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# Greek Primary Educators' Perceptions of Strategies for Mitigating Cyber Child Exploitation

Aikaterini Fragkou  
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# Walden University

College of Social and Behavioral Sciences

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2018

Abstract

Greek Primary Educators' Perceptions of Strategies for Mitigating

Cyber Child Exploitation

by

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MA, Michigan State University, 2015

BS, City University of London, 2011

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Criminal Justice

Walden University

May 2018

## Abstract

Cyber child exploitation is a problem in Greece due to the economic crisis and the resulting lack of government focus on social improvements. Research reveals the importance of educating school teachers of the potential for cyber exploitation of children and argues that early detection of child-focused cybercrimes will decrease the prevalence of child exploitation. The purpose of this interpretive qualitative study was to explore the phenomenon of cyber child exploitation in Greece and to identify strategies teachers may employ to identify and avert cyber child exploitation. Grounded theory provided the framework for this research. The sample consisted of 20 school teachers from a private primary school in suburban Greece. The 20 teachers were over 21 years old, presently certified as teachers and working in primary school, willing to share on voluntary basis information about their experiences and concerns with cyber child exploitation awareness among students, as well as parents. One-to-one interviews were conducted to gather data. Coding was the procedure followed to divide the interview data and rearrange based on common patterns. The resulting themes revealed that no consistent strategies were used to protect children, teachers play a significant role in the prevention of cyber child exploitation, and there is a need for professional development of programs to protect children. Implications for positive social change suggest that educational institutions will help protect children as teachers become more knowledgeable about specific measures to effectively recognize cyber predators. With the guidance of well-informed teachers, students may learn to use the World Wide Web in an effective fashion while being able to avoid the dangers posed by cyber predators.

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## Dedication

I dedicate my research to Jesus Christ, without whom this would not have been possible. I dedicate this study to my mother, the most important person in my life, for her untiring support and encouragement throughout my 10 years of academic study. She never allowed me to give up on my dream. Mum, I will always love you and be grateful for your belief in me. You are my strength and my pillar of support, and for that I thank you. I also want to thank my dad, who passed away; he was the one who cheered me to do my best and achieve a doctoral degree. Until the last day I saw him, he was encouraging me to keep up until completion.

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## Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

The World Wide Web presents many opportunities for development and learning in children. Through the Internet, younger generations gain access to new knowledge and broaden their experiences. However, because of the structures of the Internet, children are often defenseless against exploitation in this environment (Ey & Cupit, 2011; Freech, 2000; Nir-Gal & Nur, 2003). Although multiple countries have educational programs to help children learn ways to use the Internet safely, there is a need for better education regarding online safety. Broadly stated concerns about these risks from parents, experts on child protection, and academia demand an exploration of children's knowledge of, and education about, Internet dangers. During the past 10 years, Internet use by children has increased, while the age at which children begin to go online has continued to decrease (Aisbett, 2001; Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2006; DeBell, 2005; Ey & Cupit, 2011; NetAlert, 2007).

One safe environment where children can use the Internet and other technologies is school, where they are likely to benefit from filtering and monitoring software, classroom supervision, and an acceptable-use policy that teachers, children, and parents agree to follow (Ey & Cupit, 2011). In contrast, children may access the web at home without any safety mechanisms or supervision. There is no foolproof technological means of protecting children from all of the risks they may find online. Moreover, children need to be taught safe and discriminating behaviors that they can apply whenever and wherever they use the Internet, not only in school settings (Ey & Cupit, 2011; Qualifications and Curriculum Authority and Skills, 2014).

A minority of parents provides effective advice to their children about avoiding Internet dangers (Ey & Cupit, 2011). This situation leaves many children vulnerable. From an early age, children should be educated, together with their parents, on a range of pair strategies of politics of digitally mediated surveillance (Barnard-Wills, 2012). It is not socially responsible to leave children susceptible to Internet dangers (Ey & Cupit, 2011). Educating children about protective behaviors to use online is crucial. Efforts to educate children about online safety should be conducted within schools; it is also necessary to teach children and parents to be protected when using the Internet outside the school setting. It is essential for Greek primary schools to work in partnership with families to teach children about protective strategies that they can use whenever they access the Internet (Ey & Cupit, 2011). In exploring teachers' views and responses to cyber child exploitation, I aimed through this research to gain greater knowledge on how teachers manage cyber child exploitation in primary schools in Greece.

Like teachers all over the world, teachers in Greece aim for safe classrooms with supportive learning environments. Administrators too want all students' use of the Internet to be productive. Teachers, together with administrators, seek to fulfill these goals (Glory, Neilsen-Hewett, & Sweller, 2013).

Chapter 1 is an overview of the phenomenon of cyber child exploitation starting with background information relevant to the study and the study's problem statement. Sections addressing the nature of the study, the study's purpose statement, and the rationale for the study follow. Chapter 1 ends with a discussion of the significance of the study.

## **Background**

For the majority of people, the act violating a child by inflicting verbal or physical injury and abuse is inexcusable; therefore, child sexual exploitation is considered a hideous crime (European Commission, 2016). Despite the extreme nature of child abuse, sexual exploitation is not as rare as some might think. A European Commission report released in 2016 stated that each and every day, thousands of children become victims of abuse and exploitation through use of the World Wide Web.

Physical, emotional, or sexual child abuse through physical, emotional, or sexual actions has been the topic of many research studies (Cyr, Michel, & Dumais, 2013; Nesteruk & Marks, 2011). When a child becomes a victim of cyber sexual abuse, the physical and psychological condition of that child is affected. More precisely, the child's physical health and intellectual progress in school are challenged. Although addressing the problem of cyber child exploitation is on the agenda of many organizations throughout the world, there is a particular need for attention to this problem in Greece, where programs to raise awareness of this criminal justice issue are lacking (European Union Commission, 2011; Young & Widom, 2014).

Greek and European legislation has provided for prevention programs to protect children from cyber exploitation. Greece's antitrafficking policy mandates education as part of a training process. This training process should involve not only experienced specialists, but also schoolteachers, children, and parents (Koumpoulas, 2015). In 2011, the National Rapporteur Office in cooperation with the Ministry of Education, International Organization for Migration (IOM), United Nations Children's Fund

(UNICEF), U.S. State Department, and other institutions and organizations, began planning events to raise awareness on bullying through sports and multimedia events involving more than 10,000 high school students (Koumpoulas, 2015). Programs offered by nongovernmental organizations in multiple schools have the ultimate purpose of informing students of Internet dangers and engaging them in campaigns aimed toward preventing children from becoming victims of sex trafficking (Koumpoulas, 2015).

Presidential Decree 9/2011 formed by the Centre for European Constitutional Law proceeded with the endorsement of the Financial and Cyber-Crime Police Unit (ECCPU) as an independent central office incorporated to the Hellenic Police, which was supervised by the chief of the police in Greece; police officers and policemen comprised the personnel of ECCPU (Papathanasiou et al., 2014). Because cybercrime includes multiple types of online offenses, ECCPU is divided into four groups: General Affairs & Personal Data Protection, Minor Protection, Software and Intellectual Property Rights Protection, and Electronic Communication Security (Papathanasiou et al., 2014). One of the development areas of this unit is the creation of an educational center as well as innovative tools and technology to deal with ever-changing cybercrime challenges. After 1 year of operation, GCCPS arrested 104 individuals for a variety of cybercrimes including online fraud, gambling, personal data violations, defamation threats, blackmail with the use of electronic means, cyberbullying, and hacking/cracking. Of those arrested for cybercrimes, 55.77% were convicted for the cybercrime of child pornography (Papathanasiou et al., 2014). Those numbers signify the need for better cybercrime laws in Greece. In the Greek Penal Code, there are no laws that deal specifically with crimes



committed using the Internet (Papathanasiou et al., 2014). Presidential Decree 47/2005 maintains the anonymity of Internet communications. Although there is a procedure for intercepting Internet communications in specific circumstances, as described in Article 4 of Law 2225/94, it is impossible to trace offenses committed online, where the only usable item is the electronic trace of the committer of the act (Papathanasiou et al., 2014).

Awareness of cyber child abuses should be enhanced through culture and arts (Koumpoulas, 2015). For example, NO PROJECT is a nongovernmental organization with a very active role in schools and universities. This NGO uses art to raise awareness (Koumpoulas, 2015). A lack of knowledge concerning how children can be protected from online threats has short-and long-term effects that cannot be easily tackled because such effects may be difficult to measure and may extend into adulthood (Nesteruk & Mark, 2011). Another factor in children's awareness of child exploitation is the role of parents with Greek culture. Parents play important roles in the process of protecting their children (Cyr, Michel, & Dumais, 2013).

Existing studies on cyber child exploitation include the following:

1. Quale and Taylor (2007) conducted a qualitative research by interviewing 13 men from a variety of demographic backgrounds. Interviews were semi structured. Participants were purposefully selected because all of them had been convicted of downloading pornography from the Internet involving children. The conclusion of this study, based on the interviews, was that such fantasies become more particular through the computer.

2. Ahia, Dickson, Dombrowski, and LeMasney (2004) emphasized the criminal profiling of sexual offenders as well as the methods and techniques that offenders have used to enter cyber child exploitation. Ahia et al. concluded that sexual offenders who violate children are not a homogeneous group. When the discussion of sexual predators moves to the cyber world, the profiles of these predators become more vague. Ahia et al. categorized most sexual predators as adults, noting that only a small percentage are youth.
3. Lalor (2004) argued that child exploitation is a crime that can exist in any region on the globe, which therefore warrants immediate global action. Cyber child exploitation is not geographically restricted to the West. For example, child pornography exists in Africa.
4. Frei, Erenay, Dittmann, and Graf (2005) conducted quantitative research revealing that 8% of more than 9,000 Internet users admitted to spending between 11 to 80 hours per week for sexual purposes on the Internet.
5. Burden and Palmer (2003) stressed that many of the images and videos in the cyber world remain within the acceptable and not-illegal boundaries of soft pornography. Their study provides grounds for further philosophical-social discussion of the definition of child pornography.
6. Cyr, Michel, and Dumais (2013) emphasized the main concern, anxiety, and worry of many American and European populations on cyber child abuse.

### **Problem Statement**

This research was focused on the problem of the failure of the Greek government to present educational programs in public schools to develop awareness regarding cyber child exploitation. Abuse of children stands as a major public concern that has generated multiple studies in past decades. The problem is evident in multiple communities and cultures. The National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC; 2011) reported that 1 in 5 girls and 1 in 10 boys become victims of sex crimes either online or offline before reaching the age of 18. Statistical data from the European Union indicated that already-implemented laws and regulations cover some of the issues related to cyber child exploitation; but, such regulations are not vigorous enough (European Union Commission, 2011). In Greece, there is specialized policing that focuses on Internet crimes (Bainbridge & Berry, 2011). However, no existing intervention in the Greek educational curriculum covers the formation of courses to foster awareness and prevention regarding cyber child exploitation.

This research presented a problem worth studying because European Union programs and Greek governmental initiatives on cyber child exploitation do not promote programs to educate parents on protection measures for children using the Internet. One possible cause of the evolution of cyber child exploitation has been the continual search for innovative processes for committing crimes by offenders, particularly with the goal of generating more revenue without high risk (Eggestein & Knapp, 2014). Offenders in today's world move increasingly within the online community because the real world of children is restricted by the virtual one, causing concern for Greek society as most

parents lack the necessary technology related skills to safeguard their children (Aiken, Moran, & Berry, 2011; Byron, 2008).

Child pornographers benefit from information technology. With the rapid development of this technology, new avenues have opened to allow child pornographers to work anonymously. For instance, one way for offenders to place illegal materials into the market is through electronic forums (Eggestein & Knapp, 2012). This is a major reason that cyber child exploitation has flourished (Crippen & Brew, 2013; Romagnoli & Wall, 2012). Attacks on children in the online environment continue to increase, thus pointing to the need for this research (European Commission, 2011). Athenian families have low awareness of how to recognize the symptoms of cyber child exploitation and how to prevent child abuse.

In an examination of the long and short-term impacts of cyber abuse, Young and Widom (2014) explored the possibility of decreases in intellectual development in primary students. The European Union offered a solution for Greece. This solution involves the development of more specific legislation as well as the establishment of new regulations addressing the numerous forms of child exploitation. Such regulations, however, do not encompass efforts to enhance awareness and prevention through a policy process in the form of an educational course in primary school (European Union Commission, 2011).

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore, understand, and describe the phenomenon of cyber child exploitation in primary school from the perspectives and

experiences of teachers. Teachers have an impact on students' daily lives, including students' unsupervised use of the Internet (Goryl, Neilsen-Hewett, & Sweller, 2013; Mishna, Scarcello, Pepler, & Wiener, 2005). This study adds to the body of knowledge by focusing on teachers' perceptions and experiences of children's use of the Internet without supervision as early as primary school. Teachers' perceptions of cyber child exploitation and school policies may inform the development of suitable interventions or action plans to enhance awareness of cyber safety among teachers and students.

### **Conceptual Framework**

Birks (2014) stated that each individual has a unique conceptualization of existence and reality. Birks emphasized the ways in which people understand the world and how it is influenced by peoples' history. A fundamental aspect of grounded theory research design is the process of concurrent data generation or collection and analysis. Data from initial encounters are coded before more data are collected or produced and the development of analysis is repeated (Birks & Mills, 2014). The distinct aspect of grounded theory in relation to other research designs is that it requires the researcher to initially collect and subsequently analyze the data.

Grounded theory methods are referred to as inductive, in that they involve building up theory from data. Induction of theory achieves its aim through successive comparative analyses. The logic of induction is also much more apparent in current writings about the grounded theory method (Charmaz, 2006; Mukherji & Albon, 2014; Reichertz, 2007). Abductive reasoning occurs at all stages of analysis, but particularly during the constant comparative analysis of categories that leads to theoretical

integration. Abduction occurs through a cerebral process, an intellectual act, a mental leap, which brings together the perceptions of primary school teachers on cyber child exploitation (Reichertz, 2007).

### **Research Objectives**

The research objectives were formed based on the problem statement of this study. The problem of interest was cyber child exploitation; but, the problem statement emphasized the gap found in current literature concerning effective strategies and techniques for increasing awareness within schools in Greece on cyber child exploitation.

The following were the main objectives of this research study:

- To determine primary school teachers' experience in identifying the unattended use of the Internet by children in the classroom or at home.
- To highlight the interventions that primary school teachers find effective in addressing the dangers of the Internet for both parents and children.
- To ascertain the types of related specialized development courses in the form of training programs that primary school teachers complete regarding cyber child exploitation prevention, if any, and what programs are implemented in each and every school in Greece to address cyber child exploitation.

### **Research Questions**

The central question framing this research was the following:

RQ1: What are the perceptions of educators on the problem of cyber child exploitation?

Two sub questions further amplified the central research question:

RQ2: Do teachers understand exploitation to be a danger to the primary school students that they teach?

RQ3: Do primary school educators use any strategies to inform children how to defend themselves from the threat of cyber child exploitation?

### **Rationale of the Study**

Cyber child exploitation opens an expansive space for governance and a diversification of means and methods for responding to it (Bond & Campbell, 2008). Parents can play a chief role in protecting their children in cyberspace by creating open communication about the safe use of the Internet. Parents are placed in the position of becoming familiar with social networking sites, such as Facebook, and arming themselves with knowledge about privacy settings, activities, and interactions (Deane & Walsh, 2013). Using teachers' perceptions on what is needed to enhance awareness of cyber child exploitation moves educator-parent collaboration well beyond its conventional and relatively benign remit of providing the policing of cyber abuse of children with additional eyes and ears. There is growing frustration among the public about cyber child exploitation. Online pedophilia is at epidemic level; police forces have seized about 300 million child abuse images over the past 2 years in Europe, which shows the scale of the problem. The feeling that the authorities are not effectively tackling the issue has led people to try to get involved. Because of the inherent limitations of modern policing practices, parents and teachers are better positioned to provide the

needed guidance and oversight to help protect children from Internet predators (Campbell, 2015).

### **Operational Definitions**

*Child abuse:* Child abuse refers to an act of sexual abuse or physical neglect of a child. Child abuse can be also defined as psychological mistreatment or abandonment of a child. Child abuse involves actions of caregivers and parents that have harmful physical or emotional consequences for children. Child abuse is a form of domestic violence, an important matter that needs to be addressed, especially when it enters the cyber world (Paavelainen & Tarkka, 2003).

*Child abuser:* A child abuser may come from any place in the world, in that child abuse is not associated with a specific social, economic, cultural, or religious background (Ramsland, 2014). A child abuser is a person who is responsible for an illegal act against a child that is harmful for the child sexually, physically, and/or emotionally, and/or occurs in a neglectful context (Ramsland, 2014).

*Child abuse recognition:* Child abuse recognition is the capacity of an individual to detect any signs of child abuse (Berkowitz, 2008). It is the individual's ability to understand when a child is being abused and to recognize the overall symptoms of child exploitation.

*Cyberspace:* Cyberspace is a cybernetic, immeasurable area for communication that is established through the Internet, a complex web of connections that is created by and accessed through a range of digital and electronic media (Harrison, 2016).



*Cyber child exploitation:* The term *child sexual exploitation* indicates the sexual abuse of a person under 18 years of age, as well as the production of images and videos depicting such abuse and the sharing of those images on the World Wide Web (Europol, 2017). Cyber child sexual exploitation is a contemporary phenomenon that has been shaped mainly by technological developments. Mobile connectivity, growing Internet coverage in developing countries, and the development of pay-as-you-go streaming solutions are advancing global trends involving commercial live-streaming of child sexual abuse, which provides anonymity to viewers (Europol, 2017).

*Grooming:* Grooming is defined as (a) the use of a range of manipulative and regulatory practices, (b) with a defenseless subject, (c) in a range of interpersonal and social settings, (d) for the purpose of creating trust or normalizing sexually harmful behavior, and (e) with the overall goal of facilitating abuse and prohibiting exposure of the perpetrator (Ashurst & McAlinden, 2015).

*Education:* Careful acquisition or transmission of knowledge from one person to another. To prevent child abuse, knowledge should be gathered on means of exploitation, as well as ways of avoiding cyber child exploitation (Davies, 2004).

*Knowledge:* Skills gained by an individual through experience and/or education. The individual has an understanding based on facts and truth about a certain topic or multiple topics (Boothroyd, Fawcett, & Foster-Fishman, 2004).

*Neglect:* Neglect involves repeated incapability to meet a child's needs and, in general, take care of the child appropriately, resulting in negative psychological effects (Thurston, 2006). Neglect is also referred to as *parental neglect* to offer necessary care.

Incapacity to give appropriate care leads to the potential for physical and/or psychological harm to the child (Risser & Murphy, 2000).

*General self-reliance:* Self-reliance is a person's trust in his or her own capacity to handle and complete multiple tasks in an effective way as well as handle different situations in life (Bandura, 1977).

*Specific self-reliance:* The confidence gained by a person based on his or her own capability on a particular task (Bandura, 1977).

