceived social norm does not match the reality of youth behaviors. The results from the survey showed that sending sexual content through social media was not wholly uncommon. More than a quarter of students knew someone who sent inappropriate content, and almost four out of 10 students had received that type of content. The students of Sorsogon City do not perceive OSEAC-related behaviors, such as sending sensual photos, as being the social norm. These results were opposite of my initial expectations. I had hypothesized that students would overestimate OSEAC-related behaviors compared to the actual norm. However, the end result may also be an indication of their feelings of shame and negative connotations with sending sensual photos. This contrasts slightly with previous studies by Ramiro et al., which found that Metro-Manila communities saw OSEAC-related online sexual activities as the social norm, but they also saw the behavior as “shameful” and “disgusting” (2019, p.8).

## 5.2 Risk Perception and Preparedness

*RQ2:* What is the risk perception of key informants in the community with regards to OSEAC and what is the preparedness of community members for OSEAC cases?

Figure 27. Sorsogon City's OSEC risk perception levels



The risk perception of the Sorsogon City community is analyzed using the macro, meso, and micro levels described by Inouye (2017). First, the structural and institutional macro level of risk perception. A recently proposed bill in the Philippines (Senate Bill No. 2209 and House Bill No. 10703), the Anti-Online Sexual Abuse or Exploitation of Children (OSAEC) and Anti Child Sexual Abuse or Exploitation Materials (CSAEM) Act, seeks to protect children from OSEAC through prevention, intervention, identification, prosecution, and after care for victims (2021). This will be the first time the specific offense of OSEAC will be created with imposed minimal penalties for the perpetrators (Torregoza, 2022). The bill charges private companies with more responsibility regarding fighting OSEAC. Electronic service providers, internet intermediaries, financial intermediaries, as well as tourism establishments will have to take measures to block, report, and preserve evidence of OSAEC materials found on their platforms, and cooperate with law enforcement agents (Senate of the Philippines, 2021; 18th Congress of the Philippines, 2021). The bill's sponsors often cited the increase in OSEAC in 2020 to push for the passing of the bill (Senate of the Philippines, 2021). Both the House and the Senate passed the bill in 2022. Unfortunately, President Rodrigo Duterte was unable to sign it before leaving office, so it has yet to become law. There are no current offenses specific to OSEAC to charge persecutors with, so it is difficult to prosecute offenders for more minor refractions. Current policies include the Anti-Child Pornography Act of 2009 and the Anti-Photo and Video Voyeurism Act of 2009. If the Anti-Online Sexual Abuse or Exploitation of Children (OSAEC) Act becomes a law and is implemented properly throughout the country, the Philippines will have a much stronger structural and institutional preparedness to combat OSEAC. However, until then, the existing laws are not adequate on the institutional level. There also was confusion among key actors in the Sorsogon City community regarding who manages OSEAC cases. The DSWD referred me to the police station, who later referred back to the DSWD. Because there are few cases in Sorsogon, both offices do not have much experience in handling OSEAC and are not familiar with the processes.

Meso-level factors are those at the peer and community level, the social acceptability of a behavior. The Sorsogon City community truly does not have many reported cases of OSEAC, and so their risk awareness is low. The community does not seem to be prepared to handle an OSEAC case should one arise and so they do not have enough information to make decisions or prepare for potential risk. There seems to be trust from parents and teachers that students are safe online or that they already know how to be safe. In Sorsogon City, students did not find self-generated sexual content to be socially acceptable. They also do not really consider OSEAC to be common. When asked about their perceptions, students wrote that they associated it with TV dramas and news shows. Essentially, the problem seemed far away leading to low levels of perceived susceptibility and perceived likelihood of victimization. Lower perceived risk leads to higher confidence which in turn leads to higher risk-taking (Brewer et al., 2004). Students seem to follow this model when it comes to making friends online. Not only does making friends online feel low-risk, but students are also confident that when making friends online, they can tell if an account is real or not. Some students have experienced catfishing, but overall, there seem to be few consequences for accepting friend requests from someone they do not know. Previous assessments found that adolescents met in real-life with people they met online at 4-14%. Now, half of all students have done so. The

high-risk act of finding new friends online and later meeting them in person is normalized and perceived as low-risk.

Finally, the micro-level factors are the individual's own perception and knowledge of the situation. Every person that I had both casual conversations with and official interviews with did not see OSEAC as a problem in Sorsogon City. Students have low perceived likelihood and perceived susceptibility of OSEAC cases. OSEAC is seen as a "big city" problem and is not relevant to local people. The perceived harm is based off of what community members have seen in the media. This does seem to be higher than in previous studies in Metro-Manila, where the perceived harm of OSEAC was low. The residents there assumed that as long as children were not touched, it was not harmful (Ramiro, et al., 2019). In Sorsogon City, key actors interviewed saw OSEAC as a serious issue, and have a higher perceived harm. However, in the focus groups, students never mentioned OSEAC or any related activities or behaviors as a potential risk online or as risky behaviors. Online sexual activities were not perceived as high-risk for the individual, rather just as poor moral choices of the individual.

### 5.3. Comprehensive Sexuality Education

The research showed that students feel shame when it comes to sexuality related topics. Students were very hesitant to discuss these matters and were quick to judge people who sent content that was sexual in nature. They related topics such as "sexual desire" with "seeking attention" and were adamant they would not do such things. My previous work in the Philippines involved teaching Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE) to small groups of young Filipinos and I found that many believed myths regarding sex and were not well educated on the topic. Similarly, a study by de Irala et al., found that almost half of students surveyed in the Philippines falsely thought condoms were 100% effective at preventing pregnancy and STIs (2009, p. 8). They also found that students mostly learned about sexuality through friends, and that they wanted to learn more about it (de Irala, et al., 2009).

In the Philippines, the Responsible Parenthood and Reproductive Health Act (RA 10354) passed in 2012 following fourteen years of debate and deliberation (Tan M. L., 2018). The law funds contraceptives and "age-appropriate" sex education (Department of Health [DOH], 2012). It faces fierce opposition from the Catholic church, a very powerful and influential force in the Philippines (Ohlström, 2016). The Catholic church is so strong in fact, that the Philippines remains as the only country outside of the Vatican where divorce remains illegal (Esguerra, 2019). Ten years on, the country still struggles with implementing sexuality education in public education systems even though the Department of Education passed guidelines for Comprehensive Sexuality Education in 2018 (DepEd Order 031) (Department of Education, 2018). Only 15% of teachers had implemented it in 2020 and 66% disagreed with its implementation (TCI-U, 2020). Some teachers have refused to teach it all together (Ohlström, 2016).

