LIFE UNDER COVID-19 FOR CHILDREN ONLINE: VALUES & CHALLENGES
NOVEMBER 2021
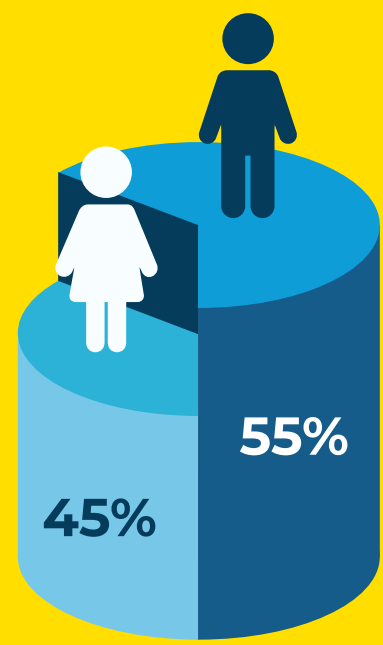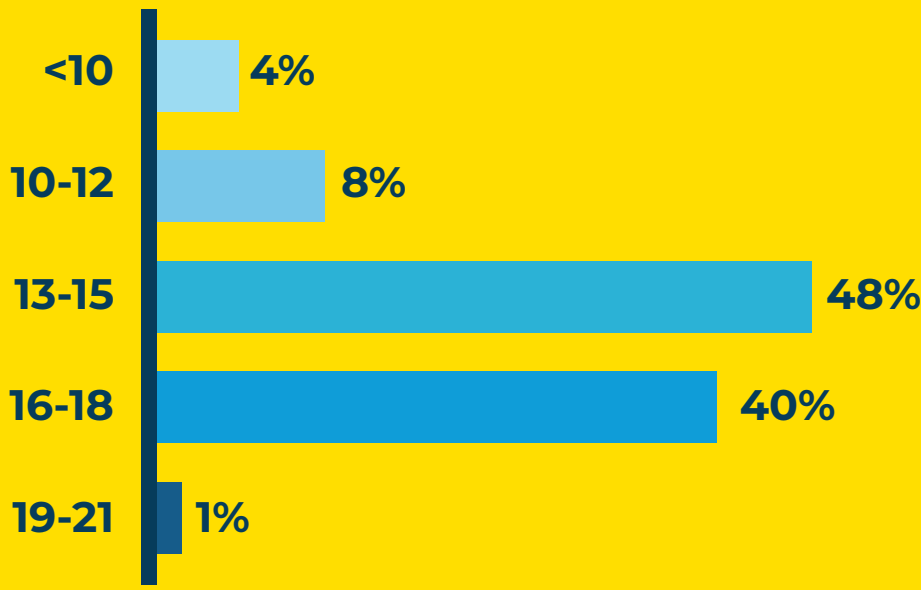
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DEMOGRAPHIC

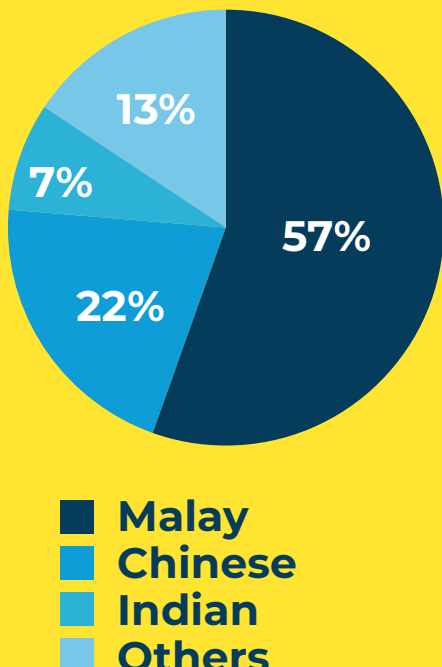- Malaysian only
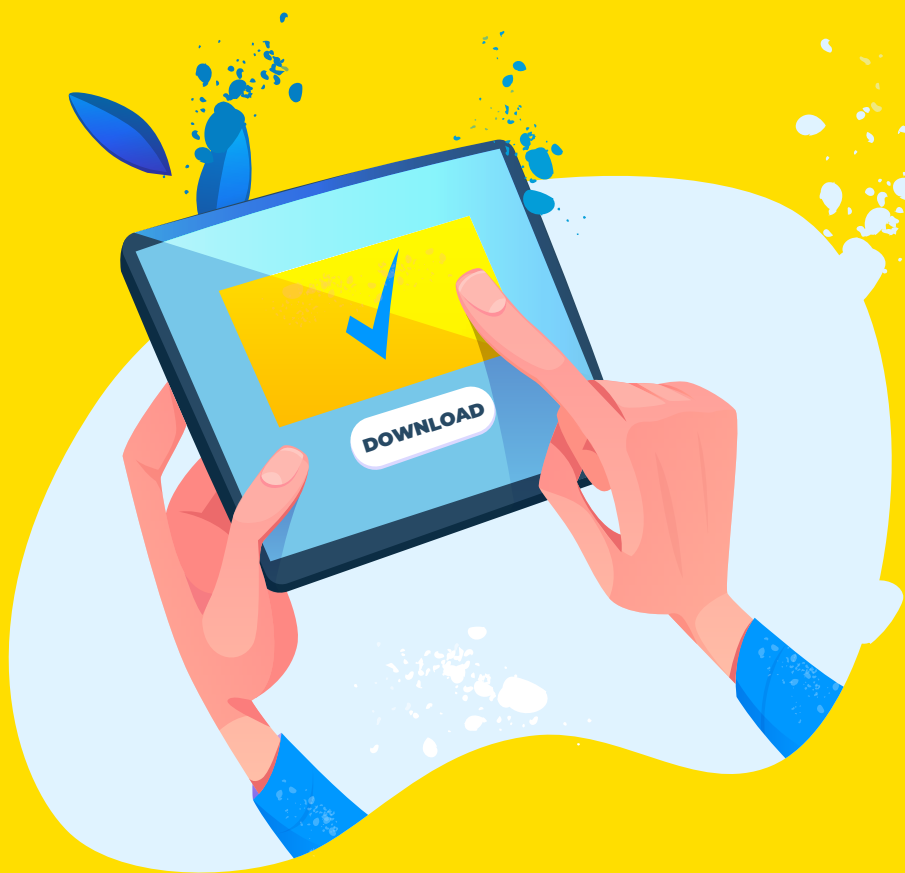- Age 21 and below
- 1,746 Internet users