*Parental self-reliance:* *Self-reliance* refers to a person's ability to achieve proficiently and professionally on a given task (Dykas & Cassidy, 2005). Parental self-reliance is an individual's knowledge about a particular topic as well as behaviors related to that topic.

*Unreported child abuse:* Unreported child abuse is abuse of a child that is not reported to any authority such as police to seek the elimination of the criminal activity (Besharov & Laumann, 2011).

### **Assumptions, Scope, Limitations, and Delimitations**

One assumption made for this study was that teachers are aware of the fact that cyber child exploitation is an ongoing issue and that parents are unaware of methods to handle it. Teachers in this study were assumed to participate and respond truthfully. The third assumption pertained to the participation of the teacher; I assumed that primary school educators took part in my research without any thought of fear about negative perceptions concerned with their wider community and school environment.

The scope of this research included primary school teachers' opinions on cyber child exploitation within the setting of a private primary school in a northern suburb of Athens, Greece. The study was limited to precise research questions and did not cover all areas of cyber child exploitation. One of the limitations of this study was that interviews were conducted in the primary school setting only. Another limitation was that the educational institution in this research was the only school in the district. Finally, the grades of children in the school were limited from first to sixth.

### **Significance**

The significance of this study lies in the prospect of helping teachers, parents, and the wider community to be informed on and aware of how to use the Internet safely, as well as how to protect children from online threats. Such awareness has the potential to eliminate the use of the Internet by children without supervision. Child sexual exploitation is not a new phenomenon. Child exploitation and cyber child abuse have been studied for many years by multiple researchers (Cyr, Michel, & Dumains, 2013). Cyber child abuse represents a crisis because although many studies have focused on this criminal justice issue, the crime remains untackled. More precisely, Greece has reinforced multiple plans and events to raise awareness by addressing cyber child exploitation (Koumpoulas, 2015). The aim of such actions has been to enhance the rights of sexually abused children as well as eliminate such crime. Greek government initiatives on cyber child exploitation stand as overall actions of this community to diminish this criminal justice problem. Greek citizens should be aware that abuse of a child represents a pattern in that child's life that may begin in the child's early years but endure into

adulthood (Putman-Hornstein, Cleves, Licht, & Needell, 2013). Families in Greece, especially with current social and economic conditions, do not have necessary resources in the form of policies to guide them in preventing children from becoming victims of cyber child exploitation (Romagnoli & Wall, 2012; Nadan, Splisbury, & Korbin, 2014).

Because the problem of child exploitation has a negative impact on society, laws have been established toward the protection of children and the elimination of their abuse. In 1974, the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA) became law. This law was passed to guard every child around the globe against any form of abuse, either physical or sexual (Child Welfare, n.d.). The European agenda includes cases of abuse; but, more and more children are becoming victims of cyber abuse (Europa, n.d.). There is a need for an awareness program and state regulations to combat this resistant trend of cyber child exploitation because the rate of cyber-abused children is increasing day after day (Children's Service Council, n.d.). The outcomes of this research may inform parents and residents in Greece about several approaches that can be implemented in their daily schedules to protect children from online offenders. In addition, this research may enhance the progress of governmental regulations and policy formation to assist in the reduction of attacks of cyber child exploitation and contribute toward positive social change in the Greek community.

When teachers, parents, and other educational and policy specialists can take efficient actions to safeguard children, social change will be realized. Students around the globe, ideally, should use the Internet safely, without fear of cyber exploitation and abuse. Through this study, positive social change may become a reality when educational

institutions and schools can build environments that endorse awareness courses for teachers and students on online child exploitation.

### **Transition Statement**

I incorporated five units: introduction, literature review, methodology, data analysis and findings, and conclusion and recommendations. The first unit incorporates the topic and the background of the research. The problem statement and purpose follow in the same unit, which emphasizes understanding of the phenomenon of cyber child exploitation in primary schools from the perspectives of schoolteachers.

In the second chapter, I focus on a review of related literature to understand the findings of earlier research. In the third chapter, I emphasize the methodology that I used and incorporated into the research design and methods to carry out this research. In the fourth chapter, I classify the data and analyze the interview transcripts. Through this analysis, certain thematic concepts are drawn out to identify the dominant themes of the results of the research. Finally, Chapter 5 is a summary of the research, relevant recommendations, and suggestions for further research.

## Chapter 2: Literature Review

The purpose of this qualitative research was to study the perceptions and experiences of teachers pertaining to cyber child exploitation to enhance awareness of this problem in primary education. This chapter contains a review of relevant scholarly books, journal articles, Internet sources, dissertations, and an overview of published literature on the monitoring of children's Internet use. The aim of the literature search was to identify important resources on the issue of cyber child exploitation and to define the body of literature that makes an important contribution to understanding this criminal justice issue. The literature review is organized around the following sections: Theoretical Framework, Literature Review, Summary, and Conclusion. The impact of pornography on the child, teachers and cyber child exploitation, e-safety, the grooming of children by online predators, parental education, and related methodologies on cyber child abuse are addressed.

### **Literature Search Strategy**

For the literature search, I used multiple strategies. The procedure included accessing both online and land-based libraries in Greece as well as in England. One hundred sixty peer-reviewed scholarly journals, books, and other materials were reviewed during this search. Databases used in this study included ProQuest, Sage, and Google Scholar. The keywords that follow aided the search: *grounded theory*, *cyber child exploitation*, *child abuse*, *grooming*, *e-safety for children*, *cyber abuse prevention programs*, and *parents' intervention on children's safety*. The research involved journal

articles, which included reports of data collection, data sources or methods, data analysis methods, and findings. Results and conclusions from relevant literature are presented.

### **Theoretical Framework**

Numerous children in primary school deal with cyber child exploitation. Cyber child abuse is a rather complex topic, and many theories have been developed in the effort to address such offenses. To fully capture and comprehend a strategy to stimulate awareness of this problem within primary schools in Greece, the study used the grounded theory method (GTM). The GTM focuses on the interface between individuals and the phenomena of interest within research (Urquhart, 2013). Under this theoretical framework, theory was developed after the opinions and experiences of teachers on cyber child abuse were collected. The process of grounded theory was represented in this study by an initiative to use the qualitative approach of interviewing to teach children how to protect themselves from cyber child exploitation. Grounded theory involves the development of a general abstract theory and a process grounded in the views of participants and, in this case, teachers' perceptions. Not every study that uses grounded theory results in the emergence of a new theory; but, a framework for the development of a theory is created.

The data in this study were gathered through one-to-one interviews with primary school teachers. Such relationships need a lot of guidance and study to move from constructs to coding families (Urquhart, 2013). Grounded theory is based on a series of cumulative coding cycles and reflective analytic memoing to form key categories to

generate theory (Miles et al., 2014). After the interviews were conducted, certain themes and patterns were reviewed during the next step of the research process.

The target population consisted of educators, whose perceptions stood as constructs for the formation of codes and themes (Schneider, Ingram, & Deleon, 2014). Theory was presented through a narrative framework, diagram, or statement. The purpose of this study was to interview 20 primary school teachers to identify one or two categories and then form a theory concerning the fight against cyber child exploitation in Greece (Urquhart, 2013). The theory became more coherent through the formation of constructs from the interviews. Generally, theory indicates multiple conceptions, abstract formulations, and indefinite descriptions of individuals or events (Reynolds, 2006). Theory can be defined as an idea up to the point when theory is supported by empirical data. At this point, theory becomes reality (Reynolds, 2006). The popular understanding of the term *theory* is that it refers to ideas, abstract conceptualizations, and vague descriptions. The noteworthy aspect of theory is that it has a large contribution to research.

Within the realm of grounded theory, constructs are grounded in observations or interviews, which derive from data. The area under investigation in this study was cyber child exploitation, and the goal was to create substantive theory from this criminal justice issue. The literature formed from this study around cyber child exploitation and how to increase the self-reliance of parents in Greece was produced after, not before, building the theory (Urquhart, 2013). Theory may be deductive or inductive (Laureate Education, 2009). Deductive theory produces a new theory by testing an existing one. In contrast,



inductive theory provides the necessary steps to form a new theory that covers more research areas and questions than an older one (Laureate Education, 2009). Inductive theory starts with study of the world and not already-examined theories. This approach is popular in qualitative discourse as it preconditions engagement with people. Inductive theory is applied when theory and variables are not predefined (Ezzy, 2002).

The aim of this research was to find a sample population with knowledge and/or influence, such as educators in Greek primary schools, to provide a basis for further regulations and policy formation to produce positive social change (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). In a grounded theory study, the theory should not determine the sample size because the theory emerges from the process of conducting the research (Miles et al., 2014).

Martin and Bush (2000) stressed that learning experience is a dominant factor in shaping people's attitudes and overall behavior. Glaser and Strauss, founders of the grounded theory method, wanted data (interviews) to speak to the examiner (Bryant & Charmaz, 2007). More analytically, data would be collected and coded, and then codes would be categorized into groups (categories) related to each other by evident concepts deriving from the data analysis process. Those concepts are then integrated to form a theory (Hennink, Hutter, & Balley, 2011).

I chose grounded theory for this study because I expected that this approach would contribute valuable insight into the crime of cyber child exploitation, and on perceptions concerning the establishment of future policies and regulations. Grounded theory provides the interviewer's thoughts, expectancies, perceptions, opinions, and

competencies (Dilmac & Aydogan, 2010). Self-reliance is a motivational construct based on the self-perception of competence rather than skill. Teachers' competencies start with acceptance of the need to alter the culture of Internet society as and the culture of primary schools in order for educators to have enough know-how to handle and consequently, minimize occurrences of unattended use of Internet by children.

Other theories, such as feminist perspectives, are more explicit in the sense that feminism is based on male behaviors. Since the beginning of the history of crime, male offenders have dominated the juvenile system (Stucky & Ottensmann, 2014). Feminism can also explain other criminal justice issues, such as causes of delinquency, risk, Internet offenses, protective factors, and gender differences (Charmaraman, Jones, Stein, & Espelage, 2013; Glasner, 2010; Thunfors & Cornell, 2008; Viding, Simmonds, Petrides, & Frederickson, 2009). It is worth noting that educators should put some strict policies in place in schools for parents and children to provide a safe online environment; the same safety policies can then be applied at home as well (Cref, Hespe, Gantwerk, Marty, & Vermeire, 2011). A safe setting for Internet use may encourage knowledge development and enhance the learning process of children and parents.

### **Literature Review**

There is a large body of research showing that young populations are using Internet and social media and are thus vulnerable to child abuse and exploitation. Such behaviors have caused major concerns for society and care providers (Ashurst & McAlinden, 2015). Many discussions about the Internet, new information, and media technologies have been dominated by popular beliefs that emphasize the potential for

boundless, creative, free communication and interaction (Akdenis, 1997). The World Wide Web promotes opportunities for communication, in addition to limitless access to knowledge (Travers, 2000). The Internet provides remarkable opportunities for children's learning and development. However, because the Internet is unregulated and difficult to control, children who use it are at grave risk for exploitation (Ey & Cupit, 2011). The sections that follow in this chapter include the definition of cyber child exploitation and the study's research questions. This study was focused on how primary school educators perceive and address cyber child exploitation and how they acquire professional development to promote greater awareness of this problem among students. This chapter contains sections addressing cyber child exploitation, the grooming of children, sexual offenders, e-safety, and parent-child schemes.

### **Impact of Pornography on the Child**

The World Wide Web generates possibilities for the harassment and deception of various groups (Meloy, 1998; Thomas & Loader, 2002). Individuals involved in cyber child exploitation show harsh behavior in this environment, due to the anonymity and depersonalization that the online community provides (Bocij & MacFarlane, 2003; Joinson, 2007; Mullen, Pathe, & Purcell, 2009; Suler, 2004). To signify the importance of the problem, the scale of the issue should be quantified. In other words, it is necessary to place such observations into quantitative terms. Taylor and Quale (2003) described how the number of online sex offenders' images rose from 3,000 to 40,000 pertaining child pornography in just 6 months. Ropelato (2006) indicated that revenues generated through the distribution of such images over the Internet rose from \$3 billion annually to \$20

billion in the last annual report of 2005. Such escalation signifies the global extent of the problem.

Children who are affected by pornography or any other type of child exploitation suffer many substantial effects with long-term impacts. People who have been exploited in childhood have been found to experience serious long-term effects of exploitation and abuse (Saavedra, Silverman, Morgan-Lopez, & Kurtines, 2010). The impact of child exploitation is momentous as well as hazardous for the one exploited, especially when that person is a child. For example, the flood of hormones triggered by a sexual assault can lead to the victim's memory of the trauma being fragmented and difficult to recall. This, in turn, leads to confusion and hesitancy that can be interpreted as indications of dishonesty. Many of the effects of child exploitation have an impact on victims for a lifetime and change the course of their lives, even if the abuse occurs in the early childhood years. Childhood exploitation may have a wide range of effects across multiple domains, including behavioral, social, and psychological development (Arnow, Hart, Hayward, Dea, & Taylor, 2000; Saches-Ericsson, Blazer, Plant, & Arnow, 2005).

When child abuse takes place, many problems, especially medical problems, appear. The most commonly reported medical problems associated with child abuse are health disintegration, gastrointestinal health problems, gynecological issues, pain throughout the body, cardiopulmonary symptoms, and obesity (Irish, Kobayashi, & Delahanty, 2009). There are many impacts of child exploitation for victims; some of the most severe involve behavioral complications, addiction to alcohol, repressed memories, sexual behaviors, unlawful conduct, and lasting psychological effects, with mood and

thought disorders being the most common. Such impacts and effects of child pornography may expand up to adulthood (Widom et al., 2007).

Children who have been victims of abuse and exploitation require lifelong psychological and educational assistance to enhance a life without mental and physical disorders. Some of the impacts are gradual, whereas others are immediate, depending on the individual child as well as the situation of child abuse (Pineda-Lucater, Trujillo-Hernandez, Millan-Guerrero, & Vasquez, 2009). What sexual offenders do is to create fear of harm and death for children whom they have abused to easily gain contact with the children's bodies. Most of the long-term effects of such abuse are associated with psychological impacts such as anxiety and depression. The short-term effects are mostly associated with eating disorders, interpersonal disorders, disorders of sexual relations, low self-esteem, blame, shame, rage, fear of family break-ups, and suicide (Pineda-Lucater et al., 2009).

Behavioral problems in childhood as well as adulthood are common in victims of child exploitation. Raghavan and Kingston (2006) indicated that there is a connection between being a victim of child sexual exploitation and engaging in illegal substance use in adulthood, as well as with other harmful behaviors. Children who have experienced abuse are more likely to become involved in drug consumption, violent behaviors, and other problems related to stress in adulthood. Many children who have been exploited start to drink alcohol, smoke cigarettes, and use drugs at younger ages than their peers (Thurston, 2006). A child who has been exploited in such a way that materials

documenting this exploitation can be viewed online anytime by almost anyone around the world may exhibit extreme behavioral problems as a result (Thurston, 2006).

Children who have been exploited lose their self-identity in the sense that they feel that they do not have control over their own lives. Children who have been abused may try to escape from their daily lives to subconsciously reject the act of abuse. In this way, abused children may try to control their lives, or some aspects of their lives. The search for control by the abused person in many cases leads to alcoholism and other destructive behaviors. Such behavioral problems emerge as coping mechanisms to support victims in developing a sense of control and protection over their own lives (Waldfoegel, Craigie, & Brooks-Gunn, 2010). According to Horney (2005), persons who do not feel secure or who have been exposed to abuse may follow schemes to cope and defend themselves against unwanted feelings of insecurity. Childhood abuse, especially childhood exploitation, is related to various behavioral complications, many of which start by the time the child is being exploited and continue into adulthood (Springer & Misurell, 2010).

The problem of cyber child exploitation is a significant criminal justice issue, and there is a glaring need for research to find solutions that may provide better protection for children. Indicators demonstrate that this phenomenon will continue to grow and expand in multiple communities (Moran, 2010). Children in Greece, as in any other place in the world, will be placed at considerable risk, either by entering offenders' domains accidentally or becoming victims of child pornography. Either way, the impact on

children will be great, with negative psychological effects if parents are not informed well to protect their children (Byron, 2008; Livingstone, 2006).

### **Cyber Child Exploitation**

Problems related to definitions and procedures linked with the term *exploitation* make it difficult to precisely measure or even consistently guess the number of people affected by it (Anderson & O'Connell Davidson, 2003; Davidson, 2011; Salt, 2000). At the same time, according to UNICEF (2007), all exploited children, whether in the sex industry or another context, suffer horrifying consequences that affect their growth and development. Child sexual exploitation and youth offending involve the exchange of the sexual services of a child for commodities (Cockbain & Brayley, 2012). Child abuse involves asymmetrical power relationships, whereby the victim's emotional, mental, or physical immaturity or socioeconomic disadvantage is exploited (Chase & Statham, 2005; Cockbain & Brayley, 2012). Together with those harmful consequences, abused children are likely to experience immediate trauma because of abuse, which may be linked with mental, emotional, and behavioral difficulties (Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre [CEOP], 2011; Cockbain & Brayley, 2012). There has been increased impetus to tackle child exploitation in an international spectrum, but nothing to decrease victimization rates has been implemented (Chase & Statham, 2005). Such initiatives include proposals for new European directives and joint initiatives aimed at improving knowledge of and responses to child exploitation (Cockbain & Brayley, 2012; Skidmore, 2004).

For many people in the Western world, activities of a sexual nature have become routine (Doring, 2009), and a fraction of such activities are illegal and involve inappropriate images of children. Despite an increase in research related to people who produce, access, and trade such images, there has been a small amount of work emphasizing the children exposed on those images (Quale & Jones, 2011). Most of the previous studies on cyber child exploitation through sexualized images on the Internet have emphasized the description of child pornography (Akdeniz, 2008; Lanning, 2008; Quale & Jones, 2011). At this point, it is worth mentioning that child abuse and pornography existed before the advent of the Internet. However, with technological advances, the accessibility of child pornographic material has increased. The circulation of images and videos depicting exploited children occurs on the web without any effective means of elimination, detection, and control. Internet technology lowered the cost of the production of videos and images depicting sexually abused children, dramatically increased their accessibility, and reduced the risk of revealing that was allied with the criminalization of production and possession (Adler, 2008; Quale & Jones, 2011; Taylor & Quale, 2003).

The Internet is known to have generated an exponential increase in the volume of cyber-exploited children (Carr, 2001; Interpol, 2002). Apart from the fact that there has been an increase in sexual exploitation of children (Hughes, 2000), there is some agreement that the volume of abuse images continues to increase (Reynold & Greighton, 2003). Children are abused and exploited at a younger age (Taylor, 1999; Taylor, Quale & Holland, 2001; Harrison, 2006) with new information and communication technology



leading to different forms of abuse towards the act of perpetrating abuse, contact other offenders with any fear of persecution (Arnaldo, 2001). Nonetheless, researchers have documented the experiences of sexually exploited young people and the need for specialist support (Beckett et al., 2013; Firmin, 2011; Melrose & Pearce, 2013; Pearce, 2009). Previous researchers declared that at the national and international levels, the children who are mostly exposed and vulnerable to be victims of cyber exploitation are those who have experienced abuse previously in other forms or are living in adverse social and economic circumstances (Kelly, 2001; Warburton, 2001). But, sexual exploitation either online or offline does not always involve abuse. Child exploitation can occur using technology without the child's direct recognition (Coy, 2016). For example, being influenced to post images of sexual nature on the Internet without immediate payment or gain (Coy, 2016).