Comprehensive Sexuality Education is defined by UNESCO in the *International Technical Guidance on Sexuality Education* as, "a curriculum-based process of teaching and learning about the cognitive, emotional, physical, and social aspects of sexuality. It aims to equip children and young people with

knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values that will empower them to: realize their health, well-being, and dignity; develop respectful social and sexual relationships; consider how their choices affect their own well-being and that of others; and understand and ensure the protection of their rights throughout their lives” (2018, p. 16). CSE does not only teach sex education, but also important life skills and understanding around gender, sex, and sexuality (Tan M. L., 2018). It is paramount in contributing to children’s safety and security. Children who are victims of sexual exploitation or abuse may often be too frightened or embarrassed to report their abuse (National Crime Agency, n.d.). Thankfully, research shows that sex education can lower the chances of abuse and increase self-efficacy and personal advocacy in the event of sexual abuse (Finkelhor et al., 1990; Goldfarb & Lieberman, 2021). This is because children can better recognize appropriate and inappropriate behaviors regarding their own bodies and sexuality (Goldfarb & Lieberman, 2021). This is critical for preventing and reporting cases of sexual abuse. The research here shows a stronger need for CSE implementation that is culturally appropriate and scientifically sound.

## 5.4 Implications

Fieldwork for this research was conducted March-April 2022, just as the Philippines began raising COVID-19 pandemic restrictions. Students returned to in-person classes April 2022. For the first two years of the pandemic, data showed exponential growth in OSEAC cases across the country and the globe. In this context, this research aimed to understand the social norms of youth online, especially as lockdowns forced the community stay to indoors and schooling was held predominately online or through modules sent home. This study briefly explored the consequences of the education system in the Philippines’ heavy reliance on social media during this time. It was clear that use of Facebook Messenger was a common way for teachers to stay in contact with students and parents. They also used the platform to make announcements, inform of assignments, and as a place for students to turn in assignments. Although the use of Facebook is already very high in the Philippines, the necessity of using it for school assignments give the platform even more legitimacy for daily use. This leaves more students addicted to their phones and stuck in the dopamine feedback loop (Sherman et al., 2016; Burhan & Moradzadeh, 2020). The unprecedented method of education through social media is concerning and the implications have not yet been explored in academic research. There are no policies, regulations, or restrictions regarding public education and social media.

The study also adds to previous research on social norms in the Philippines by Ramiro et al. (2019), by adding regional context. The social norms in Sorsogon City differed greatly from the social norms reported in the two neighborhoods considered “hot spots” for OSEAC in Metro Manila (Ramiro et al., 2019). In Sorsogon City, people acknowledged OSEAC as a serious issue but felt as if it was not applicable for their region. The Metro Manila study found that the community tolerated OSEAC practices, would not report OSEAC cases to the police, felt that it was not harmful to children if they were not touched, and thought OSEAC was “normal” (Ramiro et al., 2019, p. 12). The attitudes in these two very different communities may hinder progress in stopping OSEAC in different ways. Though the Sorsogon City community is much less prepared and less experienced in dealing with OSEAC cases, they are not

actively perpetuating the problem. The opposite is true in the case of Metro-Manila. Sorsogon's lack of experience also means that it is not possible to gain an accurate understanding of social norms regarding OSEAC. It cannot be said for certain how community members would react to local OSEAC cases, to the families who perpetrate it, or to the youth who are involved. This research showcases a smaller city in a provincial area where people are less aware of OSEAC, giving new insight into how location changes people's attitudes and awareness. Regardless of their hometown, all youth in the Philippines may be at risk for online exploitation and abuse, and to remain willfully in denial about the potential risk leaves the community unprepared.

## 5.5 Recommendations

Further research should be conducted in different provinces of the Philippines to determine if other "small cities" show similar low-risk perceptions regarding OSEAC. There should also continue to be surveys conducted among youth in the Philippines to track how social norms online change. Just within the last five years, there have been significant changes in the way youth use the internet. The improvement in students' privacy awareness and self-protection could be further explored and explained. Similarly, the higher risk awareness for the community regarding "scams" and "hackers" could be investigated. Though I was not able to fully explore this, I believe doing so may enlighten policy makers and key stakeholders to new strategies to help increase awareness for OSEAC, thereby improving the risk preparedness of the community.

It would be beneficial for the Department of Education to implement mandatory lessons to students regarding all aspects of internet safety to increase risk awareness for other internet dangers. Different communities in the Philippines have different awareness levels for OSEAC so these lessons would help to inform all students in the education system. Teachers should also be more aware of internet threats such as OSEAC. Teachers are trained to report OSEAC cases, however the current reporting and prosecution system would benefit if teachers were also be trained on recognizing warning signs and learning how to preserve evidence.

Comprehensive sexuality education should be quickly integrated into the education system throughout the entire country. CSE is a human-rights based approach that teaches consent and bodily autonomy. It also encourages youth to "recognize their own rights, acknowledge and respect the rights of others, and advocate for those whose rights are violated" (UNESCO, 2018, p. 16). This is critical to protect children from abuse so children can feel safe and not shamed when reporting that they have been abused. As an added bonus, CSE also would help to decrease the Philippines alarming rise in teen pregnancy and HIV and other STI rates (Cudis, 2021; Department of Health, 2012).

More research needs to be done on the impact of incorporating social media into the education system and the affect it has on student mental health, student safety, and on educational achievement. Policy makers should make informed decisions in regulating social media companies especially in regard to their influence and use in the education system. As of the moment, social media companies are not held

accountable. There is also a need for research on how encrypted services may impact OSEAC. If Meta and other related companies continue to implement encryption services on all of their applications, much of the data we currently receive on CSAM will be lost. More information is needed on how and between whom CSAM is shared.

A question may also be raised as to why some areas of the Philippines are more likely to harbor OSEAC cases as opposed to other. Does it have to do with the surrounding community? Or is the area monitored more heavily than others? Previous research notes that aspects of the Philippines that encourage OSEAC include ease of payment, English as a common *lingua*, and lack of parental/guardian supervision (Brown, 2016). However, these are shared qualities other provinces, such as Sorsogon, have as well. Yet the number of reported OSEAC cases remain relatively small.