### **Grooming Through Social Media**

Reports on this topic exist from the news media, from front line practitioners, and studies on the criminal justice issue. The statistics on frequency of cyber child exploitation offered evidence that young individuals get involved in cyber exploitation with frequency that signifies the need for attention from society, and the wider community to be tackled efficiently (Hackett, 2014). Before criminal justice experts adequately address cyber child exploitation, they need to consider how sexual behavior of young people, the ethics, and the norms of conduct in communications about personal and sexual matters are changing (Ashurst & McAlinden, 2015). These ideas and their behavioral concepts are also altering the strategies of groomers. The change of those

norms pose central questions for adults, especially those related with the social sciences, about the difference between what is normative or banal and what is possibly unsafe, and illegal (Ashurst & McAlinden, 2015).

Emphasizing this point, Wolak and Finkelhor (2011) referred to the notion that harm from sexually-explicit exchanges through forms of communication, such as social media, may vary from minimal embarrassment to death, based on multiple causes not limited only to the interchange or its content. The intent of messages by the individuals' communication range from just seeking attention or to harm cause intentionally. For example, someone who looks for gang recognition causes an intentional and significant harm. Their sexual behaviors are often based on mechanisms for attempting to accomplish something which is valued, or which is symbolic to themselves, or others such as sexual gratification (Ashurst & McAlinden, 2015).

The methods used in grooming vary, rendering impossible the prescription of the methods used. Such methods are limited in detection because the people who are using them formed them. In general, grooming is a rather open, and less defined process (Ashurst & McAlinden, 2015). Grooming can appear in multiple contexts, either intra familial or extra familial, as well as online, or face-to-face. In the most basic form, grooming refers to manipulation and control. The groomer only starts the manipulation if he or she ensures protection. Applying this simple notion uncovers that grooming is not only an entry point into harmful sexual behavior, but also a way that offenders may extend their criminal behavior as well as maintain it (Ashurst & McAlinden, 2015). Specialists should not be trapped into the thinking that only young people groom others

using social media tools, implying that grooming is a contemporary issue (Ashurst & McAlinden, 2015). It is not; the exploitative persistence is maintained the same, and the overarching mechanisms stay similar. The only things that may have changed in some instances are the frequency, intensity, and duration of the grooming (Ashurst & McAlinden, 2015).

Epstein and Ward (2008) argued that boys get fewer chances for organized and proper sex education in comparison with girls, leading them to trust more the actions and behaviors of peers or media, particularly social media, for their education on this topic. Current sexual norms adopted by younger populations, mainly males, become distorted and scaffolded by social media. The younger generations rely on pornographic material found for free in the World Wide Web to be educated on sexual behavior. There has been a contemporary growth in both the rate of consumption (Carrol et al., 2008) and exposure to pornography by children who are 13 years old or under (Sun et al., 2014). Some of the growth may just come from the easy way to view pornography by entering the World Wide Web (Johnson et al., 2010) and to the dominant social acceptance of a “pornified” culture (Paul, 2005).

Exposure to pornography, unsuitable, morbid, or violent content, obscene language, and communicating online with strangers is widely documented and represents concern (Aisbett, 2001; Ey & Cupit, 2011; NetRatings Australia, 2005). Recent statistics demonstrated that 4.3% of children aged 5 to 8 years old accessed the Internet daily in 2003, which was increased to 10% in 2006 (Ey & Cupit, 2011). Despite the fact that adults are encouraged to supervise children’s usage of Internet, children are monitored

less as they become more confident in using the Internet (Trewin, 2003). Aisbett (2001) revealed that 52% of families are regularly involved with 6 to 10 years olds' Internet access, 31% are involved in occasionally, while 17% are not involved at all. The Internet does present specific harms for children and persons responsible for children because it has proven very difficult to control (Lawson & Comber, 2000). However, there are no provisions for teaching safe Internet behaviors to protect children outside school (European Commission, 2017).

Moving to intervention, thinking about developing competence is a solution implying the enhancement of cognitive skills, memory, and thinking procedures that will be all essential for making healthy choices, or at least ones that are not harmful (Ashurst, 2011). The important aspect of competence in decision making expressed by Kahneman (2011) is defined as lessening reliance when automatic thinking occurs and enhancing reliance on mindful thinking. Much of this change will necessitate children to realize tactics for thinking and procedures for decision making in which the triggering of bundles and automatic thinking ends to conscious thought.

### **Profile of Sexual Offenders**

There is a large body of literature about online sexual offenders; but, only recently have researchers identified the most prominent types of offenses. These offenses include the meeting of victims online, child pornography production, possession, distribution, and usage of technology for the sexual exploitation of children (Wolak, Finkelhor, & Mitchell, 2016). Categorization also exists when the focus turns on why the offenders commit the crime. Some access out of curiosity, to satisfy some sort of fantasy

without engaging in a contact offense, others for economic benefits by distributing such illegal material as well as utilizing the Web as a means to commit a contact offense (Clevenger, Navarro, & Jasinski, 2016; Krone, 2004). Some characteristics have relatively consistent findings across various studies emphasizing on the profiling of sexual offenders. For example, one study focusing on arrested cyber child pornographers concluded that most of them were 26 years old or above (Wolak et al., 2012). Such conclusion aligns with the study of Burke, Sowerbutts, Blundell, and Sherry (2002) who noted that offenders who visited child pornographic material online are typically men of 25 and 50 years.

Babchishin et al. (2011) conducted a meta-analysis revealing that online offenders tended to be younger men with greater victim empathy and more sexual deviancy. There is homogeneity among this offender group type. Moreover, there is an agreement in terms of demographic profiling of online sex exploiters (Siegfried, Lovely, & Rogers, 2008; Webb, Craissati, & Keen, 2007; Wortley & Smallbone, 2006). However, the traits concerning the psychological and behavioral aspects of the offenders did not indicate great consistency in terms of online exploiters (Elliot, Beech, Mandeville-Norden, & Hayes, 2009; Laulik, Allam, & Sheridan, 2007; Sheldon & Howitt, 2007).

Differences do exist among this offender group, and it is worth mentioning the variations among them. Multiple researches have uncovered information showing that there are different subsets of child exploitation (Alexy, Burgess, & Baker, 2005). For example, some cyber exploiters may only view, collect, and trade images without ever engaging in a contact offense, therefore, keeping a rather inactive role (Krone, 2004;

Quayle & Taylor, 2002). On the contrary, researchers have found that other cyber child offenders do not simply possess illicit material and vigorously participate in the abuse of children (Alexy et al., 2005; Bourke & Hernandez, 2009; Krone, 2004). Although both types warrant attention, the current study focused on the ones producing child pornography, moreover, directly exploiting children through Web (Mitchell, Jones, Finkelhor, & Wolak, 2011). Cyber child exploiters are on the rise and have more than doubled between 2006 and 2009 (Wolak et al., 2012).

In reviewing cases involving the adult produced images with exploited children, the data indicated that a greater proportion of cyber child exploiters were family members and were 26 years old or above (Clevenger et al., 2016; Wolak et al., 2012). The Internet provides concealment of identity and affords access to children (Ey & Cupit, 2011; Flint, 2000; NetAlert, 2007). Although the various studies mentioned above provide a dearth of information about cyber child abusers, an area seeking attention by researchers is whether low self-reliance increases an offender's likelihood of engaging in a contact offense (Babchishin et al., 2011). For the society's sake, parents and teachers ought to learn preventative strategies against these illegal activities of the World Wide Web. Pedophiles or child exploiters/abusers-all these terms are used synonymously for this study-use a variety of devious strategies to mark and lure children into unsafe situations such as monitoring chat rooms to get familiar with children's interests. An alternative way is grooming by seducing kids through pretended attention, kindness, sympathy, and generating many key words and misspelling of children's websites to trick children and make them enter pedophile sites or block them from withdrawing (Arnaldo, 1999;

Arnaldo, 2000; Briggs & McVeity, 2000, Flint, 2000, Forde & Patterson, 1998; Freeh, 2000; Griffiths, 2000; Hay, 2004; Joint, 2003).

### **E-Safety**

Barnard-Wills (2012) used the term *e-safety* to depict the manner that children are taught about risks online, and self-protection. Education in this study borrowed the form that Barnard-Wills gave it to it as political strategy directed by multiple actors, including policing agencies and schools. E-safety education emphasizes on a broader politics of surveillance, crime deterrence, and governmental policies and techniques. Formal education does not regulate, but probably impacts the perceptions of children and parents towards the World Wide Web. Education is an explicit strategy of political actors involved in the politics of digitally facilitated surveillance (Barnard-Wills, 2012). The knowledge of e-safety education depicts in an accurate manner the online environment and information technology. This fact gives priority to certain threats and actors over others; however, it offers a minimum account of privacy as a means of protection of oneself from sexual predators (Barnard-Wills, 2012).

Predominantly, children are a population who are considered as both possible victims and prospective offenders in the online community. Young people are at risk from contact with inappropriate media and from hostile cyber actors. Young people represent a type of population whose activities must be known by adults for protecting them, but also because the population contains potential offenders (Barnard-Wills, 2012). Teachers should transmit this knowledge to parents to understand that the Internet is criminogenic (Wall, 2010). Wall focused on how and if children of primary school are

taught to stay safe online and understand a range of online threats, actors, technologies, and concepts both now and in their future lives.

Education together with persuasion and seduction are key modalities of noncoercive government (Miller & Rose, 2008). Persons in ruling positions become active in their own government, while organizations seek to create personalities who can govern themselves, able to take decisions about their self-conduct in reference to particular norms, vocabularies, and warnings (Miller & Rose, 2008). Cybercrime, particularly child exploitation, becomes leading modality for technology education, giving legitimate power to the role of a police agency intervening in education and reframing in a way to create forms of knowledge linked with crime control. Children are frequently placing themselves at risk on the Internet (Ey & Cupit, 2011). Both educators and parents need to become more knowledgeable on this issue considering their role in a child's development (Miller & Rose, 2008). The family is perceived as exceptionally strong anchor for governing cyber child exploitation. The leading role of a primary school student is that of a potential victim.

Lawson and Comber (2000) asserted that there is a moral argument on the appropriate time to acquaint children with the dangers that Internet entails. Multiple experts on the area have suggested that the parent has the obligation as an adult to teach their children Internet safety (Flint, 2000; Freeh, 2000; Joint, 2003; National Centre for Missing and Exploited Children, 1994). Briggs and Hawkins (1997) argued that most of the parents do not provide such knowledge to their children to stay safe online and claim that children's safety education of the Internet needs to be part of school curriculum.



Society demands individuals to be computer literate and urges schools to develop children's computer and technological skills (Briggs & McVeity, 2000). Briggs and McVeity (2000) advised that the school setting is the best place to teach children Internet safety and at the same time provide information for parents on how to monitor children's activity online so as to detect potential dangers and manage them effectively (Aisbett, 2001; Briggs & McVeity, 2000; Freeh, 2000; NetAlert, 2005; Zheng, 2006).

### **Self-Reliance and Child Exploitation**

Today, parents in each and every society rely on different individuals with different responsibilities to safe keep their children. For example, participants of the extended families, daycares, babysitters, religious organizations, friends, supervisors, and educational institutions are keeping a substantial amount of child care for the younger generation. Nowadays, parents do not stay at home with their kids and if they stay they do not pay the attention needed for a child exposed in the Internet. Most of the Greek families work all day long leaving their children to other people who most of the times have not received the training needed to safeguard children from the online dangers. But individuals and whole societies should understand that it is vital for parents to be educated on how to understand and detect child abuse to safeguard their capacity to recognize the signs of child exploitation and to evaluate their children vulnerability for abuse when other caretakers govern them. Abuse and exploitation recognition preconditions the awareness among school children and teachers. Education in the exploitation of children as well as recognition and reporting of the threat will surge self-reliance of children (Farrell & Walsh, 2010).

Before applying and forming laws, just by educating parents about cyber exploitation, the signs of it, and the consequences of abuse will boost the awareness among Greek schools. Therefore, parents will be able to recognize and report any sign of cyber child abuse (Letarte, Normandeau, & Allard, 2010). The gap in the literature lies on the part of how to provide education to parents about child exploitation recognition. How education will influence the self-reliance of parents, or even if there is a difference on how self-efficacy of males and females is affected by awareness. Caldwell, Shaver, and Minzenberg (2011) studied the relation among maltreatment types and attachment styles of a sample population who have been victims of exploitation in early childhood. Caldwell et al. also considered how parental self-reliance was affected in a small number of samples within society. The sample of population considered mothers at risk for the chance of abusing their children. The conclusion of the researchers was that the parental level of general self-reliance added to the adaptive care giving behavior.

The sample population used as participants in the Farrell and Walsh (2010) research assessed by pre and posttest. The sample was college students who were enrolled in a certification program for teaching as part of early childhood education. Farrell and Walsh came up with precisely the theory that self-reliance was enhanced in the college students after being given the education around child abuse.

Carpenter, Patsios, Szilassy, and Hackett (2011) conducted a study with similarities with the one of Farrell and Walsh (2010). In this study, the sample population was tested on whether self-efficacy to child exploitation detection has decreased after the child abuse education was performed. The results revealed in the posttest that social

workers and nurses who have worked in families reported with child abuse showed improved self-reliance. Such result verified that those individuals after the awareness course, which took place had a better understanding on symptoms of child abuse. The participants declared by themselves that developments occurred in their self-reported clarity on roles and responsibilities as well as on local interagency procedures on preservation of youth (Carpenter, Patsios, Szilassy, & Hackett, 2011). Post researchers have focused on measuring the impact that education has on the professionals' self-reliance of cyber exploitation.

The contemporary researchers signified the gap that exists in current literature by researching the teachers' perceptions on how to increase awareness on cyber child exploitation. People often spend a lot of time debating whether to act in certain dilemmas. There should also be time planning how to act. It is not always the recognition of a criminal justice issue or the understanding its nuances that will help people to act. Educating parents on some practical strategies and techniques for being active protectors of their children on cyber child exploitation may help to prevent and stop child exploitation in Greece similarly to any region around the globe. Parents should be taught how to intervene in advance to gain self-reliance. When people speak out against sexual violence, they show others that they have allies and encourage them to speak out too. By educating teachers, parents, and children, Greek people can work together to create culture that supports victims and survivors so that they feel comfortable detecting and reporting assaults and perpetrators.

## European Union Development Programs

On December 2016, the European Commission adopted two reports on the measures taken by member states to tackle the crime of sexual exploitation of children, sexual abuse, and child pornography. One report covered the entire directive, whereas the other report focused on the measures taken by member states against websites containing or disseminating child pornography in Article 25 of the Directive (European Commission, 2016). The directive is defined as all-inclusive governmental framework based on legislative procedures, which has led to practical development in the Member States by modifying criminal codes, procedures as well as enhancing collaboration schemes among national actors within Europe (European Commission, 2016). Nonetheless, there is still much more to be done for the directive to reach its full potential by the complete implementation of all of its provisions by EU states. Preventions and interventions' programs for cyber child exploitation stand as a major challenge revealed in the last Directive of the EU through Articles 22, 23 and 24 (European Commission, 2016).

The current program emphasizing the topic of this study is called *We Protect Global Alliance to End Child Sexual Exploitation Online* (Europa, 2017). The referred program is the result of the merger between the *Global Alliance Against Child Sexual Abuse Online* and *We Protect* (Europa, 2017). The European Commission and the U.S. launched the *Global Alliance Against Child Sexual Abuse Online in 2012* and its aim is to increase the principles worldwide and join the national efforts around the world to a more efficient battle of online sexual crimes against children. 54 countries are part of this

program which are committed to pursuing concrete actions to develop victim safeguard, detect, and prosecute offenders, raise awareness, and decrease the accessibility of child pornography in the Web as well as the re-victimization of children (Europa, 2017).

The other program mention in this section is called *We Protect*. It was created in 2014 in England as a global multi-stakeholder response to combat online child abuse and exploitation. The participants are not only the 63 states but also 30 nongovernmental organization, as well as 20 leading technology companies (Europa, 2017). The aim of those programs initiated by the EU is to combine the strengths of both initiatives while avoiding repetition of effort without effective outcomes as well as maximizing their worldwide effect.

Besides creating a stronger legal framework, the European Commission co-funds EU wide awareness raising to enhance awareness of children and their parents and educators. The Commission also funds the *INHOPE* network of nongovernmental organizations' run hotlines in European states that works in partnership with law enforcement and the internet industries. The major duty is to collect reports on child abuse websites to be removed and investigated further by other means (Europa, 2017).

The Commission has also given funds to missions, which were targeting the cyber exchange of child abuse images and facilitation of live abuse. These include the European Financial Coalition, which brings together Internet providers, banks and payment system suppliers, non-governmental organizations, telecom companies, Europol, Eurojust, and police and judicial authorities. The goal is to battle the manufacture, spreading, and sale of child pornography images throughout the Internet (Europa, 2017). In order to enhance

the overall international law enforcement response, the Commission supports the *EMPACT* policy cycle to direct action to battle child sexual abuse and regenerates the support of INTERPOL in improving international law implementation, and collaboration in this area (Europa, 2017).

Europol initiated a new campaign, just launched in June 2017, under the name “Say No” in an effort to combat electronic crime (Europol, 2017). The core of this campaign is to inform European citizens on the sexual extortion, coercion and exploitation of children in the Internet (Europol, 2017). Greece should be aware of the phenomenon of sexual blackmail and exploitation of children through the World Wide Web and for that reason the Electronic Crime Prosecution Division got actively involved. Hellenic Police started designing and forming awareness programs for children to safeguard younger populations from the online threats (Hellenic Police, 2017). The aim of those programs is to support children who already suffered the consequences of the Internet exploitation and blackmail. In-depth information sessions will be created to inform children who use the Internet every day and may be potentially victims of cyber child exploitation (Hellenic Police, 2017). For example, online predators reach the child through social media and, then, they start building trust through online chatting. The goal is to receive photos and videos to produce pornographic material (Hellenic Police, 2017).

In response to this worrying phenomenon, the EU as well as the Greek community has joined forces to launch the Say No! campaign to inform and give advice to those who have been or are most likely to be targeted for child exploitation. The key in the initiated informative sessions, included in the campaign, is to strengthen reporting of

current or perspective victims as well as developing mechanisms to guard children (Europol, 2017). The Head of Europol, Steven Wilson (2017) stressed the fact that children are increasingly using the Internet to communicate with the world as well as form new relationships; This is part of their social development nowadays (European Cyber Crime Centre, 2017). Europe, in general, should transmit to its states the collective responsibility to educate all children on the threats behind those online relationships as well as on mechanisms children should apply to enter the cyber world as safe as possible (European Cyber Crime Centre, 2017).