## 6. Conclusions

This study first sought to obtain a clear picture of student activities and social norms online. Many of the results indicate that student online norms have changed a lot over the past few years. Students are more knowledgeable about scams, hackers, and other internet crimes. Thus, they have become better at securing their privacy online. Fifty-one percent of students have private profiles on Instagram. Seventy-one percent of students have their posts set to be visible by just their friends. Compared to previous studies, there are also trends that are problematic. Students have become more likely to see pornographic content online (84%) and are more likely to receive inappropriate content (38%). They are more likely to befriend (67%) and meet in person with online friends (51%). They also feel shame when discussing sexual topics. These trends show that there is not nearly enough action from companies to protect children on their platforms, notably as they are being used for school. Students are also not receiving in their education critical information such as CSE or internet safety. Both of which could help improve OSEAC prevention and reporting. Youth behavior online is determined by the knowledge base they developed from what they watch on TV, the social norms of their peers online, and the experiences of their peers and community. This is exemplified by the fact that students and teachers that took part in this study have similar ideas about internet dangers and privacy online. Key actors can develop modules or targeted media interventions that can educate based on current data and trends of youth online.

Community preparedness is critical for disaster risk reduction, particularly in the case of OSEAC. Unfortunately, risk preparedness can be hindered by the social norms in that community (Shreve et al., 2016). Low risk awareness, low perception of susceptibility, and low perception of likelihood for victimization negatively impact the preparedness of the community for disasters and increase the likelihood for risky behaviors (Brewer et al., 2004). This study next sought to understand the community's perception of and preparedness for OSEAC. Overall, it can be stated that Sorsogon City's risk awareness for OSEAC is low. Though the perceived harm of OSEAC is high, the community does not believe it is at-risk for OSEAC cases. This, and the lack of experience, leaves the community unprepared to handle OSEAC cases, especially at the meso and micro levels.

OSEAC has been growing exponentially within the past few years and as students become more comfortable making friends online, they can also become potential targets for exploitation. Understanding their social norms online and improving community risk preparedness can be critical in helping to prevent, recognize, report, and prosecute cases of OSEAC. This is a never-ending battle to protect children and to learn more is to be better prepared for the future.

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## 8. Appendix

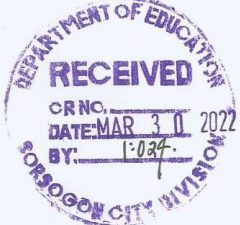
### Annex A: Fieldwork

#### A.I: Fieldwork permissions

##### 1. Request to conduct research, signed by the school district superintendent:



WILLIAM E. GANDO, CESO VI  
Schools Division Superintendent  
Sorsogon City, Sorsogon



March 30, 2022

Dear Sir Gando,

My name is Dorothy L. Wang. I am an Erasmus Mundus Masters student studying “Education Policy for Global Development” (GLOBED), a prestigious EU program between the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, Universität Bremen, University of Glasgow, and the University of Cyprus (<http://www.globed.eu/alumnus/dorothy-wang/>). Previously, I worked in Sorsogon from 2014-2016 as a United States Peace Corps Volunteer where I succeeded in leading many various projects at Sorsogon East Central School (SECS), including a province wide Special Olympics event, teacher trainings on remedial reading, library rehabilitation and more.

In partial fulfillment of my final thesis, I am currently undertaking research on “Mapping the Online Social Norms and Risk Assessment of Online Sexual Exploitation of Children (OSEC) of youth in the Philippines”. In this regard, I would like to request your endorsement to be able to conduct surveys with students to get an overview of their online behaviors. If possible, I would also love to request an interview with you. Though there are already many studies about OSEC based in the Philippines, the majority of them are Manila-based. I think it is equally as important to look into other provinces also.

It is my goal to complete a comprehensive study in Sorsogon that would allow us to have an overview of the different policies and actors involved with OSEC cases, preventative measures, reporting, and more. I would greatly appreciate it if you can also provide and allow me to look into any materials that could provide more information this. Rest assured that such information will be kept confidential and used solely for academic purposes.

**Research Questions**

*RQ1:* What are the behaviors of minors in online spaces in Sorsogon and how do they compare to previous studies in Manila?

Hypothesis: The time minors spend online increases alongside the increase in OSEC cases. Due to the lack of education on internet safety, there also will be little to no improvement in student behavior online in regard to safety.

*RQ2:* What is the perceived social norm online for minors regarding student’s perception of OSEC risk and online safety? How does this contrast in comparison to the actual norm?

Hypothesis: Minors will engage in normalized risky behaviors online. They will underestimate the prevalence and dangers of OSEC, and overestimate what constitutes as OSEC.

**Target group:** 200+ students from grade 6-12.

Classes will be mostly from Sorsogon National High School and possibly Sorsogon East Central School (pending the current situation regarding the pandemic)

Surveys will be conducted in the classroom. Questions will be read aloud and students will turn in anonymous written responses.

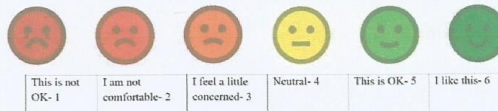


*Sample operationalization of variables*

Variable	Dimensions	Indicator	
Online Behaviors	Access online	From: internet café, home, data?	Multiple choice
		On what device?	Multiple choice
	Day to day use	Where do they get money for internet?	Fill in
		Which social media websites?	Fill in
Risk Awareness	Privacy	How much time is spent online?	(#)
		How many FB accounts do you have?	(#)
		Are their accounts public/private?	(Y/N)
		Do add strangers as friends?	(Y/N)
		Do they talk to strangers?	(Y/N)
		Do they post personal information?	(Y/N)
OSEC exposure	Explicit content	Do they use the check-in feature?	(Y/N)
		Have they seen pornographic content?	(Y/N)
		Have they been sent “ “	(Y/N)
		Do they know anyone who has sent nude photos?	(Y/N)

Finally, there will be a portion where student emotions will be measured using a scale of attitudes. This will help in determining the social norms for those specific scenarios, outside of individual experiences. Questions will be situational and be based off of realistic examples. For example:

1. “A young boy/girl from England wants to be your friend on Facebook”
2. “An online friend texts you every day and gets upset if you do not respond”
3. “You receive multiple messages from the same person every day, even if you do not respond back.”

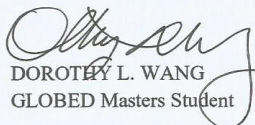


These emotions will be quantitatively measured, the discomfort of the person will be numbered lower, while enjoyment is measured higher. Afterwards, the results will be used to determine the social norms of students. Some behaviors may be seen as more normal than others.

A copy of my finished work will be provided to you at the soonest possible time it is available. The results of my study may help you zero in on aspects that need to be reinforced or modified to protect children and prevent future cases. I believe that you will find this information useful for teacher trainings in the future. Your approval of my request is highly anticipated. Should you need further clarification, please do not hesitate to reach me at: [missdorothywang@gmail.com](mailto:missdorothywang@gmail.com) or 09918511005

Thank you very much.

Respectfully yours,

  
DOROTHY L. WANG  
GLOBED Masters Student

Approved by,

  
WILLIAM E. GANDO, CESO VI  
Schools Division Superintendent

The superintendent was explained all aspects of the research. During the conversation he reiterated the need for anonymity of students and their responses.

2. Parent permission slip copy:

April 10<sup>th</sup>, 2022 at 2:00pm PH462 Eagle CDC, Burabod, Sorsogon City

A session on internet safety will be conducted for youths of PH462 Eagle. The purpose of which, students will discuss their online internet habits and learn internet safety strategies. The first part of the session will be recorded, and the data will be used to determine online social norms for youths. The recording will not be publicly available and will be highly confidential. The rest will be focused on how students can be safe and smart online and avoid being victims of bullying, scams, and abuse.

My son/daughter \_\_\_\_\_, will be allowed to participate in said session.

Parent name and signature:

Permission slips were signed and given to the prospective organizations who supported the focus group sessions.

3. Sign-in sheet, DWSD focus group session

**DSWD** DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL WELFARE AND DEVELOPMENT  
DSD-DF-001 | REV. 00 | 11 JAN 2021

YOUTH DEVELOPMENT SESSION ON INTERNET SAFETY  
 April 5, 2022/ 1:00PM  
 POO SORSOGON

**ATTENDANCE SHEET**

NO.	OFFICE	SEX	AGE	SIGNATURE
1	Burabod	F	17	[Signature]
2	Burabod	M	16	[Signature]
3	Burabod	M	15	[Signature]
4	JAMIA	F	16	[Signature]
5	Burabod	M	16	[Signature]
6	Uglog	F	18	[Signature]
7	Cabid-an	M	19	[Signature]
8	CABID-AN	M	17	[Signature]
9	Cabid-an	M	16	[Signature]
10	Cabid-an	M	15	[Signature]
11	Burabod	M	19	[Signature]
12				
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PAGE 1 of 1

DSWD Central Office, IBP Road, Batasan Pambansa Complex, Constitution Hills, Quezon City, Philippines 1126  
 Website: <http://www.dswd.gov.ph> Tel Nos. (632) 8 931-8101 to 07 Telefax: (632) 8 931-8191

This sheet was required for DSWD 4P's sessions.

4. Sign-in sheets, Ph462 EAGLE CDC

April 10, 2022

Temp	Name	Section	Birthdate	Signature
36.1	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]
35.9	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	06, 2005	[REDACTED]
36.2	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	20, 2003	[REDACTED]
36.1	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	01, 2003	[REDACTED]
36.1	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	22, 2004	[REDACTED]
35.6	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	08, 2005	[REDACTED]
34.6	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	11-	[REDACTED]
35.7	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	04	[REDACTED]
36.0	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	04	[REDACTED]
36.4	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	09	[REDACTED]
36.3	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	02	[REDACTED]
36.4	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	12	[REDACTED]
36.4	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	09	[REDACTED]
35.9	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	09	[REDACTED]
36.4	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	01	[REDACTED]
35.8	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	11	[REDACTED]
36.6	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	07	[REDACTED]
36.6	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	09	[REDACTED]
35.8	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	09	[REDACTED]
36.4	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	04	[REDACTED]
36.4	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	05	[REDACTED]
36.4	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	05	[REDACTED]
35.5	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	19, 2005	[REDACTED]
35.4	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	11-2002	[REDACTED]
35.3	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	11-2005	[REDACTED]
35.4	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	11-2005	[REDACTED]
35.4	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	11-2005	[REDACTED]
35.3	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	11-2005	[REDACTED]
35.4	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	11-2005	[REDACTED]
35.7	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	11-2005	[REDACTED]
35.9	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	11-2005	[REDACTED]
35.9	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	11-2005	[REDACTED]

Temp	NAME	SECTION	Birthdate	Signature
33.	[REDACTED]	BNC	2004	[REDACTED]
34.	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	2003	[REDACTED]
35.	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	2004	[REDACTED]
36.	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]
37.	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]
38.	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]

The sign-in sheet was required for this session.

A.II: Survey Questions

1. Online Survey Link: <https://forms.gle/hBi5bKQJgVSXxgb9> (currently closed)

2. Paper copy sample:

Online Habits

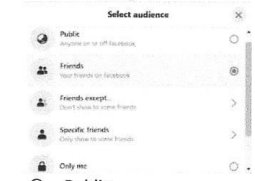
SAMPLE ONLY

This survey will be used to learn about youth online behaviors. The results will be completely confidential/secret- no one will see you answers besides the researcher. Please be honest when answering. Thank you!

- How old are you? 16
- What is your gender? (M/F)
- From where do you get internet?  
(Check all that apply)
  - Wi-fi/Broadband
  - Data
  - Internet Café
  - Other \_\_\_\_\_
- On what device?  
(Check all that apply)
  - Computer/Laptop
  - Smartphone
  - Tablet
  - Other \_\_\_\_\_
- Where do you get money for the internet?  
(Check all that apply)
  - Parents
  - Other family
  - Friends
  - Myself
  - Other \_\_\_\_\_
- Which social media websites do you use?  
(Check all that apply)
  - Facebook
  - Messenger
  - Instagram
  - Discord
  - Twitch
  - TikTok
  - Twitter
  - YouTube
  - Reddit
  - Snapchat
  - Other \_\_\_\_\_
- On average, how many hours per day do you spend online? (Global average is 7 hours)  
10 Hours\*
- How often do you post online?  

	2+ times a day	Once a day	1-2 a week	1-2 a month	Rarely/Never
Facebook	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Instagram	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Tiktok	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
Snapchat	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
Others	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
- How many Facebook accounts do you have?  
2

- How many Facebook friends do you have? Please state for each account.  
(forexample: 1st account- 5,000. 2nd account- 1,200)  
5000, 428
- Do you use FB messenger more than text messages?  
 Yes  
 No
- Is your Instagram account set to private or public?  
 Private  
 Public  
 I don't know  
 I don't use Instagram
- What is the privacy settings of your Facebook posts?



- Do you add strangers (hindi mo kilala) as friends?  
 Yes  
 No
- Do you chat with strangers?  
 Yes  
 No
- Have you ever posted information such as: your full name, phone number, age, location, address, information about your family and friends?  
 Yes  
 No
- Have you ever used a location tag?  
 Yes  
 No
- Do you know how to check for fake news?  
 Yes  
 No

19. Have you ever seen inappropriate content (hindi kanais-nais) online? (for example, in advertisements)
- Yes  
 No
20. Have you ever been sent inappropriate content online?
- Yes  
 No
21. Do you know anyone who has sent inappropriate photos online? (indecent photos, private parts, nudes)
- Yes  
 No
22. Have you ever been catfished? (You become friends with someone who used a fake account with fake pictures)
- Yes  
 No
23. Do you know how to check if an account is fake or real?
- Yes  
 No
24. Have you become very good friends with someone you only met online?
- Yes  
 No
25. Have you been in a relationship with someone you only met online?
- Yes  
 No
26. Have you met a real person face-to-face that you met from online?
- Yes  
 No
27. If yes, for what purpose
- To buy something  
 To meet with a group  
 To be friends  
 To work together

**Feeling ko....**

Using this picture, answer the following questions with your feeling #.