### **Teachers' Impact on Children**

Silver, Measelle, Amstrong, and Essex (2010) revealed a strong relationship with complex transactions between children, teachers, and the elementary school environment. Even though parents and other family members may be the most salient relationship for young children, the influence of nonfamilial relationships, such as the one with teachers, increases as children enter school. Teachers, especially in elementary school, stand in a crucial position since they must develop positive relationships with children as well as face heavy academic demands. Educators who can promote positive relationships even with students with challenging behaviors have the potential to alter children's use of the Internet by developing warm and supportive relationships with those students and their parents (Silver et al., 2010).

When it comes to Internet safety, according to Beaufort (2007), teachers should have the knowledge to teach a generic approach of Internet protection, which leaves children prepared to face any online threat (Ambrose, Bridges, & Lovett, 2010). Children

should be taught how to live well, work, and contribute in a complex global environment. Internet, like any other domain, represents a broad area of focus that encourages interdisciplinary approaches and collaborative problem solving among faculty, and students (Matus & Talburt, 2015). Every digital tool is an expression of human will and a common will to share know-how knowledge. Nietzsche argued that intellectual technologies should come in to popular use as they often promote new ways of thinking to the general population and do not limit themselves to a small, elite group. (Matus & Talburt, 2015). The limitation on today's Greek school curriculum is that no precise awareness program is implemented to inform parents and children on e-safety (European Commission, 2011).

Thoughts and concerns about the impact of technology are not new. For many centuries, thinkers have questioned whether human inventions are making people narrower or deeper. Since the time of Socrates, people have started worrying about these questions, yet a definite answer has not been given until now. All this history has been written to answer and tackle one main thing; the training of the young in mastery of the new digitalization (Matus & Talburt, 2015).

Effective school teaching under Greek curriculum involves the development of expectations. Setting expectations and rules within a teaching practice setting will contribute to the children's need to feel competent, connected, and secure. In a way, effective teaching context will protect each child's personality, as well as each child's ability to explore his/her perspective without minimizing the chance of another child. Setting clear expectations from the start of academic year will help children to develop



their limits regarding Internet use. Palmer (2015) highlighted that teachers cause a meaningful impact on children through the connectedness that they establish, so that the students can learn to weave a world for themselves. Palmer's stance pursues that such connectedness lies on the heart of teachers and not on predetermined methods. Heart, in its ancient sense, is the place where intellect and emotion and spirit and will converge in the human self (Parker, 2015).

### **Parent-Child Relationships**

A child needs a parent that is next to him/her. Children need parents that are attentive, engaged, and responsive to the children's actions independent of the type of action; whether the actions are looking, reaching, smiling, thinking, manipulating, playing, or working (Aronoff, 2012). The reaction of each parent to these actions helps to create the child's awareness of its own processes such as thoughts, wishes, or feelings. Briggs, Wurtele, and Berkower (2010) focused on the behaviors of parents and kids in order to prevent cyber child exploitation. Children should be taught in schools concepts such as body ownership, integrity, and body-safety rules during gym class (Deane & Walsh, 2013). Wurtele and Berkower (2010) argued that a myth concerned with child exploitation is that most sexual offenders physically force children to comply with sexual requests. This is not true especially when it comes to the use of the Internet. Parents should learn, by teachers, safety tips which can actively inspire their children to be assertive (Deane & Walsh, 2013). The main area of concern includes children being exposed to inappropriate sexual content and making unsafe contacts online. Awareness

on cyber child abuse in Greek schools should be built to establish cyber safety rules and boundaries for children's computer use.

Researchers have documented many experiences of sexually exploited young people and highlighted the need for specialist support (Beckett et al., 2013; Firmin, 2011; Melrose & Pearce, 2013; Pearce, 2009). Brigg's (2010) study is useful for the research because it provides long term and firsthand experience interviewing child sex offenders in Australian prisons. The key message out of her research for further state as well as global action is that parents can lower the risk of child sexual abuse and exploitation by being informed and aware. This is not the case in Greece. Nonetheless, independent of the country, children and young people have specific needs and disadvantages because of their lack of power and resources, and developmental capacities, relative to those of adults (Coy, 2016). They are dependent on parents for their shelter and emotional protection. Melrose (2002) shed light on the inequalities of children and adults and the responsibility of the elders to inform and protect the younger population.

The use of technology in children's everyday life and the growing accessibility in home environments, schools, community settings cautions states, organizations, legislative institutions to actions requiring further attention and intervention programs. Parents do play a chief role in protecting their children in the World Wide Web through creating open communications about the safe use of the Internet. Parents are encouraged to get to know social networking sites such as Facebook, get familiar with the Internet, and arm themselves with knowledge about privacy settings, interactions, and activities (Deane & Walsh, 2013). Yar (2013) agreed with that and supported the argument that

popular action, such as educating parents, is more important than state action to prevent cyber child exploitation.

While Yar (2013) emphasized the affective force of the public action, Drury and Ashended identify and acknowledge the public as an important political actor whose expressive and discursive capacity interact with, interrogate, and potentially disrupt the normative contours of the landscape of police and criminal justice system (Campbell, 2015). Barford (2013) emphasized the feeling of many people around the globe that the authorities and police agencies are not properly tackling the issue of cyber child exploitation. People at home do have more knowledge of the Internet than police officers. Parents do help in the provision of protection that can be found nowhere else.

### **Related Studies and Methodologies**

Sousa et al. (2011) collected all sources and information related with the effects of cyber exploitation on children. The outcome of this research emphasized on the fact that children who were exposed to child exploitation tended to reveal more antisocial behaviors and behavioral problems in comparison with children who were not exposed to this cybercrime. Christoffersen and Depanfilis (2009) conducted a qualitative study and revealed that children who were exploited either by abuse, maltreatment, or neglect came up with strong behavioral instabilities. Qualitative research stands as dominant contributor of cyber child exploitation issue.

Ninety percent of parents argued that schools are the most important institutions to inform children about cyber exploitation based on recent qualitative data from researches (Chen & Chen, 2005). Briggs (1998) found that 100% of the parents felt that

education on child exploitation should be taught in schools to promote well informed children. Chen, Dunne, and Han (2007) found that the threat of cyber child exploitation could be minimized through parents' increased knowledge to monitor their children's use of Internet. The present research was developed from the findings in these researches. Increasing knowledge of teachers would assist to enhance the knowledge of students.

Keys (2005) conducted a research project, where nurses, midwives, and general practitioners from health care professions have received training course to recognize child exploitation. The health care professional is the one who must identify his/her stance in the detection and reporting of child exploitation. The health care professionals are identified as a population in society that has the capability to detect child exploitation due to the contact they have with children due to the medical care they provide. The same happens also with educators. Keys (2005) reported that it was essential for health care professionals to acquire a self-valuation of the knowledge gained on cyber child exploitation detection. Such precise valuation of their own knowledge was improved with sufficient instruction and information about child exploitation (Keys, 2005). The education sector should integrate ways to report child exploitation under anonymity. In other words, health care professionals should be given the opportunity and the means to report child exploitation without any fear of penalty (Keys, 2005).

This study's sample population was willing to assist together with their positive evaluation of the education experience. Forty percent of the participants in the study showed greater knowledge on child exploitation. The sample population noted an increase in specific awareness affecting child exploitation recognition of over 50%, after

the provision of education. Keys (2005) also identified that before the provision of the education of health care professionals did not have an interest in child exploitation reporting. After the precise educational training was provided, health care professionals gradually initiated to report families to social workers for child exploitation incidents. The purpose of the Keys' research was to identify and analyze if an increase in specific awareness for child abuse identification in the health care profession occurs, and to increase reporting of families to social services for further assistance. The research was effective because there was an increase in awareness and professionals on health care started reporting more and more referrals of child exploitation cases to social agencies. There is an immediate need for training in the health care field for the professionals to recognize and report child exploitation (Montoya, Giardino, & Leventhal, 2010). Such a study stands as an example of how education promotes self-reliance and boosts community action to tackle child exploitation.

Patterson (2004) studied 30 recruits who had been educated throughout their fourth and seventh months of police academy. The targeted population was separated into two groups. The first group was the experimental group and the second group was the control group. The officers in the experimental group were educated on behavioral and physical indicators of child exploitation, neglect, and maltreatment. In the experimental group, the population indicated considerably greater knowledge about assessing child exploitation and their overall attitude in the assessment of the exploitation was more positive in comparison with the control group. The participants in the experimental group advanced their skills in child exploitation evaluation in contrast with the control group.

Individuals such as teachers given education about child exploitation recognition to be more capable of recognizing signs of cyber child exploitation and abuse (Keys, 2005). Children who are abused and are exposed to cyber exploitation, have the tendency to treat others the way they were treated during the exploitation. This escalates the risk of those children to become abusive parents in their adulthood. Allard, Letarte, and Normandeau (2010) completed quantitative research with a sample population composed of parents who were related with the abuses of their own children in the past and they have passed an education program. The study revealed that participants did not display a particular enhancement of awareness on child exploitation. The conclusions of this study may be due to the fact that the parents in this research were individuals who abused their own children. Such research stands as an isolated research and there is no existing similar study to either neglect or validate this claim.

Farrell and Walsh (2010) proceeded with their research with 157 college students taking part in a quasi-experimental study. This group of students was all part of a 4-year University of Early Childhood Education Program. The hypothesis of the research was that “the difference between student self-rated confidence and knowledge scores before and after the tutorial?” (Farrell & Walsh, 2010, p. 2). The scope of the research was to highlight the level of self-reliance of those college students before enrolling in the program and after. The results verified the hypothesis. The pretest scores were significantly lower in terms of measurement of the self-reliance on child abuse detection when compared with the posttest results. Letarte et al. (2010) proceeded with a quantitative research adopting a repeated measures approach with 26 participants. The

study was formed to gather the appropriate material concerning the effectiveness of educational training on parents' practices, self-reliance ratings as well as the overall view of parents on their children behavior. The selected population was tested in two different time spots, before and after a 19-week interval. The results of this study revealed that there is no witnessed transformation in parents' specific self-reliance at posttest. Though there was a positive effect on individuals' childcare practices after the completion of the study (Letarte et al., 2010).

Important for the current research is the fact that parents/ teachers and health care professionals have been found to have a role in child exploitation prevention, known as needed reporters. In many regions around the world, licensed public school educators are obliged by the other states to be specialized and to have compulsory child exploitation education regularly. Doctors, nurses, and other practitioners from the health care professions or anyone in the health care field, are obliged to take child exploitation awareness training. This population can be named as mandatory reporters and have the authority to detect and report any sign of child exploitation (Tietjen et al., 2010). Nonetheless, non-reporters, such as the rest of the individuals living within a state, have an ethical obligation to the society where they are living (Fagan, 2011). Assigned reporters are working to maintain protection and wellbeing of the children for whom they care. Mandated reporters are part of the community in which they serve and have access to a great number of children in the community (Pietrantonio et al., 2012).

The qualitative inquiry conducted in this area focused on the impact of child exploitation and on the long and short-term effects of such crime. The qualitative study

emphasized more on parents' position on education around child exploitation. On the other hand, the quantitative research documented around this topic emphasized more on a variety of topics related to child abuse and exploitation incorporating the effects of child exploitation awareness on the person's specific self-reliance. Earlier scientists have employed similar methodology for the collection of data on child exploitation identification and prevention on various sampling populations with noteworthy conclusions (Farrell & Walsh, 2010; Lee, Dunne, Chou, & Fraser, 2012).

### **Summary**

Nearly one million children are sexually exploited (European Union Commission, 2011). An average percentage of 4.5 children from all over the world are dead due to sexual abuse (European Union Commission, 2011). The detection of cyber child exploitation and the enhancement of self-reliance of parents will decrease the cyber exploitation of children in Greece. The existing literature demonstrated the necessity of providing education to parents on how to prevent their children from being victims of cyber abuse. I focused on the perceptions of Greek primary school teachers on strategies and techniques to foster awareness among Greek schools. The increase of awareness within the educational system aims to eliminate cyber child exploitation.

Cyber community brings a new era of technologies forming a virtual community through which citizens are interacting with one another (Harrison, 2016). Through such social interaction, democratization is enhanced in the sense that freedom of speech is increased. Cyber world signifies concentration of political power and the growth of other forms of abuse. D'Ovidio and James (2003) indicated that the cyberspace stands as the



most suitable tool for sexual offenses and fear. At this point, feminist school of thought assists the research by giving more detailed information on who is the actor and the target. The actor is a person who attempts or who commits a crime. He is also called as perpetrator, attacker, or respondent. The target is the intended victim of a crime. The most conservative school of thought of criminology provides some characteristics of the actors and targets; most of lawbreakers are men and most of the victims are women and children (Harrison, 2016).

The cyberspace boosted the number of child sexual attacks and there is a consent among analysts and researchers that child exploiters target more easily the younger ages of children (Harrison, 2016). The Internet signifies violence and abuse particularly for persons in early childhood who are sitting without supervision on the computer. This stands as a reality and is not new since technological innovations have led in various forms of exploitation of children. The Internet has made it difficult, or even impossible to detect both the victims and the offenders (Harrison, 2016). Otternsmann and Stucky (2016) suggested that most criminals do not go far to commit their crimes and they tend to maintain stable geographical areas to commit their crimes. The important aspect of this statement is that Internet safeguards anonymity. Even in a perpetrator's home or in diverse places each time, it is hard to uncover cyber exploitation.

Stucky and Otternsmann (2016) and Harrison (2016) matched that social and economic features of an area do play a role in the commission of crime. Unequal distribution of power affects social interactions in many ways. Low economic conditions act as a system of oppression, which stands as a barrier to action. For example,

unemployment, divorced parents, and households headed by female, low living standards, and medium household incomes are some among the many factors that contribute to cyber child abuse. Either in national or international spectrum, the most vulnerable population of children to exploitation is those that have been previously abused, or those who are living under low social and economic conditions (Stucky & Otternsmann, 2016). Socioeconomic situations in one region or country of the world determine the percentage of sex crime commission. In Greece, many families face harsh social and economic conditions, which contribute to the lack of resources to form policies and educational programs for teachers, parents and children on cyber child exploitation.

All the citizens of Greece have the responsibility to stop cyber child exploitation. But it is not always so easy. Economic and cultural pressures as well as personal attitudes may block effective action to a crime (Deane & Walsh, 2013). By recognizing and considering these barriers to action, now, myself as well as future researchers prepare the grounds to overcome them to do something in the future. This research has to do with teachers of primary school as to their experiences and perceptions on approaches to prevent cyber abuse of Primary school children. It is essential to comprehend what is meant by approaches. Strategies or approaches will take the form of education and understanding of parents and children's notions. Such notions have to do with body ownership and integrity. Parents and children should be taught body safety rules as well as advices to control the use of the Internet. Parents should recognize that sexual offenders do not use physical force to force a child to comply with sexual requests (Deane & Walsh, 2013). Panic and confusion should not come with awareness, but rather

community should endorse awareness and promote the reduction of the exposure of children in online threats.

To stop sexual violence, parents and teachers need to act together and understand how, why, and in what conditions their children may be at risk to increase their knowledge on ways and methods to prevent their children from being victims of cyber abuse. Parents should be educated and should trust their individual actions towards the elimination of cyber child exploitation. Parents and teachers as a network of conscious advocates can change the damaging social norms (Deane & Walsh, 2013). But such action starts with all of us taking responsibility for doing something. Briggs (2012) verified the identity of my research. Briggs interviewed child sexual exploiters in prison and discovered that sex exploiters agreed to the fact that parents by being informed can lower the risk of cyber child exploitation (Deane & Walsh, 2013). Consequently, primary school educators should assist parents to get familiar with social networking. Parents should look more thoroughly on privacy settings and techniques to protect their children.

All in all, most researchers emphasized the basic parts of the analysis on child exploitation, Internet and exploitation, social and economic conditions, and parenting strategies to protect children from online threats. Many children currently create and preserve cyber friendships. Such online friendships may potentially be harmful and dangerous. Online culture creates structural, institutional, and personal openness where exploitation occurs. Perpetrators make children trust them, abuse them, and then get away with committing crimes, making it difficult to report those crimes. Online culture provides a smokescreen for abusers in terms of detection, and punishment of those.

Teachers should provide with technical assistance the parents in order to dismantle the online culture which cause a threat to their children.

### **Conclusions**

The literature review revealed numerous potential themes and perceptions. Among them were cyber child exploitation, e-safety, parents and children relation, self-reliance, and European development programs and interventions. Although these issues were found to enhance the knowledge on cyber child exploitation, studies were not found on the teachers' perceptions of cyber child exploitation in Greece. Strategies and techniques to counter cyber child exploitation and prevention were limited in scope. Most of the researchers found use qualitative approach emphasizing on focus groups of students, teachers as well as health care professionals. Few findings revealed the perspective of teachers in their attempt to address cyber child exploitation and the education that they have received on that-if any. Extra research and examination are warranted to address this literature gap.

### Chapter 3: Research Method

The purpose of this qualitative research was to explore, understand, and define the phenomenon of cyber child exploitation in primary school through the experiences and perspectives of educators in Greece. Cyber child exploitation warrants serious attention for preventive intervention due to the negative impacts associated with this cybercrime, and its potential short and long-term negative effects on Greek society. Primary school educators were chosen as the focus of this study because they are influential actors in students' daily lives (Mishna, Scarcello, Pepler, & Wiener, 2005). The perceptions of teachers on cyber child exploitation and school policies are helpful in defining what is needed to create appropriate interventions to raise children's awareness of this problem and to provide educators with relevant training.

In this Chapter, I describe the methodology and research approach used to carry out this research. The key components of this section address the study's research design, my role as the researcher, sample selection, and data collection and analysis processes. The central question framing this research was the following:

RQ1: What are the perceptions of educators on the problem of cyber child exploitation?

Two sub questions further amplified the central research question:

RQ2: Do teachers understand exploitation to be a danger to the primary school students that they teach?

RQ3: Do primary school educators use any strategies to inform children how to defend themselves from the threat of cyber child exploitation?

I conducted this study with the aim of further analyzing primary schoolteachers' responses to child cyber exploitation and interventions for parents to adopt for protecting their children from becoming victims of cyber abuse. This enquiry represents a positive step toward the development of applicable interventions by educators to endorse cyber child exploitation awareness in schools.

### **Research Design and Rationale**

I used the qualitative research approach as described by Creswell (2009). The reason behind the choice of the qualitative approach was that the study's aim was to discover the existing insights of primary school teachers on the issue of cyber child exploitation (Simon, 2011). The study's purpose and problem statements place emphasis on the study of insights, experiences, beliefs, and the formation of a policy process for raising awareness of cyber child abuse prevention among parents and children. In this study, real-life situations were taken into account to match the research design to people's needs and reduce any likelihood of threats to validity (Trochim & Land, 1982).