This is not OK- 1	I am not comfortable- 2	I feel a little concerned- 3	Neutral- 4	This is OK- 5	I like this- 6
-------------------	-------------------------	------------------------------	------------	---------------	----------------

1. "A young boy/girl from England wants to be your friend on Facebook" 6
2. "An online friend texts you every day and gets upset if you do not respond" 2
3. "You receive multiple messages from the same person every day, even if you do not respond back." 1
4. A friend online wants to meet in person. 5
5. A friend online likes to talk on the phone but is never available for video call. 3
6. Your online friend wants you to send them selfies every day. 2
7. Your online friend wants to know more personal information (where you live, what your schedule is like) 2
8. Your friend online gets mad kung hindi sinunod ang gusto. 1

3. Questions in the survey based on variables: The first section obtained general information and determined student access to online spaces.

1. From where do you get internet?
2. Which devices do you use?

The second section went into detail about social media accounts and determined social norms online.

3. How many accounts do you have on Facebook? (#)
4. How many friends do you have on Facebook? (#)

The next section was purely dichotomous (Yes = 1, No = 0).

5. Are their accounts public/private? (Public = 1, Private = 0)
6. Do they add strangers as friends?



Finally, student emotions were measured using Likert's scale of attitudes (Jamieson, 2004). This helped determine the social norms for those specific scenarios, outside of individual experiences. Questions were situational and based on realistic examples.

7. *"A young boy/girl from England wants to be your friend on Facebook"*
8. *"An online friend texts you every day and gets upset if you do not respond"*

### A.III: Focus Groups

1. Focus Group PowerPoint link: <https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1EzxT53b0JJ8NF2Q03kiebZaO-d-xWDEs/edit?usp=sharing&ouid=113915874329809967601&rtpof=true&sd=true>
2. Fictional story of a girl provided to participants:

Ito ang araw na bumago ng guhit ng kapalaran ko. Isang mensahe mula sa Facebook mula sa isang taong walang ibang laman ang account kundi mga larawang hango sa Google. Isang hi sa hindi isang taong ni isang mutual friend ay wala kami sa facebook at sa loob ng isang taong pagkakagawa ng kanyang account ay iilang post pa lamang ang makikita sa kanyang wall. Pogi siya sa picture nya. Yung tipong akala mo'y bida sa isang pelikula. Maputi, matangos ang ilong at sa una palang ay talaga naming sinuman ay mapapatulala sa kanya.

Isang hi na agad ko naming tinugunan ng hello ang umpisa ng lahat. Tumagal ang palitan ng mensahe at nalaman kong isa pala siyang marine sa Amerika. Oportunidad sabi ng aking ina. Kaya naman sa aking 17-anyos na pag-iisip ay napuno ng kuryusidad at pag-asang ito na nga ba ang aahon sakin sa hirap ng buhay. Ilang linggo pa lamang ay pumayag na akong maging nobya niya. Sweet sya at maalalalahanin at mahilig magbigay ng regalo na malugod ko ring tinatangap. Kapag naman gipit kami sa pangangailangan ay sya rin ang aking nalalapitan at agad din siyang nagbibigay.

Hanggang sa isang araw – sa mahigit isang buwan naming nag-uusap – bigla nyang sinabing gusto nya akong makita. Kumuha ako ng litrato at pinadala ko sakanya sapagkat ayaw niya ng video call at ito daw ay para sa mga isip bata na walang tiwala. Natuwa naman siya sa pinadala kong litrato at agad nagtanong kung sino ang aking kasama sa bahay. Sabi ko ako'y mag-isa – ang aking mga magulang ay nasa bukid at ang mga kapatid ko naman ay naglalaro sa tabing ilog. "Good," sabi nya "now can you do me a favor?"

At sa gulat ko sakanyang sinabi ay natulala ako bigla. Gusto nya akong makita ng nakahubo. At nung ako'y tumanggi, sabi nya'y normal lang daw sa magnobyong sa panahon ngayon ang ganon at isa pa'y madami na nga daw siyang naibigay saakin. Ano nga daw ba ang isang litrato kumpara sa halaga ng tinanggap ko galing sakanya.

Hanggang sa tuluyan na akong nakumbinsi. Lahat ng kanyang hiling, gagawin ko. Lahat ng mga hinihingi nyang mga larawan ay ipapadala ko. Hanggang sa nagtuloy tuloy ang mga pangyayari. Mga larawang malalaswa kapalit ng mga regaling binibigay nya para sa load, pagkain at mga dagdag na luho ko sa buhay. Pero ni isang beses ay hindi ko sya nakita. Ang mga larawang pinapadala nya ay madalas nakatalikod, larawan ng mga lugar o kaya naman ay di hagip ang kanyang mukha. Pero masaya na ako, nasanay na rin ako at inisip kong normal lamang iyon basta't masaya ako at natutustusan ang mga pangangailangan at luho ko.

Hanggang isang araw sa pag-aakalang wala nakaalis na ang lahat saamin, nahuli ako ng aking ina na kumukuha ng malalawang larawan at bidyong pinapadala ko sakanya. Napatalon ako sa gulat at namutla sa kaba. Ang takot ko sa galit ng inay ay biglang napalitan ng lungkot ng siya'y umalis lamang ng tila'y walang nakita. Ayos lang sakanya. Walang reaksyon sa mukha o mata. Walang ni anumang emosyon kundi blankong mga mata.

Ang mga susunod na araw ay naging blangko. Malungkot. Napagtanto kong ako'y naging tanga, bulag at nagpadala sa luho at mapusok na damdamin. Sinubukang kong makipaghiwalay sa aking nobyo na minsan ma'y di ko nakita. Ngunit nagbanta siyang ilalalabas nya lahat ng mga larawan at mga bidyo pinadala ko sakanya. Umabot ng ilang

linggo ang ayaw at pagpupumiglas ko ngunit nakatali na ako na walang ibang sisihin kundi ako. Lumabas din ang totoong isa siyang retired na marine sa Amerika at sa susunod na taon, pagtungtong ko ng 18 ay papakasalan nya ako, iuuwi sa Amerika upang kami ay magsama. Pinangakuan ako ng marangyang buhay ngunit, anong kasiguraduhan nito?