The aim of this qualitative research was to investigate the views and opinions of Greek primary schoolteachers in a particular region on how education can act as an intervention to combat cyber child exploitation. Yin (2014) stated that through qualitative inquiry, multiple contexts enhance knowledge of individual and other sociopolitical phenomena (p. 4). The qualitative method (interviewing) enabled the collection of information to stress the necessity to design a course; a resulting action plan will be implemented in public as well as private schools in Greece with the goal of informing parents on how to prevent the uncontrolled exposure of children to the cyber world from

a young age.

Interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) is used as a qualitative research design (Hancock, Ockleford, & Windridge, 2007). IPA incorporates two elements, one phenomenological and the other interpretive. In this study, the phenomenological approach was represented by interviews with primary school teachers. Teachers were individually interviewed to explore their perceptions and experiences concerning how a course can be developed for an educational institution and a general educational system in order to create awareness among parents of the dangers of cyber child abuse in early childhood (Hancock et al., 2007). Subsequently, results and observations were analyzed for generating an insider perspective in the design of an awareness course.

The interpretivist approach of qualitative research was ideal for this study because it emphasized meanings and comprehending individuals' definitions and understandings of specific criminal justice issues (Merriam, 2002). The study was processed in a natural setting, with I as the researcher acting as the instrument. This research was aimed at discovering the themes, patterns, and clusters of information that were produced from teachers' perceptions.

Interpretative qualitative research renders the characteristics of all forms of qualitative approach simpler because the researcher mainly pays attention to understanding how participants comprehend the phenomenon. The author stresses the need to grasp how participants perceive sociopolitical issues and standpoints. Given the multiplicity of qualitative studies, I decided to conduct this research with the above design, which gave me the opportunity to be more flexible in terms of obtaining

information and an in-depth understanding of cyber child exploitation from the standpoints of Greek primary school teachers in their natural setting.

### **Role of the Researcher**

I engaged in reflexivity as I sought to build knowledge toward social change by conducting face-to-face interviews with primary school teachers on how they perceived cyber child exploitation and how increased awareness among both teachers and students might affect this criminal justice issue. The role as a researcher is one that is understood and accepted in the interviewee's world (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). In this case, I was a coworker and researcher on education and criminal justice. By adopting this role, I ensured that I would not be seen as an untrustworthy outsider by the primary school teachers who were the interviewees in this study. I intended for the educators to feel that I was a person whom they could trust to report fairly what I heard, and someone who was informed and could ask interesting questions (Ravitch & Carl, 2016).

The use of American Psychological Association (APA) style is helpful in multiple respects, especially when one is seeking to conduct research in an unbiased manner. The APA style guide deals not only with citation issues, but also with academic writing standards and skills. The application of an unbiased research method and the use of clear academic language with a suitable level of specificity are important in the research field, no matter the subject (Creswell, 2009). Interviews demand effort from a researcher to eliminate the risk of ethical issues in writing, which could arise if the researcher suppressed, falsified, or invented findings that would be of service to his or her needs and those of the potential audience (Creswell, 2009).



The term *openness* is an insight to be taken into consideration when the researcher puts his or her thoughts onto paper (Bryans & Smith, 2000). Openness involves recognizing obstacles and boundaries in relation to beliefs and thoughts as a step toward removing them when actual dissertation writing takes place. Through openness, learning occurs with further unbiased research. Learning leads to a shared awareness of values and a new inclusiveness, which provide a foundation for effective learning throughout a study (Bryans & Smith, 2000). In the interpretation of the data collected by a researcher, a high level of accuracy is needed apart from the openness described above (Creswell, 2009). The experience of being a researcher is training for life, in that it teaches one how to handle one's beliefs and prevent them from affecting the data under study while remaining open to ideas and observations.

### **Data Collection**

In this research, I gathered information from 20 primary school teachers from Athens, Greece, whom I selected purposefully. These participants provided valuable information about cyber child exploitation. The objective of this research was to analyze the ideas, opinions, and perceptions of primary school teachers on strategies and techniques that parents can use to protect their children from cyber child exploitation. One-to-one interviews were conducted to gather rich data that were sufficiently detailed and varied. This variation revealed a full picture of the topic of cyber child exploitation (Maxwell, 2005). Sample size, especially in qualitative research, may vary greatly with the nature of the study (Creswell, 2009). Creswell (2009) argued that there is no

predefined sample size for qualitative inquiries because the large amount of data generated in such studies produces more complexity for analysis.

The aim of this study was to gather enough data to achieve the point at which no new information was obtained. I sought to gather data until saturation occurred. According to Marshall, Cardon, Poddar, and Fontenot (2013), the sample size in qualitative research should be appropriate for coverage of the phenomenon, which has its basis in the purposefulness of the research and the actual interest of the researcher. The scope of this research involved gaining insight into teachers' perceptions on cyber child exploitation and their opinions on how this cybercrime can be eliminated.

The selected sample was a purposeful sample because I purposefully selected individuals to shed light on the issue under study (Creswell, 2007). The primary school educators were selected as a sample population because they could be easily accessed and were willing to provide information on cyber child exploitation awareness. The purposeful sample was homogeneous, implying that the individuals selected had common characteristics and could respond to cyber exploitation. The criteria for the selection of the sample were based on participants' responsibilities and dominant role in students' and parents' daily lives. The research's aim in terms of the sample was to assemble a homogeneous sample that would be purposefully selected to fit the context of the study. The teachers' perspectives were important in identifying the best solutions that parents of primary school children can use to protect their children from becoming victims of cyber child exploitation.

One hundred eighty-seven teachers taught at the school I selected for this study. Each teacher was responsible for a class of 20 to 25 students. I arrived at the number of 20 teachers as approximately 10% of the teacher population within this particular school. The 20 teachers had the following characteristics in common:

- Over 21 years old
- Presently certified as a teacher and working in primary school
- Willing to share information about their experiences and concerns with cyber child exploitation awareness among students as well as parents.
- Participated voluntarily

All participants were recruited based on the study inclusion criteria above as well as on the basis of their knowledge of and experience with the topic. The participants were teachers who were currently teaching multiple courses and subjects. My professional relationships with the participants were limited because I had no relationship of a supervisory nature in relation to them. I engaged in open and honest communication with all the interviewees in this research study. I sought to ensure that I took the correct steps to bracket any feelings or personal perspectives that might form an obstacle in my interpretation of the teachers' perspectives.

After the study received Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval, I invited individuals to participate using both email and telephone. The recruitment letter consisted of the following elements: (a) an introductory paragraph with a description of the study's purpose, (b) a brief description of participation in the study, (c) explanation of the time needed for the completion of the interview, (d) acknowledgment of any risks or

inconveniences associated with participation, (e) a description of potential benefits of participation, and (f) a privacy statement describing how study data would be protected, including assurance of participant confidentiality. When respondents agreed to participate, they were required to sign an informed consent form. Each interview lasted about 45 minutes in a mutually agreed location. Information was provided to the participants through e-mail and just before the interview concerning the fact that the interviews would be recorded for transcription and analysis. I conducted the transcription myself. After completion of the transcription, I e-mailed the transcribed documents to the participants and asked them whether the transcripts were correct.

The interviews were conducted in depth using a face-to-face format. These interviews had the advantage of clarifying the questions as needed and as requested by the interviewees. Nonverbal cues from respondents were also noted. All questions had an open-ended format, which was designed to give participants the option to engage in an organic discussion about their experiences and perceptions concerning cyber child pornography. I prepared eight interview questions to align with the research questions listed previously. I arranged the interview questions so that the interview would have a logical flow from demographics to more precise questions that would enhance conversation. Examples of interview questions follow:

1. Do you believe that the Internet stands as a threat to primary school students in relation to cyber child exploitation?
2. How many hours does each student spend on the Internet, if you were to report an average time per day?

3. Are there any school policies for teachers as well as parents on the subject of cyber exploitation awareness and prevention strategies?
4. What actions would you recommend for parents to protect their children from cyber child exploitation?

To get the interview started in a rather natural way after ensuring that the participants met all inclusion criteria, I presented some questions regarding demographics. For instance, I asked how long each participant had been teaching primary school. I allowed up to 45 minutes for each interview to allow sufficient time for both the interviewee and I to discuss the topic. I took field notes during the actual interviews; any important points that I noted could lead to the formation of new questions. Field notes were used to track questions and define the order of the discussion points. I attempted to transcribe each interview at the earliest possible opportunity. The type of interview that I used was a traditional social science research interview. In such an interview, the effects of the interviewer are minimized by formatting the questions in a standardized way so that each of the participants receives the same stimuli during the interviews (Creswell, 2007). After determining the sample population, I conducted data collection through one-on-one interviews. In order to collect relevant material, I created protocols or written forms of recorded data based on the interviews, known also as notes.

### **Data Analysis**

Hatch (2002) defined data analysis as an approach conducted in a systematic manner to examine, organize, and categorize data in search of meaning. This procedure sheds light on patterns, indicates explanations relevant to the research inquiry, supports

interpretations, and enhances connections. After the completion of the interviews, I played the interview tapes to ensure that the information was complete and without errors. Common themes, significant statements, shared beliefs, and commonalities were the focus of the study. Many researchers seek to interpret and define the meanings of important statements by making lists (Johnson & Christensen, 2004).

For this qualitative research, I was the instrument, in that I served as a researcher who was receptive and sought patterns in relation to how to inform parents so that they can protect their children from cyber abuse. When a researcher is using small amounts of data, it is possible and often preferable to analyze the data as well as manage transcriptions using software that the researcher is most familiar with, such as Microsoft Word and/or Excel, to keep the process simple. Microsoft Word may be used to organize multiple sources and records that need to be compiled toward a comprehensive qualitative research study. Records in a study may include not only data files from interviews, but also published research, images, diagrams, audio-video files, memos, and other materials. By recording a term/code in a program such as Microsoft Word, more complete, and therefore trustworthy, ensures the disclosure of credible interpretations. The use of technology for qualitative data analysis may result in a more thorough inquiry (Bazeley & Jackson, 2013).

Among the basic norms of research interviewing is the fact that the questions posed to the interviewees should derive as much information as possible useful to the study (Patton, 2015). The questions in this research were appropriate to population. Nonetheless, in qualitative research nothing is proved but rather is suggested. The

interviewer aims to hear opinions and events that the respondent has experienced.

Qualitative interviewing starts with the assumption that the perspectives of other people are significant for research (Patton, 2015, p. 427). The format of the traditional social science research interview is standardized questions. The format of those is standardized questions so that each individual gets the identical stimulus so that the interviewer effects are reduced.

There is no standard way to identify and discover codes and themes. The assigned codes should be in consistency to minimize the chances of errors and reliability of data. Coding was the procedure followed to divide the interview data and rearrange based on common patterns (Merriam, 2002). The common patterns are found by, first, revising the transcript again and again in search of key words and phrases. Patterns, categories, and emerging themes were detected. All discrepant data were highlighted for future use or for the case of follow up interviews.

### **Trustworthiness**

The trustworthiness of a qualitative research study is questioned by the positivist setting of quantitative methodology due to the validity and reliability issues that cannot be addressed in the naturalist setting the same way. Researchers such as Guba formed criteria that substitute the positivist concepts of validity and reliability. Credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability are the four criteria that should be addressed in each research (Shenton, 2004). Those features, if addressed properly in the research, ensure the trustworthiness of the study.

Credibility stands as the process of ensuring that the phenomenon is clearly presented. This norm was addressed in the following study from the one to one interviews that are used, which is a well-established research method in general (Shenton, 2004). In the individual interview, honesty was ensured in the informant by providing the option to deny participation or end the discussion when he feels to do so, a fact that added another credible aspect in this study. Transferability has to do with external validity or in other words with positivism. Transferability is primarily concerned with the findings of one study and whether those findings are applicable to other studies too (Shenton, 2004). This criterion reveals one problem in qualitative research because when qualitative methods are used the studies are small and it becomes almost impossible to apply the same research in different population and context. However, this research had a small sample size, as it reflected a broader theme of positive social change, and therefore, is something that led to the same conclusion if applied to a different population and even in a different country. This research used the teachers' perceptions as results to offer potential for positive social change.

Dependability focuses on whether future researchers would have the opportunity to re-conduct the research (Shenton, 2004). This element can be effectively used by other researchers by applying overlapping methods such as observation and one to one interview (Shenton, 2004). The research is seen as a prototype model that gives the opportunity to future studies to repeat the work. Confirmability is accomplished when the research findings come from mere data collected and not from a researcher's own predispositions (Shenton, 2004).



### **Ethical Considerations**

The researcher has the responsibility of conducting ethical study in a way that meets all the requirements and standards of Walden University and the general regulations applied for the defense of human participants in qualitative research. As such, all those regulations and guidelines are followed to minimize any risks for the participants. To ensure that all participants to be protected by any ethical issues, they had to sign the consent form. Through the interview process the data and privacy of the population's anonymity are maintained. It was clear to all participants that participation in the research was on voluntary basis and at any time they were free to withdraw from the study.

Notes, tape recordings, and all other transcripts were properly stored in a secure and safeguarded area for the duration of the study. Backup copies of all the research data were securely stored on the computer with password only known by me. Memos, field notes, transcripts, documents, and recordings will be kept for 7 years after the completion of the study and then will be destroyed. To further ensure the participants' privacy and confidentiality, there exists no actual reference to the exact location of school and participants respectively. If questions of ethics arise, IRB and members of dissertation committee will be informed.

This qualitative research plan used numerous opinions and perceptions of primary school teachers from Greece. The data collection received close attention because the interviews focused on serving the purpose and scope of the study (Creswell, 2009). Critical analysis of the data quality was of paramount importance to ensure unbiased

results. Most teachers agree to intervention so as to prevent cyber child exploitation in one region, the same may not apply in another region (Creswell, 2009). Finally, the study required precision in the reference of the data specific to the physical geography (Creswell, 2009).

### **Conclusion**

In the above section the methodology of the study is discussed. The scope of this interpretive qualitative study was to gain deeper insights in to the issue of cyber child exploitation in primary school students from the teachers' perspectives and experiences. The aim of this study was the protection of children. The important points of the section stress the research design, role of the researcher, criteria for the selection of sample population, data collection, data analysis, issues of trustworthiness of the study, as well as of ethical protection of participants. The following section will refer to a portrayal of the outcomes and findings of the research study.

## Chapter 4: Results

In this chapter, I analyze the results of the research as well as the process used to reveal the findings in this study. Key points addressed in this chapter include the process by which data were gathered, findings relevant to the research questions, discrepant data, and a summary of the themes. Basic interpretative qualitative design was used for this study. The scope of this qualitative study encompassed exploring and understanding the meanings that people attribute to a social problem, or more specifically, a criminal justice issue (Creswell, 2008). Five themes emerged from this study.

### **Data Gathering Process**

The setting for this research was a primary school situated in an urban northern school district in Athens, Greece. To ensure confidentiality, I refer to the school as *ABC School* throughout this dissertation. Data were drawn from two major sources. First, data were generated through interviews to reveal primary school teachers' perceptions on cyber child exploitation. Second, data were generated from an in-depth examination and analysis of current literature. The participants in this study were 20 purposefully selected teachers, all of whom met the criteria for participation. The primary aim of this research was to explore and analyze the perceptions of teachers on cyber child exploitation to reveal whether prevention strategies are implemented in schools to prevent cyber child abuse.

I began gathering data after gaining approval from the Walden University IRB to proceed with the study (Approval number is 09-22-17-0575179). I notified the administration at the study site that I could proceed with data collection after I had

obtained approval from the IRB. I clarified to the administrator that I was ready to launch the research and that the information collected from the teachers' perspectives could be valuable for the school itself, in that this information could be used to support a positive climate. This positive climate would be the outcome of a collective aim among teachers to provide their thoughts and knowledge to create awareness of an important criminal justice issue, cyber child exploitation. The administrator of the private school granted permission to contact primary school teachers, invite them to participate in the study, and arrange times, places, and dates for interviews in the private school.

The participants were all invited to take part in the research study via email and telephone. The consent form acted as a letter of invitation before I asked the participants to decide whether they would participate. The consent form included a brief introduction defining the purpose of the study and explaining what participants should expect from the interviews. If they agreed to participate, participants were asked to read and sign the consent form. Participants were told that the interviews would be recorded and that the audio recordings would only be used by me for transcription and analysis. The interviews took place after school hours in empty classrooms with no distractions, where privacy was afforded.

### **System for Data Tracking**

Information from the interviews was stored using computer software. After the interviews, I saved the digital recordings on my computer under password protection, so that I would have easy, secure access to the data to produce interview transcripts. The recordings were named and labeled in my computer as audio files. I processed the

transcriptions and saved the files on my password-protected computer as Microsoft Word documents. I did not use specific qualitative analysis software because Microsoft Word enabled easy management and storage. Apart from the audio recordings, handwritten notes were used to highlight important points and statements. The handwritten notes also helped me to maintain the flow of the interviews as well as to place in order the fictitious names assigned. I transcribed and reviewed the interview data immediately after the interviews to enhance efficiency and precision as to what had been stated.

### **The Findings**

The main emphasis of the findings was on the problem and research questions. The central problem of this study was the existence of a gap in research on the phenomenon of cyber child exploitation in primary school, as presented through the experiences and perspectives of primary school teachers in Athens, Greece. The research questions were as follows:

RQ1: What are the perceptions of educators on the problem of cyber child exploitation?

Two sub questions further amplified the central research question:

RQ2: Do teachers understand exploitation to be a danger to the primary school students that they teach?

RQ3: Do primary school educators use any strategies to inform children how to defend themselves from the threat of cyber child exploitation?

I used a qualitative interpretative research design, as described in Chapter 3, to address the research problem and answer the research questions stated above. I adopted

this qualitative approach because it gave me the flexibility I needed to search for understanding of the in-depth meaning of cyber child exploitation from the perspectives of 20 primary teachers in a school that was their natural setting. The primary data source was the interviews. When the interviews were transcribed, certain codes, patterns, and themes emerged. For the actual analysis of the transcripts, I used open coding to begin with reading and rereading the transcribed interviews. Afterward, emphasis was placed on the information that revealed similarities, common patterns, and themes. This procedure gave me the opportunity to comprehend the content of the transcribed interviews more fully and to verify that the transcripts had been properly addressed.

### **The Interviews**

Twenty purposefully selected primary school teachers were interviewed from one northern primary school with a student population of 187 teachers and 4,301 students. Eight open-ended questions guided the semi structured interviews, as seen in the interview protocol in Appendix A. The interview questions were in alignment with the research questions. At the beginning of the interviews, I asked the participants for demographic information such as gender, grade taught at the time of the interview, and number of years of teaching experience.

### **Demographic Information**

The sample in this study was 75% ( $n=15$ ) female and 25% ( $n=5$ ) male. Nine of the participants reported working in the district for up to 5 years, nine of the participants reported working in the district for 6 to 15 years, and two participants reported working

in the district for 17 years. The participants are referred with pseudonyms to ensure confidentiality by safeguarding their identities (Table 1).

Table 1

*Teacher Demographics*

Participants	Gender	Grade taught	Years of experience
Anna	Female	4	3
Bill	Male	6	17
Chrisa	Female	6	17
Ermina	Female	1	5
Johnny	Male	5	6
Katie	Female	6	10
Lily	Female	2	3
Louisa	Female	2	2
Maggie	Female	1	3
Manoli	Male	2	7
Markel	Male	4	3
Miranda	Female	3	13
Mirsini	Female	2	4
Myio	Female	4	7
Nicki	Female	5	9
Maike	Female	6	8
Nikol	Female	1	2
Penny	Female	4	10
Victoria	Female	5	6
Zacharias	Male	4	5

### **Interview Item Analysis**

In the first questions of the interview, I asked for demographic information such as name, grade taught, and years of teaching experience. These data are presented in Table 1. As shown in Table 1, 90% of the primary school teachers had from 2 to 15 years of teaching experience at grade levels ranging from first to sixth grade. Only two teachers had more than 15 years of experience in primary classrooms.

The first question on the interview protocol (Appendix A) was as follows: Do you believe that the Internet poses a threat to school students in relation to cyber child exploitation? In what ways? Participants' responses revealed that they all agreed that the Internet poses a threat to school students in relation to cyber child exploitation. I also asked participants to indicate the ways in which this occurs. For this second part of the question, the responses of the participants varied widely.

Among participating teachers, 45% ( $n=9$ ) said that the Internet is the main reason that cyber child exploitation occurs. The constant demand of predators for online victims, the addiction that the Internet provokes in users, the normalization of Internet behavior, and the need for the Internet in peoples' lives were among the answers that indicated that the Internet is the reason that cyber child exploitation has flourished. For example, Nikol (pseudonym) replied, "Yes, it certainly does pose a threat. The main reason why is because the Internet normalizes and validates the sexual exploitation of the children." Mirsini (pseudonym) replied to the same question by saying, "Yes, the Internet poses a threat in school students because it has become an addiction at almost every age. Then, offenders have more and more victims available to choose from the cyber community."



Thirty percent ( $n=6$ ) of the participants argued that cyber child exploitation is a contemporary phenomenon that is increasing in prevalence because there is no Greek legislation to inform parents, children, and teachers of how to combat such cybercrime. Lily stated that parents were not aware of the dangers behind the benefits of the Internet in the education and entertainment of their children:

The Internet without any second thoughts does pose a threat in school students especially in younger ages. Parents in Greece believe that cyber abuse is a contemporary phenomenon that happens somewhere else far from Greece without knowing that cyber exploitation may be a crime within their house.

Lastly, 25% ( $n=5$ ) of the teachers replied that cyber child exploitation is more evident in primary school children due to their young age, vulnerable character, and not fully formed identity. For instance, Miranda contended in her response to the first question that

There is no question about that, also other teachers, psychologists and professors, and anyone working with children cannot ignore ... the danger from the Internet, especially in primary school. I say primary school because the identity of the child and his/her character is not fully formed. The danger, then, is much bigger. The child at that age is completely unprotected in the threat of cyber child exploitation.

In response to the first question, all the participants agreed and stressed that the Internet hides great dangers for children; but, their responses varied in terms of the ways that the Internet affects cyber child exploitation.

In Table 2, I present a summary of the participants' responses to Questions 2 and 3 from the interview protocol (Appendix A) regarding the number of hours per day that students spent on the Internet as well as the most-often-visited websites in primary school. All participants agreed that primary school students spend more than 1 hour per day surfing the World Wide Web. The majority (90%) agreed that children spend more than 2 hours on the Internet daily. Only one teacher estimated that children spent 1 hour on the Internet daily.

Table 2

*Summary of Responses to Interview Questions 2 and 3*

Participants	Hours spent on the Internet/per day	Social networks/websites
Anna	1	Facebook, YouTube
Bill	4	Facebook, YouTube
Chrisa	1 to 4	YouTube
Ermina	2	YouTube
Johnny	3	Instagram
Katie	5	Facebook
Lily	2 to 3	Facebook
Louisa	2 to 3	YouTube
Maggie	5	Facebook, YouTube
Manoli	3	YouTube
Markel	2	YouTube
Miranda	3	Facebook
Mirsini	2	YouTube
Myio	5	Facebook, Instagram
Nicki	3	YouTube
Maike	4	Facebook
Nikol	2	Facebook, YouTube
Penny	2	YouTube
Victoria	4	Facebook, YouTube
Zacharias	3	Facebook

Bill and Chrisa argued that the time spent on the Internet by a child depends on the afterschool activities that he or she has, as well as the family's structure. Ermina expanded on this idea by referring to the importance of parental involvement. She stated, "It depends on whether the parent is busy at home and cannot sit with the child, work in his/her homework and do other activities together. I think 2 hours a day." Another interesting point was raised by Johnny, who in response to the same question answered that hours spent on the Internet increase as a child grows up. Maike supported this statement by observing that in sixth grade, all her students have cell phones and therefore spend a dramatically increased amount of time on the Internet. Victoria expanded her thoughts based on her experiences and discussions with children and parents and declared that from the time that children return home from school, they have an open electronic device at home that they are using constantly until they go to bed.

In response to the third question, most of the participants had very similar statements, as shown in Table 2. Specifically, 90% ( $n = 18$ ) declared that Facebook, YouTube, or both were the most often visited websites by primary school children. The rest of the population ( $n = 2$ ) mentioned Instagram as another highly popular website for students in primary school.

The fourth question addressed whether there were any school policies for teachers and parents about cyber child abuse awareness and prevention strategies. In answer to this question, 100% stated "no," denying that there was any form of training or program for cyber child abuse awareness and prevention. Lily said that she was not aware of any school policies for teachers and parents, but noted that in the computer science class,

children learned how to use the Internet safely without falling into the trap of viruses. Nonetheless, she continued arguing that nothing more precise was taught to children, parents, and teachers. Maike added to this point by emphasizing the need for a new governing body to train teachers on at least an annual basis for teachers and parents to keep up with technological advances.

The seventh question (“What type of cyber abuse policies is in place at your school in the management of parental awareness on cyber child exploitation?”), like the fourth question, received a negative answer from all of the participants. More precisely, when I asked about school policies, the majority (100%) of the teachers stated that there was no school policy in place. For example, Chrisa stated that there was not any type of cyber abuse policy, but that there should be for teachers to be able to spot potential warning signs and have the confidence to begin conversations with parents based on their concerns. Maggie stressed the existence of Smile of a Child, which is the only certified and recognized nongovernmental organization since 1996. The primary aim of such an institution is to fulfill multiple pedagogical actions concerned with children’s problems, child abuse, neglect, and cyber child exploitation. Nicki used the term *mentors* to describe the role that teachers should have in the education of children. She argued,

Children who disclose online contacts with a stranger, for example, often tell a trusted adult other than a parent. Therefore, training for schoolteachers is very important, as is training for any other person who works with children in any capacity.

Table 3

*Recommendation for Parents to Protect Their Children From Cyber Child Abuse—  
Question 5*

Participants	Recommendations
Anna	Start early and talk often to your children. No matter how many hours parents work or what daily obligations they have, they should use everyday opportunities to talk about sexual abuse.
Bill	The child should have limited time to the Internet and replace the time spent in front of the computer to different activities that will enhance the mindfulness of the child; for example, team sports like basketball, volleyball, and/or football.
Chrisa	Create trust from early childhood and develop that each and every day. Then, parents would be able to cooperate with their children and discuss the dangers of uncontrolled Internet use.
Ermina	Three things parents can do to safeguard their children: First, to keep the computer in a public place and do not allow children to keep their computer in their bedroom. Second, parents should install filtering software that will prevent children to view pornographic material. Third, parents should talk to their kids about the dangers of the Internet and the dangers of putting personal information in the Web.
Johnny	So many parents let their children to use the Internet without any restriction. It is crucial for parents to understanding the magnitude of the threat of cyber child exploitation, and they should stop uploading their children on the Internet. It is crucial to realize that indecent images of children can exist in various forms.
Katie	One action is to monitor the children's Internet activity and not leaving them alone in order to do other daily obligations and also to define time limits of Internet daily usage.
Lily	The first that I recommend, and I encourage is not to leave their children unattended in the cyber world. There has to be always a guardian to monitor the child's Internet activity in order not to be found in a dangerous website as a potential victim of cyber child exploitation. Place the computer in a high traffic area where parents and older siblings can see what's going on. The child will have also the fear of doing something wrong when a guardian will watch him.
Louisa	Monitor you child's Internet use; that's my advice to parents. The Internet has become the favorite means for pedophiles to interact privately with children.
Maggie	Parents should get informed about the dangers of cyber child exploitation and protect their children accordingly. Sexual predators often target kid-friendly sites with colorful banners, ads, and games. Teach your children to always ask permission before clicking an ad or downloading. Use software to protect your personal data against spyware and viruses.
Manoli	Parents should not ignore the danger that Internet poses, and they should educate themselves on how to protect their children from the Internet. Priorities should be given within family structures. For example, the child should talk and play with his/her parents, do the homework, go out for activities, and only play in the Internet for a couple of minutes each day and only under supervision.
Markel	Since there is not any institution on a global scale to provide a kind of manual of the Internet, the basic things that I want to recommend for parents is, first, to monitor their children's Internet activities as well as provide some limits as to when the Internet will be used in the house and which websites are allowed to be used.
Miranda	One is never unattended. Second to take care of the people surrounding their children, meaning the child's friends and the family of those. Third is to stay close to your and do not use Internet as way to

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Participants	Recommendations
	keep your child entertained in order for the parent to complete a job or an obligation.
Mirsini	Parents should be close to their children and provide them with all the help and support during their early childhood. The Internet should not act a means to leave the children entertained alone but, the cyber world should work to develop their knowledge and capacities.
Myio	I have heard from a news' article that there is such thing as GPS for kids control for each parent to monitor the child's location. This stands as a practical way to know where your child is, but I believe first of all comes the awareness and learning that the child should have regarding the acceptable and unacceptable things to do in the Internet in order to enhance safety.
Nicki	Parents as well as children should be careful when opening emails and attachments. They must not accept friend requests from strangers.
Maike	Students, especially in the higher grades of primary school, should be made aware about cyber child exploitation. They should know that is punishable offense as per cyber law.
Nikol	But I strongly support the idea of teaching courses for parents in a monthly base. In those courses, parents will learn how to talk properly to their children regarding the dangers of exploitation. Parents should teach their children about their body, about what abuse is, and as age-appropriate, about sex. Teach children words that help them discuss sex comfortably with parents.
Penny	Tight connection and cooperation should exist among teachers, parents and children. This is the only to protect children from this cyber threat.
Victoria	I believe that awareness for parents is a must-do as the children are in their early innocent ages and they are quite vulnerable.
Zacharias	Take their children to activities outside home like swimming, music, and drawing, dancing. Those activities like any others outside home are the best weapons of parents to keep safe their children as well as develop their full potential and personality.

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As shown in Table 3, the participant responses varied greatly from a strong cooperation among teachers, students and parents to after school activities and constant supervision of children when using the Internet. Mirsini felt that parents should be next to their children by providing them with all the assistance and support from early childhood. The Internet should only help children develop their educational development. In addition, Markel explained on the same point.

Since, there is no any institution on a global scale to provide a kind of manual of the Internet, the basic things that I want to recommend for parents is, first, to monitor their children's Internet activities as well as provide some limits as to when the Internet will be used in the house and which websites are allowed to be used.

On the question about any recommendations for parents to protect their children, Ermina claimed that three things parents can do to safeguard their children; first to keep the computer in a public place and do not allow children to keep their computer in their bedroom. Second, parents should install filtering software that will prevent children to view pornographic material. Third, parents should talk to their kids about the dangers of the Internet and the dangers of putting personal information in the web (Ermina, 2017). Myio talked about an article that she had read around children's protection measurements. She noted the GPS system through which the parent can monitor the child's location.

Table 4 demonstrates the participants' responses on the major source of cyber child exploitation from the selected sample interviewed. It appeared that 25% of the

population agreed that the source of cyber child exploitation is the anonymity that provides to offenders. Miranda enhanced such argument by stating that abnormality always existed, but now is covered by the anonymity that the Internet provides to its users. Another 25% of the interviewees believed that the source for the rapid development of cyber child exploitation is the fact that there is no unified legislation and school policy to guide children, parents and teachers how to protect children from cyber abuse. Parents and children are left unaware.



Table 4

*Examples of Sources of Cyber-Child Exploitation, Question 6*

Participants	Sources of cyber child exploitation
Anna	There is no legislation on a precise curriculum for school to follow and inform students and parents on cyber child exploitation. There is educational law to combat this cyber crime.
Bill	We are living in a technology-based society, with minimal human contact leading to misbehaviors of people. People are more and more isolated with the result of more criminal behaviors.
Chrisa	Greek families face economic problems that do not allow them to have time and build a strong relation with their children because they are working and most of the children are kept with their grandmothers and/or grandfathers.
Ermina	Anonymity is given to offenders and I believe this is the major source of cyber abuse. Abusers are given the opportunity to exploit children by pretending to be their friend in the online community. Through the Internet abusers are avoiding the legal sanctions and the consequences of their illegal acts.
Johnny	Parents are not aware of the danger and even if they were aware of, they do not know simple things that they should follow in their daily routines to avoid their children to become victims of cyber child abuse.
Katie	Lack of effective and consistent legislation in Greece and strategies for educational institutions to adopt in order to prevent this cybercrime.
Lily	People in Greece tend to distance themselves from such criminal justice issues and they tend to perceive that such threats do happen outside Greece. Therefore, they do not pay attention to guard their children from cyber abuse although the Greek family structure is over- protective.
Louisa	The major source of cyber child exploitation is the vulnerability of children. More analytically, children are less powerful, and least likely to be able to protect themselves from a powerful adult. Also, through the Internet predators appear as friends and caretakers.
Maggie	Parents, especially in Greece with the economic crisis at its highest cannot support their children the way they did before. In other words, parents now are too busy to stay next to their children and talk to them for any issue and especially for cyber child exploitation.
Manoli	Meeting someone from the Internet or create new friendship through any other social network is normal, leaving open the door for cyber child exploiters to get in contact with children under such normality.
Markel	Since, there is no any institution on a global scale to provide a kind of manual of the Internet, the basic things that I want to recommend for parents is, first, to monitor their children's Internet activities as well as provide some limits as to when the Internet will be used in the house and which websites are allowed to be used.
Miranda	The abnormality of many people that always existed but now is covered by the anonymity that the Internet provides.
Mirsini	Parental unawareness.
Myio	People are lacking awareness and time to respond to this cyber threat. Due to the economic crisis in Greece there are no so many things going on in order to educate parents and us on how to

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protect children from cyber child exploitation.

Participants	Sources of cyber child exploitation
Nicki	The major source of cyber child exploitation, well. I believe it's the vagueness of the Internet that cannot be controlled; therefore, what has to do with the Internet like cyber child exploitation is difficult to manage and detect.
Maike	The major source is anonymity that the cyber world provides. There always has been child exploitation but the Internet allows this crime to flourish.
Nikol	The major source of cyber child exploitation is the economical profits that it brings. More precisely, child pornography is a fast- growing business with annual revenues estimated around one billion from what I read in news' reports.
Penny	I believe that the constant release of personal information through the Internet is a major source of cyber child exploitation. For example, real names, age, sex, check in on Facebook and other social networks gives more and more information to predators on how to approach the child.
Victoria	The major source of cyber child exploitation in my opinion, as any other crime of today's world, is the disappearance of ethical barriers.
Zacharias	Children are subjects to many forms of coercion and control the worrying part is that children most of the times are unable to recognize what is happening to them as abuse and exploitation.

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The 15% of the same population stressed the economic crisis as a source of the evolution of cyber child exploitation. Under such argument, parents shift their attention to economic problems and not to online threats. Nikol expressed an interesting point by arguing that the source and maintenance of cyber child exploitation occurs from the rather profitable business that offers worldwide.

Similarly, with Questions 4 and 7, Question 9 asked the participants if they have received any professional training or development on the topic of cyber child abuse awareness, and their answers revealed that 90% of the participants stated that they have not received any type of training program. Contrary on the majority of the participants' responses, Miranda referred to a professional training that she undertook by X University of Athens, Greece. The training that she was referring to concentrated on the psychological tensions that the Internet causes to Primary school students and how that stress may stand as an obstacle to their development in education.

Table 5

*Current Filters and Protocols in the School's Internet Service, Question 9*

Participant	Filters and safety protocols	Why the school has such protocols
Anna	The protocol that the school uses includes filters that allow student to work on certain things in the computer and do not just surf on various websites. They use a certain operating system; precisely, already downloaded application software including word processing, painting, educational software, and Internet navigation software.	Another interesting point in the protocol is that students are encouraged to complete Internet- based projects in groups in order to learn to use the computer with other person and learn how to work together on a computer- based task.
Bill	I have been teaching almost twenty years in Primary school and I see the necessity of refined safety protocols in school regarding Internet service. There is no new safety feature in the school policy to teach children how to prevent themselves from becoming victims of cyber exploitation. Every young person, in the context of his general education, must acquire basic knowledge but also skills in using the Internet as well as necessary critiques and social skills to understand the things that happen around him. This was the main reason that Computer Science class was formed approximately thirty years ago. The computer is usefulness as a tool for day-to-day work, but the current situation in the educational process of Greece is not ready to prepare the kids for the safety usage of the Internet. The cultivation of a new pedagogy based on Computer use will take time in Greece since it is not at the top priority- where it should have been.	Children should have had certain safety features in the Internet which will allow them to use Internet in order to facilitate new active ways of learning and develop new attitudes and skills.
Chrisa	I do not know any filters or safety protocols. Children are using the computers in school only when they have class.	In 6 <sup>th</sup> Grade, students make calculations and graphs either for homework or in-class activities. Their tasks may also involve presentation of data in a table and/or the creation of simple charts.
Ermina	I think that the school follows the general curriculum implemented by the Ministry of Education in Greece regarding Computer Science courses in Primary school. Children on the first-grade start learn to browse texts, pictures. They also listen to sounds and music from ready-made multimedia applications. One safety feature is that the school has predefined the music, sounds and all the other multimedia applications in order to avoid entering in a wrong website. Children	The safety feature of predefined multimedia application exists mainly because offenders create similar websites to attract children. I had heard that pedophiles misspell children's websites to trap them into entering pedophile sites.