Wala na akong nagawa. Oo nalang ang kapalit ng lahat. At sa isang iglap naglaho sya – nawala bigla ang bakas ng sinumang nakakausap ko. Blocked. Deleted. Unavailable.

Ako nga lang ba? O isa lang ako sa madaming biktima?

### 3. Photos from focus groups





Annex B: Results  
B.I. Survey results

Figure 4.



## GENDER OF RESPONDENTS

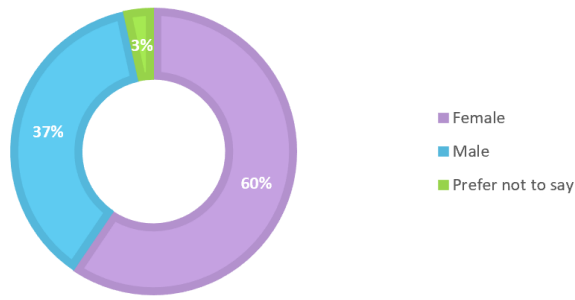


Figure 5.

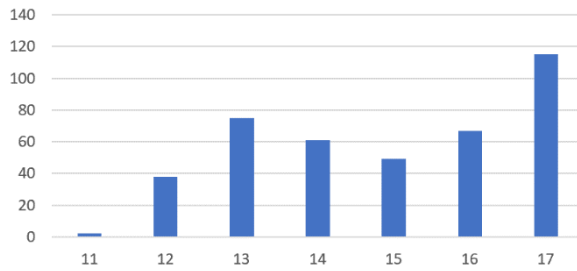


Table 4.

Internet	Use percentage	# of students
Wi-fi/Broadband	85.5	348/407
Data	37.59	153/407
Internet Café	1.2	5/407
Device	Use percentage	# of students
Smartphone	91.65	373/407
Computer/Laptop	67.32	274/407
Tablet	10.7	41/407
Who pays?	Percentage	# of students
Parents	97.05	395/407
Other family	9.09	37/407
Myself	8.6	35/407

Figure 10.

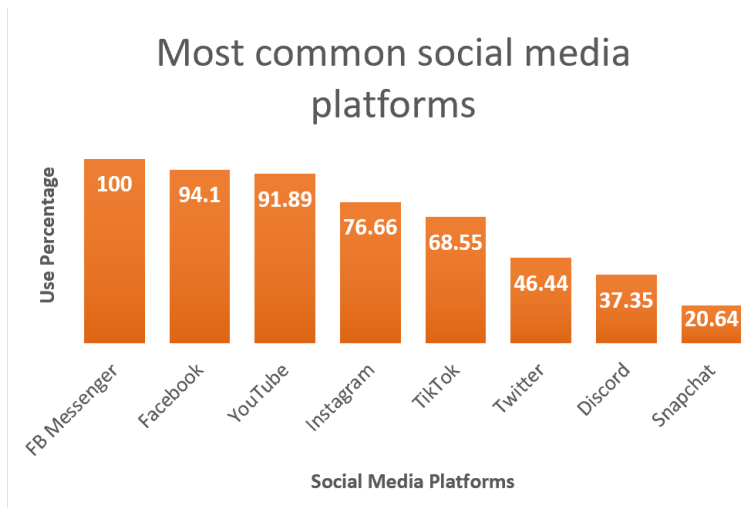


Figure 11.

Do you know all of your FB friends in real life?

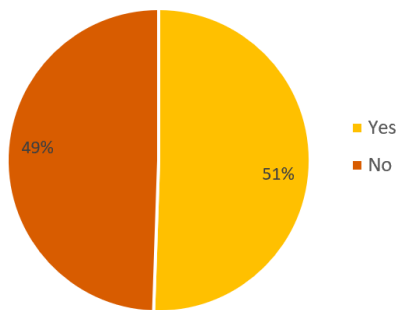


Figure 12.

Have you become good friends with someone you met online?

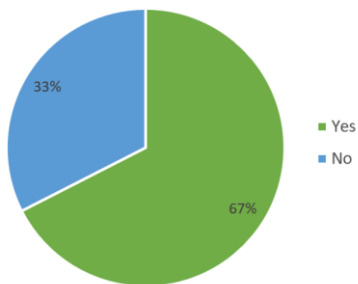


Figure 13.

Have you met a real person face-to-face that you met from online?

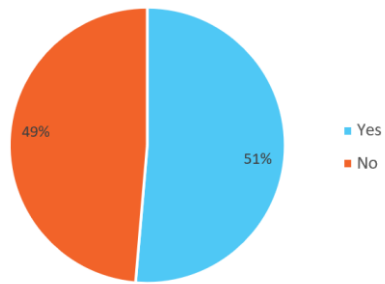


Figure 14

Reasons to meet someone in person

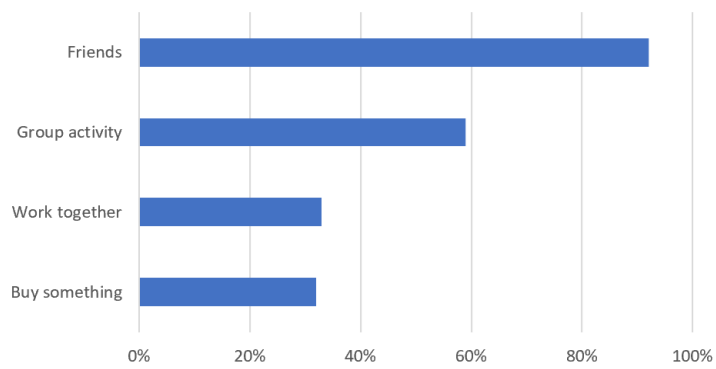


Figure 15.

Do you add strangers as friends on FB?  
(i-iadd mo bang tao hindi mo kilala?)