Participant	Filters and safety protocols	Why the school has such protocols
	learn how to create images based on certain themes as well as shapes and movements in the mouse pad.	In 5 <sup>th</sup> grade I give them half semester projects that they work with the computer science teacher to complete them. Such projects include simple text formatting, embedded image in text, save and retrieve file, creation and expression various pictures in one single document as part of art projects.
Johnny	Children are taught in school how to use computer efficiently to assist them with their homework or different projects that they have. Computer Science teachers do not have a curriculum to follow regarding Internet safety.	In 5 <sup>th</sup> grade I give them half semester projects that they work with the computer science teacher to complete them. Such projects include simple text formatting, embedded image in text, save and retrieve file, creation and expression various pictures in one single document as part of art projects.
Katie	There is no safety protocol regarding computer use in school but there are certain lessons that should be completed in each grade in the Computer science subject.	In the last grade of Primary school, children learn how to use Word, Excel and PowerPoint programs. Additionally, they learn to distinct useful information and qualified sources for lessons' projects, distinction of useful and not- trustworthy material as well as safe interaction and communication via emails.
Lily	The school follows the Hellenic curriculum of Information Technology and Computer Science. The human activity is directly affected by the use of computer from very early childhood.	In the grade that I teach now they have twice a week from one hour each day and they study the basics for computer use. For example, students start learning the correct body position in front of the computer as well as open and close an application initially with help and then gradually autonomy. I personally think that this is not something 'updated' since children from three years old and onwards know very well how to use technological devices such as laptops, computers, tablets and smartphones. When they had first written the curriculum, computer use was not so well inherent in our daily lives.
Louisa	Students start learning the various uses of the computer as a surveillance tool taught, as a cognitive - exploratory tool and as a tool for communication and search of information in the context of day-to-day school's activities. Thus, by acquiring the ability to understand the basic principles governing the computer technology in major human activities (such as: information and processing, communication, entertainment, new possibilities of approaching knowledge), the necessary conditions are created favoring a pedagogical and didactic methodology centered on the learner.	The aim of teaching Informatics in compulsory education (Primary, High School) is for students to acquire an initial and comprehensive understanding of the core functions of the computer while developing wider critical thinking, ethics, and correct cyber social behavior.
Maggie	One filter that I know that the school uses based on its protocol under the Internet use section is that certain sites that most children are attracted to are restricted, such as YouTube.	The school in collaboration with the teachers apply certain instruction either by independent practice of each student or by group work activities that enhances the creativity of students as well as communication and collaboration.

Participant	Filters and safety protocols	Why the school has such protocols
Manoli	The Internet is a valuable tool for acquiring rich cultural and scientific knowledge for children from the early grades in Primary school. I am not aware of any safety features, but I know that the school follows a protocol regarding the teaching materials of each grade in the class of Computer Science because kids should know how to use the Internet in a correct way.	The Computer Science class ensures lifelong learning and promotion of individual education. It also contributes to the improvement of the education provided to children with special educational needs in the ordinary school.
Markel	I think that the hardware that the school uses as well as the Internet and proxy filters are the ones that constitute the safety protocols as you named it.	The hardware being used will prevent students from entering in unwanted sites and inappropriate contexts such as pornography. Nonetheless, the school Internet system does not provide sophisticated filtering technologies such as usage reports. The reason for not having detailed reports of every child's usage is that the time that the students spent in the computers is restricted to the one-hour class in the Computer Labs as well as another reason is that children are learning and using specific applications and features instructed by the teacher during class.
Miranda	I am not aware of any precise safety features, but I am aware of what children do in the Computer Science class since I have substituted teachers before.	Mostly, in early grades, they play and learn in the computer with games that are downloaded and confined by the school to avoid unwanted downloads from the Internet. Additionally, they learn how to search in search engines like Google by typing plain text. Another Computer Science class may focus on painting and the different features of this computer's application.
Mirsini	The school does follow a protocol on the Internet with certain filters and restrictions applied based on the usage of the computers in school. In the second grade, students, based on the Protocol, are familiarizing themselves with the computer and they learn how to use it as a tool for discovering, creating, and expressing, but also as a mental tool, as well as a tool to develop their thinking.	They use multimedia educational content defined by the protocol of the school in order to develop their cognitive skills.
Myio	The school does not have any unique curriculum regarding computer use. The only thing that I know is the division computer science based on the age of the child. For instance, in 4 <sup>th</sup> grade, they have just started with the first acquaintance with the graphic environment of the computer.	I am not aware of any precise safety features regarding computer use.

Participant	Filters and safety protocols	Why the school has such protocols
Nicki	<p>The school that I am working at now does not allow students to enter sites such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter or YouTube in order for children to learn how to use the Internet and the computer for completing learning goals and studying for school. From early childhood, students should learn that the Internet is not a means for entertainment but also a means for finding sources that in previous years they would not have access to them.</p>	<p>Students, in their general education should understand the impact of new technologies in the various fields of human activity. Students should become familiar with issues of protection and copyright, information security, as well as Internet behavior in general.</p>
Maïke	<p>The school has not adopted a new model for teaching, which includes the use of iPad and computers for the actual learning process of the children. This does happen in other parts of the world but not in Greece. In this school students use the Internet while in class of Computer Science and most of the times has the scope of searching, collecting, and selecting information on a subject in class.</p>	<p>The school restricts students to use Internet only for learning purposes in order to limit their time in social network websites and long- lasting videos in YouTube.</p>
Nikol	<p>The main feature of the safety protocol of the school regarding the use of the Internet service by the students is its restriction in usage only in the time of Computer Science class.</p>	<p>In all grades of Primary school, what students are primarily learning is how to use the computer in everyday life with knowledge and safety. For example, the formation of e-mails and the dangers and capacities that each email account offers are explored in the 4<sup>th</sup> grade.</p>
Penny	<p>Students use the Internet service of the school only when being in the Computer Science class with the supervision of the teacher. So, I guess one safety feature being in place is that students use the computers only under supervision and also only in restricted websites and application in order to monitor their activities.</p>	<p>Of course, children even before entering the Primary school, know how to use a technological device either a computer or a smartphone or even a tablet. What the school tries to do is to give them the knowledge needed to be protected in the Internet and make use of it for good purposes.</p>
Victoria	<p>The only safety protocol that I certainly know from the school Internet service is that children can visit selected sites of the Internet (www....) and not Facebook or Instagram. The school has blocked those websites.</p>	<p>In my opinion the reason for that is that students should learn how to use the Internet productively- without losing time from their learning in social networking sites- but also because if the child enters his Facebook page through the school's computer, then, a predator- hacker can easily detect the location of the child and proceed with his/her future victim in to exploitation.</p>
Zacharias	<p>The School's Internet service is mainly restricted in the Computer Science class. This is the only time that children have in the computers. Even that time, teachers who taught Computers use different</p>	<p>I am not aware of any precise safety features apart from the restricted use of the computer under teacher's supervision during the Computer Science class.</p>

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Participant	Filters and safety protocols	Why the school has such protocols
	features to have them learn how to use computer for studying. In fifth grade, students search information in dictionaries and/or encyclopedias etc. Create small projects and save and open files- Word or PowerPoint- initially with help and then by themselves.	

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Based on participants' answers on Question 9 displayed in Table 5, a minority ( $n=4$ ) of the participants declared that are not aware of any filters or safety protocols supported by the school. However, most the teachers reported that certain restricted software exists for the use of computers by primary school students during the Computer Science class. Some other teachers added that there is a need for an updated protocol which follows the rapid technological advances of today's society. For example, Maïke argued that, "The school has not adopted a new model for teaching, which includes the use of iPad and computers for the actual learning process of the children."

Moving to the second part of Question 9, an overwhelming majority ( $n=18$ ) of teachers agreed that the reason why the school has such Protocols is because children, especially in primary school, should learn how to use the Internet productively. In addition, children should learn how to use basic features to complete class projects. Ermina suggested that the restriction of certain websites by the school administration occurs because certain kids' friendly websites are misspelled on purpose by pedophiles to get in contact with children.

### **Summary of Findings in Relation to Patterns and Themes**

Through this research, I was asking what is currently being done. This helps provide a good baseline as researchers seek to find what is missing, and what is potentially needed to enhance safety for primary school children. I focused on learning what participants know about the problem of cyber child exploitation collected from 20 interviews with primary school teachers. The data analyzed from the participants'

responses revealed multiple similarities, which led to the following seven emerging themes:

1. Parents play an important role in cyber abuse prevention
2. Facebook and YouTube are the most popular social networks witnessed in Primary school
3. Internet societies influence cyber child exploitation
4. Teachers' lack of training and development programs on cyber child exploitation
5. No school policies for teachers as well as parents on cyber child abuse awareness
6. Parental supervision as a preventive strategy
7. Classroom protocols on Internet safety

### **Parents Play an Important Role in Cyber Abuse Prevention**

The similarities in responses from the teachers formed the first theme out of the data analysis. The findings suggested that all the participants (100%) agreed that parents should be close to their children and talk to them from very young age. Although the primary school teachers may have recommended different actions for parents to protect their children, all of them reported the necessity of parents in the Internet safety of their children. Children will then report to their parents observed acts in the cyber community that may lead to a criminal act.

### **Facebook and YouTube are the Most Popular Social Networks Witnessed in Primary School**

All the teachers claimed that from their discussions with parents as well as with children, Facebook and YouTube are the most dominant websites for primary school students. The most prevalent websites were Facebook and YouTube through which children communicate constantly and make new friends from all over the world. Worth mentioning is the fact that such websites are all daily visited by students.

### **Internet Societies Influence Cyber Child Exploitation**

Most of the teachers believed that the Internet is everywhere and highly affects child exploitation. The technological advances pose a great threat to children since they are in a quite vulnerable age. Instant messaging, chat rooms, and social networks such as Facebook can boost the job of online predators. The fake profiles that online offenders use to approach children stand as a great threat to child's development. What precisely Internet gives to child exploitation is the uncontrolled nature of the cyber community.

### **Teachers' Lack of Training and Development Programs on Cyber Child Exploitation**

All participants claimed they had received no training or professional development programs on cyber child exploitation prevention. However, despite the teachers not having school-sponsored training on Internet safety, participants highlighted the need for such program in order to protect the children.

## **No School Policies for Teachers as Well as Parents on Cyber Child Abuse**

### **Awareness**

There was consent under the above emerging theme. The consent stressed that there is no such thing as school policies to help teachers and parents to learn about cyber child abuse awareness. All the teachers agreed that preventative education delivers knowledge and detects challenging attitudes. Nothing more precise in the form of legislation or policy program exists in the school as in any other school in Greece. Children should be taught about safeguarding, including online, ensuring that the appropriate filters and monitoring systems for online activities are in place. Teachers agreed that parents should be taught as well to safeguard their children from this cyber threat. For example, a good idea would be that of teaching courses for parents on a monthly base. In those courses, parents will learn how to talk properly to their children regarding the dangers of exploitation. Parents should teach their children about their body, about what abuse is, and as age appropriate, about sex. Teach children words that help them discuss sex comfortably with parents.

### **Parental Supervision as a Preventive Strategy**

Most of the teachers ( $n=18$ ) agreed that parents should start early and talk often to children. Parents should create trust from early childhood and talk on the dangers of uncontrolled Internet use. In other words, parents should be guardians of their children's safety in the online communities. Mindfulness should be enhanced through after school activities for their cognitive skills to be developed, and eventually limit the time that students have on the Internet. Parents should monitor the time spent on the Internet as

well as the websites visited by children should be all filtered. Parents should understand that the Internet has become the favorite means for pedophiles to interact privately with children. Sexual predators often target kid friendly websites with colorful banners and games.

### **Classroom Protocols in the Management of Internet Safety**

Another theme emerged related to school policy program on Internet safety. An overwhelming majority (80%) of the teachers said the school had written a protocol/ curriculum determining the Internet use during the Computer Science class and teachers of this subject were required to follow this protocol. Two of the teachers claimed that were unaware of the school curriculum. The establishment of classroom rules especially when it comes to the computer use was a profound action for the well-functioning of the society. As previously shown in Table 5, the teachers referred to controlled Internet usage, filtered websites and computer use for assigned projects in different subjects depending on the nature of the assignment. Three of the teachers mentioned that the current situation in the educational process of Greece is not ready to prepare the kids for the safety usage of the Internet. The cultivation of a new pedagogy based on computer use will take time in Greece since it is not at the top priority, which it should have been. Children should have certain safety features in the Internet which will allow them to use Internet to facilitate new active ways of learning and develop new attitudes and skills (Bill, 2017).

## **Findings in Relation to the Research Questions**

### **Research Question 1**

Research Question 1 was as follows: What are the perceptions of educators on the problem of cyber child exploitation?

Based on the findings, the perceptions of educators on the problem of cyber child exploitation varied but were similar in nature. Most teachers described cyber child exploitation as a contemporary cybercrime that seeks governing bodies and laws to tackle it. Children should learn from precise curriculum on the dangers that the World Wide Web hides regarding cyber child exploitation. Primary school students may become victims of cyber abuse by making a friend through Facebook. Nowadays, especially for younger generations, it is very common to become friends through Facebook without knowing each other. One innocent conversation through the Internet may lead to a dangerous person with abusive behavior. Ermina noted that cyber child exploitation is on the rise. The feeling was that Facebook, Instagram, and other social media networks give to children, especially in early childhood, a false sense of security behind a computer screen. The teachers believed that cyber child exploitation should be soon tackled because it stands as a great danger, which stems from lack of legislation, preventive strategies, and the economic crisis in Greece. Aside from these factors, cyber child exploitation was believed to result from a lack of parental awareness and supervision when their children participate in social media communities. The feeling was that Internet hides a lot of dangers to students mainly because they are not told how to use it wisely

since there is no pan European or even Greek legislation on how to teach children Internet safety.

### **Research Question 2**

Research Question 2 was as follows: Do teachers understand exploitation to be a danger to the Primary school students that they teach?

Teachers understand that exploitation as a great danger to the primary school students that they teach. Most teachers agreed that child exploitation always existed from ancient times until today. What has happened is a shift from an offender attacking to a child in a limited region to the unlimited that the Internet provides. Now, the offender who may be residing in one side of the world may have a victim of cyber exploitation in the other side of the world just by a computer. Offenders can more easily exploit children since they have more and more victims available to choose from the cyber community.

Only one participant did not see the exploitation as a threat but the fact that there is no education and curriculum to define what parents and students should know regarding this crime. Chrisa explained that

I do not believe that Internet is a real danger if parents take good care of their children by talking to them about the dangers of the Internet from early childhood, keeping an eye on them for the time that they spend online, minimizing, therefore, the risks of becoming victims.

**Research Question 3**

Research Question 3 was as follows: Do primary school educators use any strategies to inform children how to defend themselves from the threat of cyber child exploitation?

The findings indicated that the majority of the teachers at the school did not use any strategies to inform children how to defend themselves from the threat of cyber child exploitation. Only the Internet safety protocol that exists is the only evidence of a protection strategy for children from school. I think that the hardware that the school uses as well as the Internet and proxy filters are the ones that constitute the safety protocols. The hardware being used is preventing students from entering in unwanted sites and inappropriate contexts such as pornography. Nonetheless, the school Internet system does not provide sophisticated filtering technologies such as usage reports. The reason for not having detailed reports of every child's usage is that the time that the students spent in the computers is restricted to the 1-hour class in the computer labs as well as another reason is that children are learning and using specific applications and features instructed by the teacher during class. All the teachers felt that professional development is needed as to how students should protect themselves from cyber child exploitation, and more effective ways for the school to inform parents and eliminate such cybercrime.

**Discrepant Data**

Despite the number of similarities and commonalities released from the outcomes of the data collected, the findings revealed some discrepancy or misinforming information. I was quite surprised to learn that four of the participants were totally



unaware of any filters or safety protocols supported by the school. I was equally surprised to learn that there is no precise legislation or policy program to inform children, parents, and teachers on how students should be protected from cyber child exploitation, in and out of school. I checked with school's administration and verified that the education institution does not have such a policy on the management of cyber child exploitation. The existing policy stated that the involvement of information systems in the perpetration of child pornography has created several new implications to the crime, as it is reflected in Law 3625/2007, by which digital child pornography was formalized in the Greek Penal Code. Therefore, today, in the second paragraph of article 348A, the crime of child pornography is explained, which is committed through a computer system or Internet, an aggravated offense which is punishable more severely than conventional child pornography (European Law Monitor, 2014).

### **Evidence of Quality**

This study was conducted in a specific manner to meet the highest standards of quality expected by Walden University and the school. Some responses contradicted or run counter to any category, or specific pattern as in any qualitative research. What I did to ensure trustworthiness and quality was to properly note and address the discrepant data. I asked five of the participants to review a summary of the transcripts to enhance the quality of the research by increasing the accuracy of the interpretations. Then participants confirmed that the statements were an accurate summary of their accounts. Lastly, throughout the whole data analysis process I have assigned a precise date with the

dissertation committee members to follow their recommendation in each step of the process.

### **Conclusion**

The purpose of this qualitative research was to address the cybercrime of child exploitation from the perspectives of 20 primary school teachers. All the teachers interviewed believed child exploitation takes place instantly since technological devices such as laptops, smartphones, and tablets are, now, part of children's lives. Most of the teachers witnessed that primary school children spend more than 2 hours daily online. Teachers believed that more parental supervision is needed at home to decrease the chances of children to become victims of cyber exploitation. Based on the finding, seven major themes emerged relevant to the teachers' perceptions (a) parents play an important role in cyber abuse prevention, (b) Facebook and YouTube are the most popular social networks witnessed in Primary school, (c) internet societies influence cyber child exploitation, (d) teachers' lack of training and development programs on cyber child exploitation, (e) no school policies for teachers as well as parents on cyber child abuse awareness, (f) parental supervision as a preventive strategy, and (g) classroom protocols on Internet safety. This study will continue in Section 5 with a discussion, recommendation, and conclusion.

## Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

The focus of this basic interpretative qualitative study was exploring and describing the phenomenon of cyber child exploitation from the perspectives and experiences of 20 purposefully selected primary school teachers. The general problem of this study was the rise in cyber child abuse attacks in Greece and throughout Europe as well as the world. Cyber child exploitation occurs through the involvement of children with the Internet in the absence of a unified awareness program on how to use the Internet safely. It is necessary to explore the quality of education concerning the dangers of the Internet for children.

In-depth, face-to-face interviews and field notes formed the data for this study. Data were collected from 20 purposefully selected primary school teachers who provided precious information about the selected topic. The research questions were developed to examine what is currently being done based on the primary school teachers' experiences and perceptions. What is currently being done, eventually, helped the study to provide baseline information on what is missing and what is potentially needed to enhance the safety of children in the online environment. Coding, categorization, and thematic analysis dominated the analysis of the data for the study.

The results of the research revealed seven major themes relevant to the teachers' opinions and experiences: (a) parents play an important role in cyber abuse prevention, (b) Facebook and YouTube are the most popular social networks witnessed in primary school, (c) Internet societies influence cyber child exploitation, (d) teachers lack training and development programs on cyber child exploitation, (e) there are no school policies

for teachers as well as parents on cyber child abuse awareness, (f) parental supervision may be used as a preventive strategy, and (g) classroom protocols on Internet safety are needed. The following section starts with a discussion on the findings and the literature relevant to the findings. In other words, the literature supports the findings.

### **Interpretations of the Findings**

#### **Research Question 1**

Research Question 1 was as follows: What are the perceptions of educators on the problem of cyber child exploitation?

Based on the findings, the perceptions of educators on the problem of cyber child exploitation varied but were similar in nature. The majority of teachers described cyber child exploitation as a contemporary cybercrime and indicated the need for governing bodies and laws to tackle this problem. Lack of legal and governmental consistency on the issue of cyber child exploitation was a major theme developed from patterns and similarities during analysis of the teachers' responses from the interviews. Consistent with the findings, Papathanasiou et al. (2014) noted that lack of appropriate user awareness and training is the primary reason that cybercrimes flourish, suggesting that the lack of such programs fuels ongoing cybercrime.

A precise program/policy should be implemented for teachers to be trained and for children to be taught about the dangers hidden behind the entertainment and education that the Internet provides to its users. Most frequently, victims of cyber child abuse are from populations that are not educated on Internet safety (Papanikolaou et al., 2014). Primary school students may become victims of cyber abuse by making friends through

Facebook. Today, especially for younger generations, it is common to become friends through Facebook with people one does not know personally. One innocent conversation through the Internet may lead to contact with a dangerous person with abusive behavior. Ermina (2017) noted that cyber child exploitation is on the rise.

Facebook, Instagram, and other social media networks give children, especially young children, a false sense of security as they interact behind a computer screen. This idea was alluded to in one of the themes that emerged from this research: Facebook and YouTube are the most popular social networks witnessed in primary school. In describing the ways that children are approached by abusers online, Europol experts have referred to both the environments where suspects contact minors and the means of communication used for this purpose (Europol, 2017). In this study, the most common means of communication were social media, chat applications, games, and YouTube. Although some platforms may be used more often than others, there is little evidence to suggest that there is a specific feature common to those websites that promotes coercive and exploitative behavior. Such websites and platforms offer viable opportunities to those wishing to contact potential victims (Europol, 2017).

The use of computers does not change the character of a crime such as child exploitation. Nevertheless, the rapid expansion of information and communication systems and constant connectivity to the Internet have recently triggered a qualitative change (Papanikolaou et al., 2014). Internet society provides a space for the exploitation of children by criminals, who experience no geographical constraints if they are online. In this way, the Internet has helped in the expansion of cyber child exploitation.

Aside from these factors, cyber child exploitation is believed to result from a lack of parental awareness and supervision when children participate in social media communities. Despite the fact that the Hellenic Police has quite recently established a special unit for dealing with cybercrime, in general, the legal framework needs revision and more precise regulations with updated information in order to bring Greece one step forward toward becoming an active member of the global fight against cybercrime (Lough, 2013). One obstacle to such an initiative is the economic crisis in Greece. Three interviewees stressed the economic crisis as a reason for the evolution of cyber child exploitation. According to their argument, parents have directed their attention to economic problems and not to online threats. Nikol expressed an interesting point by arguing that the source and maintenance of cyber child exploitation occurs from a rather profitable, worldwide business. Papathanasiou et al. (2014) supported the interviewees' opinion by stating that Greece has a strong economic crisis, which is correlated to some degree to an increase in cybercrime cases and a shift of priorities on the government's agenda.

All in all, the feeling was that Internet hides a lot of dangers for students, mainly because they are not told how to use it wisely, given that there is no pan-European or even Greek legislation on how to teach children about Internet safety. The economic crisis in Greece shifted attention to socioeconomic issues regarding the debt in the European Union and has left less space for educational intervention programs. Meanwhile, the Internet is attractive to technologically savvy criminals because it provides them with the opportunity to locate and search for victims. Law enforcement

faces several difficulties in both investigating and closing such crime cases (Papanikolaou et al., 2014).

### **Research Question 2**

Research Question 2 was as follows: Do teachers understand exploitation to be a danger to the primary school students that they teach?

Teachers understand exploitation as a great danger to the primary school students that they teach. Polyzoidou (2016) suggested that digital technology has provided offenders with increasingly sophisticated means to engage in child exploitation. In the present study, teachers expressed the belief that cyber child exploitation had become more prevalent, although they had not personally witnessed such exploitation. Perhaps this could be explained by such online exploitation usually occurring after school hours over the Internet, in that during school hours, children have limited time with computers and have certain tasks to complete when using them during computer science classes. The ever-increasing use of technological devices such as mobiles, iPads, and game consoles may explain the increasing usage of technological devices by very young age (Allen, 2010; Sbarbaro & Smith, 2011).

The majority of teachers agreed that child exploitation has existed since ancient times. Today, child exploitation has become more apparent due to the anonymity and rapid communication that the Internet provides. In the pre-Internet era, exploitation was limited and occurred in restricted groups of pedophiles who had to be careful to preserve their privacy as far as their identity was concerned; further, pedophiles had to remain aware of the risks that personal contact involved (Neumnanu, 2011). Now, geographical

restrictions are no longer an issue. Websites that contain images and depictions of children being exploited have increased by 345% over the last decade. An interesting fact for this research is that in Greece, depictions of child exploitation on websites have increased by 150% annually (Polyzoidou, 2016). Such numbers offered by current literature highlight a lack of appropriate training for teachers and school administrators, which leaves children vulnerable, resulting in an increase in the rate of cyber child exploitation (Glanser, 2010).

What has happened is a shift from an offender being limited to attacking a child in a certain geographic region to the unlimited reach that the Internet provides. Now, an offender can target a victim of cyber exploitation on the other side of the world using a computer. Offenders can more easily exploit children because they have more and more victims available to choose from in the cyber community. Personal computers, game consoles, and mobile phones are ubiquitous in technologically advanced societies (Papanikolaou et al., 2013). Cyber child exploitation has adopted a transnational character and can simultaneously affect individuals in different geographical locations, with offenders retaining anonymity (Papathanasiou et al., 2014). Another report on cybercrime indicated that 556 million users are manipulated each year, a number that exceeds the entire population of the European Union (Papanikolaou et al., 2014). Lack of effective policing of cybercrime and technological advances that enhance anonymity have contributed to these numbers.



Only one participant did not see cyber child exploitation as a threat, instead perceiving the threat as the fact that there is no education or curriculum to define what parents and students should know regarding such crime. Chrisa explained,

I do not believe that Internet is a real danger if parents take good care of their children by talking to them about the dangers of the Internet from early childhood, keeping an eye on them for the time that they spend online, minimizing, therefore, the risks of becoming victims.

Cybercrime prevention literature confirmed that effective prevention activities must involve an entire team consisting of parents, children, and teachers (Olweus & Limber, 2010). Primary school teachers and parents can play important roles in preventing cyber child exploitation. For cybercrime to be fought effectively, international cooperation is necessary with a view toward adopting a harmonized legislative framework and appropriate procedures to boost transnational cybercrime investigations and prosecutions in an effort to minimize the incidence of cybercrime as well as prevent potential predators from attacking children (Papathanasiou et al., 2014).

### **Research Question 3**

Research Question 3 was as follows: Do primary school educators use any strategies to inform children of how to defend themselves from the threat of cyber child exploitation?

The existing Internet safety protocol was the sole evidence of a protection strategy for children at the school where this study was conducted. The hardware that the school used as the Internet and proxy filters constituted the safety protocols. The hardware

prevented students from entering unwanted sites and inappropriate contexts, such as online gaming and Facebook. However, the school Internet system did not provide sophisticated filtering technologies such as usage reports. The reason for not having detailed reports of every child's usage was that the time that the students spent on the computers was restricted to 1-hour classes in the computer labs. Another reason was that children were learning and using specific applications and features under the instruction of the teacher during class. All the teachers felt that professional development was needed as to how students should protect themselves from cyber child exploitation, and they indicated a need for more effective ways for the school to inform parents about and eliminate such cyber abuse.

The findings indicated that most of the teachers at the school did not use any strategies to inform children about how to defend themselves from the threat of cyber child exploitation. The findings from the study were clearly supported by the literature. Europol (2017) indicated in its last issued report on this topic that the development of successful preventive or awareness-raising campaigns related to cyber child exploitation is not always simple. This crime phenomenon is multifaceted, with intricate subtleties; hence, crime prevention campaigns often face challenges that can only be overcome through the combination of theory-based models with existing practical knowledge. More coherent, precise planning is needed for Greece to decrease and prevent cyber child abuse.

No schools in Greece have adopted formal programs to prevent and reduce cyber child exploitation (Europol, 2017). However, participants in this study generally

expressed willingness to engage in cyber abuse prevention, but most of them claimed that they lacked training to do so. This fact may make them reluctant to step in or even recognize when cyber abuse is happening, especially when it is indirect, as when it occurs through a fake Facebook profile. Europol (2017) suggested that teachers' lack of training could render the misbehaviors of children caused by cyber abuse unrecognizable. The key tenant is connected to the attitudes of teachers and parents and how they perceive cyber child exploitation. Their attitudes on such incidents are directly related to their level of training.

One of the key strategies that teachers reported in multiple responses throughout the interviews involved emphasizing the role of parents, which gave rise to the theme *parents play an important role in cyber abuse prevention*. Parents must be trained as well, not only to recognize overt and covert forms of cyber child exploitation, but also to appropriately address such behaviors. Any programs to prevent child cyber abuse must be sustained over years because research has shown that such programs lose their effectiveness over time if they are not set for the long term. Further, no strategies exist, and no applied research is conducted regarding cyber child exploitation in Greece because people tend to believe that cybercrime is not a primary concern for them (Papanikolaou et al., 2013). Parents contribute to the success of students in terms of their academic, career, and social development (Cornell & Mehta, 2011). Parents or guardians may be more aware of cyber issues than friends or counselors due to their unique role because they spend more time with their children and live with them.

It is a foregone conclusion that professional development programs need to be ongoing (as opposed to taking the form of a 1-day awareness event) so that educators and parents can be better equipped with skills to address cyber child exploitation on a school-wide level through practice and policy (Barnes et al., 2012). What is needed for Greek legislation on cyber child exploitation is to create a certain training program for teachers to be prepared to respond to cybercrime issues, in addition to possessing the knowledge and skills necessary to implement preventive strategies both at home and at school. Teachers should approach the subject of cyber child exploitation with students in a careful and supportive manner.

### **Theoretical Implications**

A key finding in the study was the fact that there are no preventive strategies to teach students and parents how to protect themselves from cyber child exploitation. Another correlating finding is that there are no trainings available to help teachers become aware of the dangers that the Internet hides, as well as preventive strategies to protect their students. These findings are supported by Birks (2014) who stated that each person has a unique conceptualization of existence and reality. The realities and experiences of the primary school teachers interviewed revealed that there is no prevention or intervention program to protect children in Greece from cyber exploitation. Within Birks's theory, emphasis is given to the way that people understand the world and how it is influenced by their history and the context in which they live. This is precisely what I aimed to ascertain about the selected population through the research interviews.

One fundamental aspect of grounded theory research design is the process, collection and analysis of concurrent data generation. The data from the initial encounters undergo codification before collection, production and development of analysis of more data are repeated (Birks & Mills, 2014). The distinct aspect of grounded theory from other types of research design is that the researcher must first collect and then, analyze the data. The data were collected, transcribed, and coded to arrive in certain themes that will highlight the necessity for further research and social change.

Grounded theory methods are considered inductive since a theory is built up from the data itself. The theory here can stand as the need to create a climate of inclusion of both parents and students and to promote the learning of appropriate social skills, so that positive action emerges to combat cyber child exploitation. Abductive reasoning emerged at all phases of analysis but particularly during the constant comparative analysis of categories to categories resulting in theoretical integration. Abduction occurred through a cerebral process, an intellectual act, a mental leap, which summarizes the perceptions of primary school teachers on cyber child exploitation (Reichertz, 2007). As the findings suggested, cyber child exploitation is often mistakenly considered something happening far away from Greece. Cyber child abuse is a very contemporary cybercrime which is rooted in each household with any technological device such as computer, smartphone, tablet, and game console. In such cybercrime with radically increased numbers of expansion, school environment plays an important role in the behavior of children regarding Internet safety. The premise is that primary school teachers should have an effective training program to learn about the dangers of Internet and some preventive

strategies to teach students and parents how to protect themselves from cyber exploitation.

### **Implications for Social Change**

The safety of children when they enter the cyber world is a rather prevalent issue stressed in this study. The results of this study made it clear that there are no development training programs for teachers and neither preventive strategy for children and parents on cyber child exploitation. Unless primary school teachers of Computer Science come to the classroom with skills that allow them to teach independently of the school curriculum to avert cyber abuse instances, there is no program established by the Greek Educational Ministry neither the EU to inform systematically parents and children how to be protected from cyber exploitation.

Teachers are well positioned to direct a social change that can minimize the effects of the Internet to children regarding cyber abuse. The best ways to deal with cyber child exploitation is the Greek government to issue a preventive awareness program for students and parents taught by teachers in each primary school. Europol (2017) called for a united effort to address and prevent cyber child exploitation. It takes an entire school community effort and commitment to establish a safe browsing of children in the Internet, outside and inside school, as the teachers mentioned. Working together, parents, children, administration, school counselors, and teachers can help to avert cyber child exploitation through awareness, learning, and prevention.

### **Recommendations for Action**

Based on the findings of the study, numerous plans for actions are suggested. The conclusions designated that teachers and parents should obtain a positive approach by speaking up to each other around the safety issues when surfing in the web. The premise is that children, especially in primary school, are close to their parents and teachers; it will be crucial to generate a platform where they can be informed in terms of what to avoid when using the Internet and, generally, how to be protected from cyber threats.

The present study also revealed that all the interviewees were not aware of any cyber abuse policies in the school, or even in the district. Some of the interviewees believed that any potential awareness programs with preventive strategies at their core should be examined and reviewed on monthly base by teachers, parents, and children. With that in mind, to help with cyber child exploitation at home, primary school teachers need professional trainings in order to be able to detect cyber abuse before it becomes exploitation. After teachers acquiring such knowledge, parents should be taught on those skills as well. By placing the cyber child exploitation awareness on the school's agenda throughout the school year and may be in the district's professional development agenda this will not only educate the classroom teacher, but it would help to educate the district and parents alike.

Recommendations are created to support children in their wellbeing and educational development while sometimes reduces any instances of cyber exploitation in the primary school population. For example, the involvement of key stakeholders in a positive dialogue to incorporate insights and recommendations deriving from these

research findings seems to be extremely important. Having the permission of the school administrator, I will distribute the results of this study among teachers in an open forum to present teachers' perceptions on cyber child exploitation. Teachers as well as other personnel from school should have access to knowledge about cyber child abuse so that they can uniformly address the issues. All educators should be knowledgeable about cyber child exploitation and the need to create a preventive program with strategies to be used and protect the children from online threats. Ideally, school districts from all over Greece should provide training about such strategies prior to the start of each academic year.

### **Recommendations for Further Research**

The Head of Europol, Wilson (2017) stressed the fact that children are increasingly using the Internet to communicate with the world as well as form new relationships. The Internet is part of their social development nowadays (European Cyber Crime Centre, 2017). Europe, in general, should transmit to its states the collective responsibility to educate all children on the threats behind those online relationships as well as what mechanisms children should apply to enter the cyber world as safely as possible (European Cyber Crime Centre, 2017). Although the literature demonstrated the need for a policy to inform parents and students as well as train teachers on cyber child exploitation awareness, more research is needed by Greece itself at the primary school level to further explore and better understand teacher development training and involvement in the reduction of cyber child exploitation. In addition to this, more research is needed to fully explore the extent of teachers' role in providing the



appropriate interventions. The educators stated that they do play important role in the development of children especially in primary school.

Research literature was lacking in several key topics, which included areas such as teacher and student relation. Research is needed to explore student to parent behavior on issues regarding Internet use and how these dynamics contribute to their awareness on cyber child exploitation. The premise is that much more needs to be known about cyber child exploitation from the perspectives of teachers, parents and children. Much more needs to be known about Internet safety, parents' awareness, and children's effective use of the web. A good point to start further research and a challenge as well, is to find schools, administrators, and teachers who would welcome to capture the experiences of students and parents in this topic.

### **Reflections on Researcher's Experience**

From the beginning of the research, emphasis was given on the importance of adequate research preparation, the role of the researcher, the ability to be confident enough to explore the unknown. The completion of the dissertation by adopting a qualitative approach was a rewarding work. Nonetheless, multiple challenges were encountered like the time, which students spent for transcription. My main concern was whether I was following the right process for a qualitative study while trying to assimilate lots of information. On this respect, one thing that I observed is that there was no precise manner and method in the process of reporting the outcomes of the study. My primary interest was to accumulate a quality body of research and ultimately comprehend the

underlying experiences and perceptions of primary school staff connected to cyber child exploitation.

One of the most challenging tasks I witnessed was carrying out the data analysis and coping with personal bias. More analytically, I train myself to retain my objectivity. As the process went on, I learned to set aside any preconceived ideas and thoughts to allow participants' voices to be heard. Coding, categorizing, and developing themes provided a framework for the data analysis process. Doing it well takes a lot of experience, plus time, and effort. However, the tasks were so rewarding and worthwhile as the results began to unfold.

### **Conclusion**

The purpose of this basic interpretative qualitative study was the exploration of the phenomenon of cyber child exploitation in primary school from the perspectives and experiences of 20 teachers. The research questions revealed primary school teachers' experiences and views in cyber child exploitation as well as possible ways to effectively tackle abuse in the World Wide Web. This qualitative research was done using grounded theory. Data were collected from 20 purposefully selected primary school educators who were the source of valuable information about the study topic. Such information formed a basic line of a theory which argues that policy process need to be established in the educational system of Greece to inform parents and students on the dangers of cyber child exploitation. Coding, categorizing, and thematic analysis are included in data analysis.

The literature and the findings revealed that cyber child exploitation is a long-standing problem with potentially severe ramifications. Because teachers spend most time with students at school it is imperative teachers have knowledge and adequate professional training in terms of prevention and intervention techniques to guard children from cyber threats. School districts ought to regularly provide training for both parents and teachers who take the cyber prevention and intervention roles.

Although all teachers would benefit from cyber exploitation prevention and intervention training, the school district should also turn the focus on training parents too. It is crucial to incorporate cyber exploitation prevention and intervention information into the curriculum so that students learn how they can effectively and productively react to the cyber abuse situations. If teachers, parents and students become well educated about cyber exploitation and schools provide consistent information on this cybercrime, cyber child exploitation can be eliminated. Social change will take place when all educational agents respond effectively to cyber child exploitation awareness so that students will be able to enter peacefully and productively the cyber world.

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## Appendix A: Interview Protocol

**Time of Interview:****Date:****Place:****Interviewer:** Aikaterini Fragkou**Demographics:**

Male / Female

Grade Taught:

Years of Teaching Experience:

Pseudonym of the Participant:

The following interview questions will be used to guide the line of interview questioning:

Thank you for participating in this interview.

1. Do you believe that the Internet pose a threat in school students in relation to cyber child exploitation? In what ways?
2. How many hours each student spends on the Internet if you were to report an average time per day?
3. What types of social networking or websites do you believe are more prevalent in primary school?
4. Are there any school policies for teachers as well as parents on the subject of cyber abuse awareness and prevention strategies?
5. What actions would you recommend for parents to protect their children from cyber child exploitation?

6. What do you believe is the major source of cyber child exploitation?
7. What type of cyber abuse policies is in place at your school in the management of parental awareness on cyber child exploitation?
8. What type of professional training or development have you had on the topic of cyber child exploitation awareness?
9. What filters and safety protocols that are in currently in place in the school Internet service and why do they have those safety features?