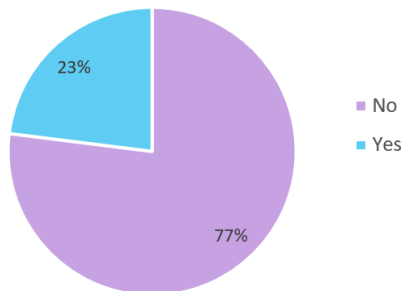


Table 5+6 combined

Do you know all of your FB friends in real life?	Do you add people you don't know in real life on social media? (i-iadd mo bang t		Total
	No	Yes	
No	81 59.12	56 40.88	137 100.00
Yes	123 86.62	19 13.38	142 100.00
Total	204 73.12	75 26.88	279 100.00

Key  
frequency  
row percentage

Pearson chi2(1) = 26.8194 Pr = 0.000  
Cramér's V = -0.3100

Do you know all of your FB friends in real life?	Have you become very good friends with someone you met online?		Total
	No	Yes	
No	31 22.30	108 77.70	139 100.00
Yes	56 39.44	86 60.56	142 100.00
Total	87 30.96	194 69.04	281 100.00

Pearson chi2(1) = 9.6478 Pr = 0.002  
Cramér's V = -0.1853

Figure 16

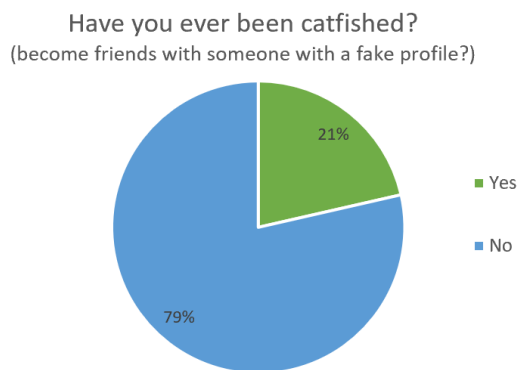


Figure 17

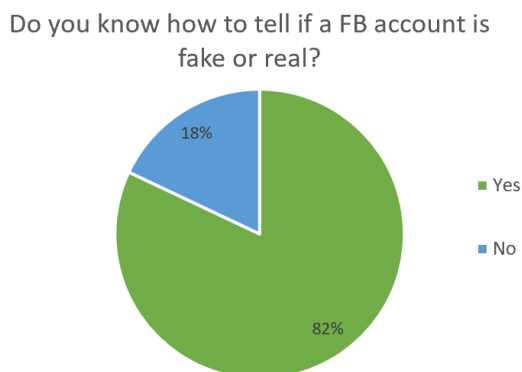


Figure 19

Facebook post privacy setting

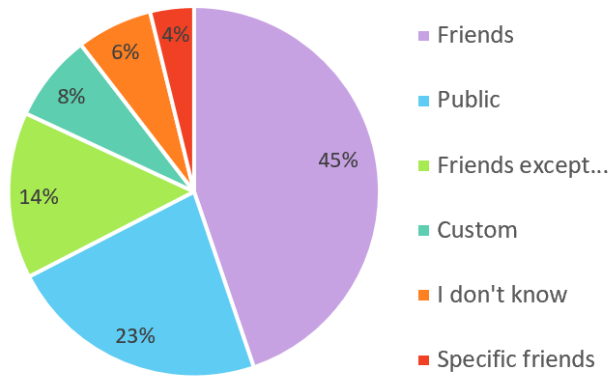


Figure 20.

Instagram privacy setting

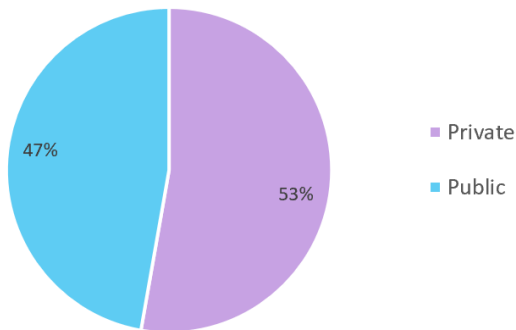


Figure 21.

Have you ever used a location tag?

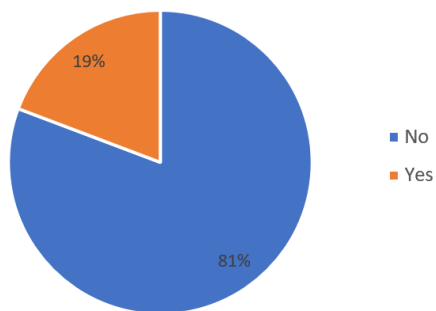


Figure 22.

Have you ever posted information such as: your full name, phone number, age, location, address, information about your family and friends?

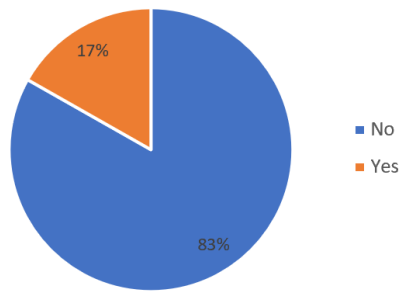


Figure 23.

Have you ever seen inappropriate content (hindi kanais-nais) online?

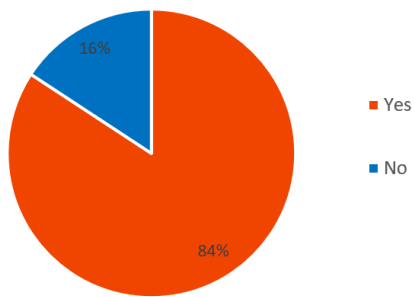


Figure 24.

Have you ever been sent inappropriate content online?

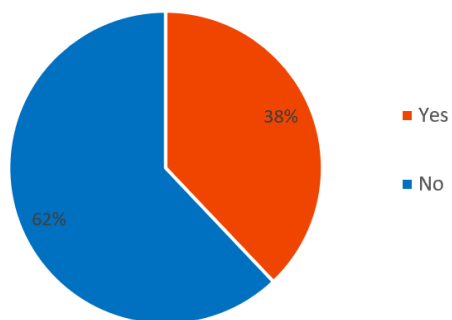


Table 8.

What is your gender?	Have you ever been sent inappropriate content online?		Total
	No	Yes	
Female	142 58.68	100 41.32	242 100.00
Male	103 68.21	48 31.79	151 100.00
Prefer not to say	8 57.14	6 42.86	14 100.00
Total	253 62.16	154 37.84	407 100.00

Pearson  $\chi^2(2) = 3.7488$  Pr = 0.153  
Cramér's V = 0.0960

Figure 25.

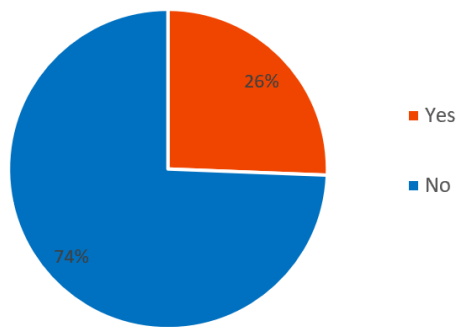


Figure 26.

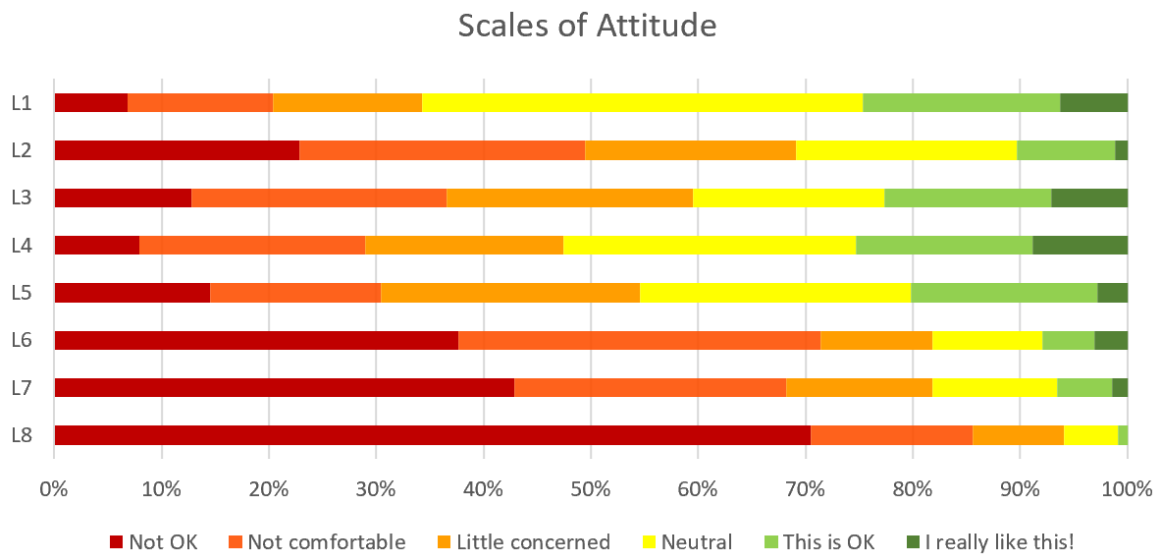
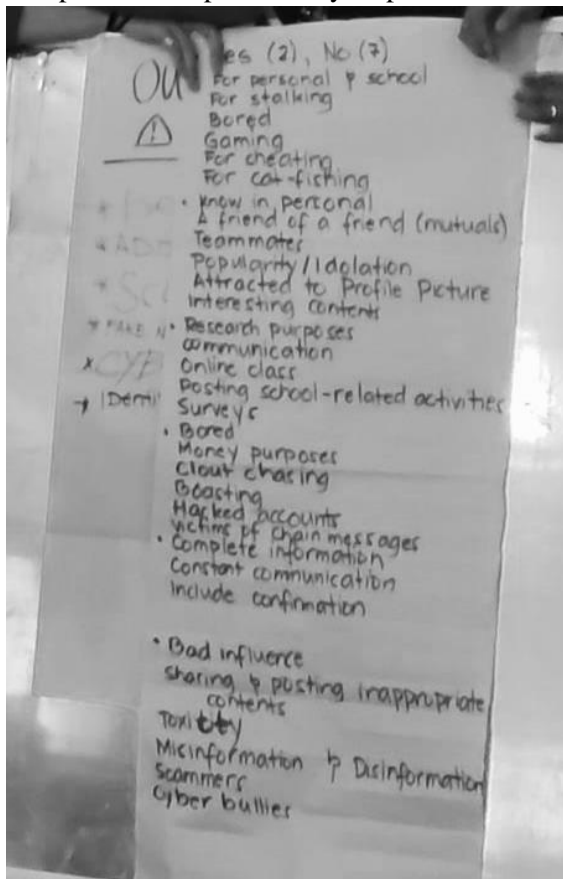


Table 10

Item	Obs	Sign	item-test correlation	item-rest correlation	average interitem covariance	alpha
Likert1	353	+	0.5364	0.3765	.5736508	0.7730
Likert2	352	+	0.6624	0.5247	.5180563	0.7488
Likert3	353	+	0.5802	0.4035	.5460467	0.7712
Likert4	352	+	0.6677	0.5196	.5090794	0.7496
Likert5	352	+	0.5831	0.4189	.5490677	0.7669
Likert6	353	+	0.6779	0.5437	.510483	0.7453
Likert7	352	+	0.7336	0.6202	.4900076	0.7323
Likert8	353	+	0.6030	0.4953	.5700458	0.7572
Test scale					.533298	0.7797

## B.II. Focus Groups Results

### 3. Sample answers provided by respondents



### 4. Sample answers provided by respondents



1-lack of awareness

- True story
- scammer
- griddy

2. No!

3. sad

4. A lot of people is familiar about it

5. Complicated relationship / toxic relationship

6. Have a awareness

7. ~~no~~! No, cause i won't <sup>lose</sup> my dignity

natatakot ang babae dahil binabantaan sya ng lalaki na ilalabas into ang kanyang mga pinadalang mga litratong malalawag.

1. common  
2. napapanood sa TV.

3. avoiding strangers online

4. nagisend sya ng mga malalawagang litrato at binabantaan sya ng ilalabas nya ang mga malalawagang litrato.

5 - pinangakoan sya ng ~~mga~~ pagtapataraal at magandang buhay at ito ay naging isang bola at biibigyan sya ng pera.

Hackers

4. ~~Don't click a link.~~ Don't click a link.

## 5. Sample answers provided by respondents

1. RELATED SA TOTOONG BOHAY.
2. NO.
3. HAPPY SIDE AY YONG NATUSTUSAN PO YONG MGA LOHO AT YONG SAD SIDE AY YONG NAGPADALA SYA NG MGA MALALASWANG LITRATO.
4. YES.
5. PITY AND MAD.
6. NO, ~~NO~~ Stalk muna ang fb acc ng stranger at kapag wala itong ni isang posts, at friends list, huwag itong iaaccept at huwag munang kausapin. and also ~~judice~~ <sup>maunang</sup> pag ~~trahahan~~ sa malinis na paraan ~~ng~~ <sup>yang</sup> para.

LET'S TALK

1. COMMON.
2. NEWS / FROM NEWS.
3. WAG KAGAD MAGTIWALA SA HINDI KILALA.
4. YONG BINANTAN SYA NA IKAKALAT ANG MGA MALALASWANG LITRATO NIYA.
5. YONG NAREALIZED NYA NA MALI YONG PAG <sup>BIGAY</sup> ~~IBIGAY~~ NYA NG MALALASWANG LITRATO.

6. Frequency chart: online dangers

"Online Dangers" themes	# of mentions
Fake news	5
Cyberbullying	4
Scams/scammers	4
Hacker	2

B.III. Records

1. Police records- OSEAC cases