GENDER
- 55%
- 45%

AGE GROUP
- <10 — 4%
- 10-12 — 8%
- 13-15 — 48%
- 16-18 — 40%
- 19-21 — 1%

REGION (WEIGHTED)
- 24%
- 21%
- 18%
- 17%
- 19%
- Central
- North
- South
- EC

ETHNICITY (WEIGHTED)
- 57%
- 22%
- 7%
- 13%
- Malay
- Chinese
- Indian
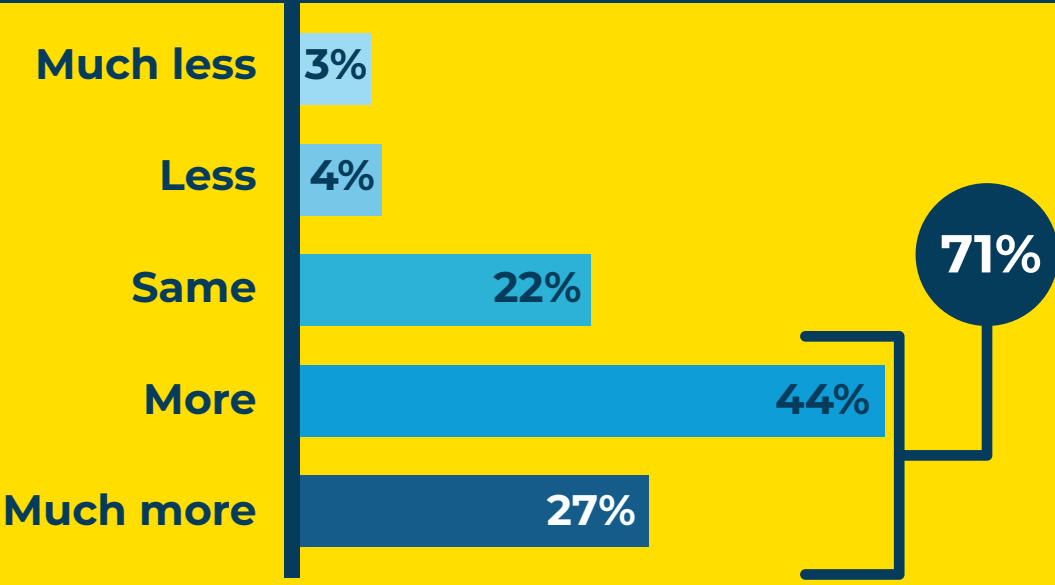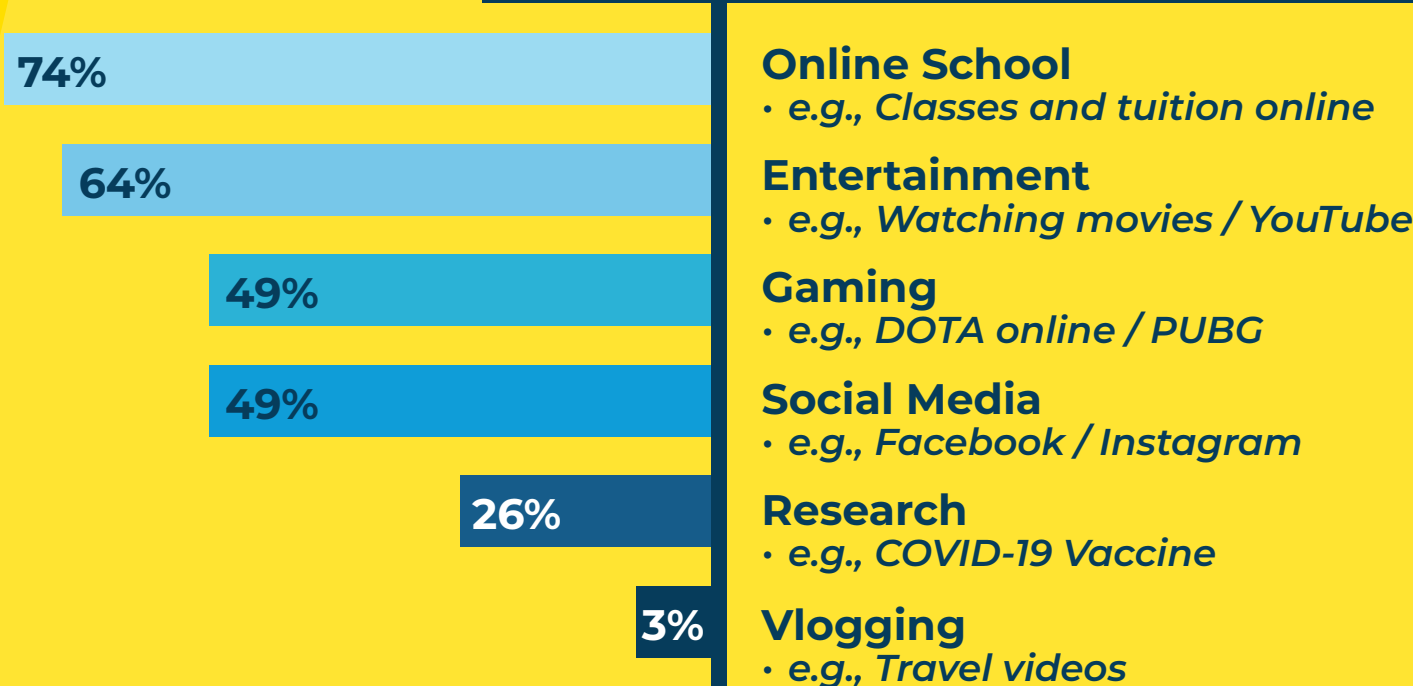- Others
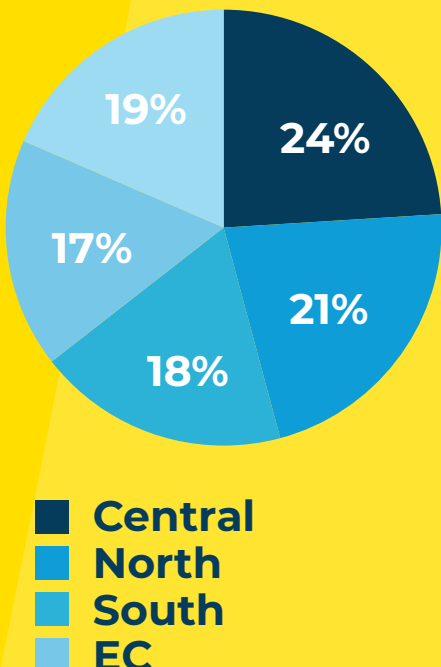
Children today spend more time on the internet, mainly using smartphone. Younger ones have time restrictions online in a day; teens and older ones use the internet almost all day.

Although online schooling is the most widely done activity online, using social media apps and video streaming are claimed to be used longer when online.

PERCEIVED TIME INCREASE SINCE PANDEMIC

- Much less — 3%
- Less — 4%
- Same — 22%
- More — 44%
- Much more — 27%

71%

ACTIVITIES DONE DURING PANDEMIC

- 74% — Online School
  - e.g., Classes and tuition online
- 64% — Entertainment
  - e.g., Watching movies / YouTube
- 49% — Gaming
  - e.g., DOTA online / PUBG
- 49% — Social Media
  - e.g., Facebook / Instagram
- 26% — Research
  - e.g., COVID-19 Vaccine
- 3% — Vlogging
  - e.g., Travel videos

TIME SPENT ONLINE

- 38% All the time (when I awake till bedtime)
- 9% Mostly after lunch (1.00pm - 5.00pm)
- 13% Mostly late at night (10.00pm - 2.00am)
- 10% Mostly in the mornings (8.00am - noon)
- 17% Mostly in the evenings (6.00pm - 10.00pm)
- 13% Only during school hours

ACTIVITIES SPENT MOST TIME ON

#1 Social media apps

#2 Video Streaming

#3 Educations & Learning

While NOT too far off from each other in ranking, close to half of children age <12 say they spend most of their time in education and learning while for older youths, we see social media and video streaming activities

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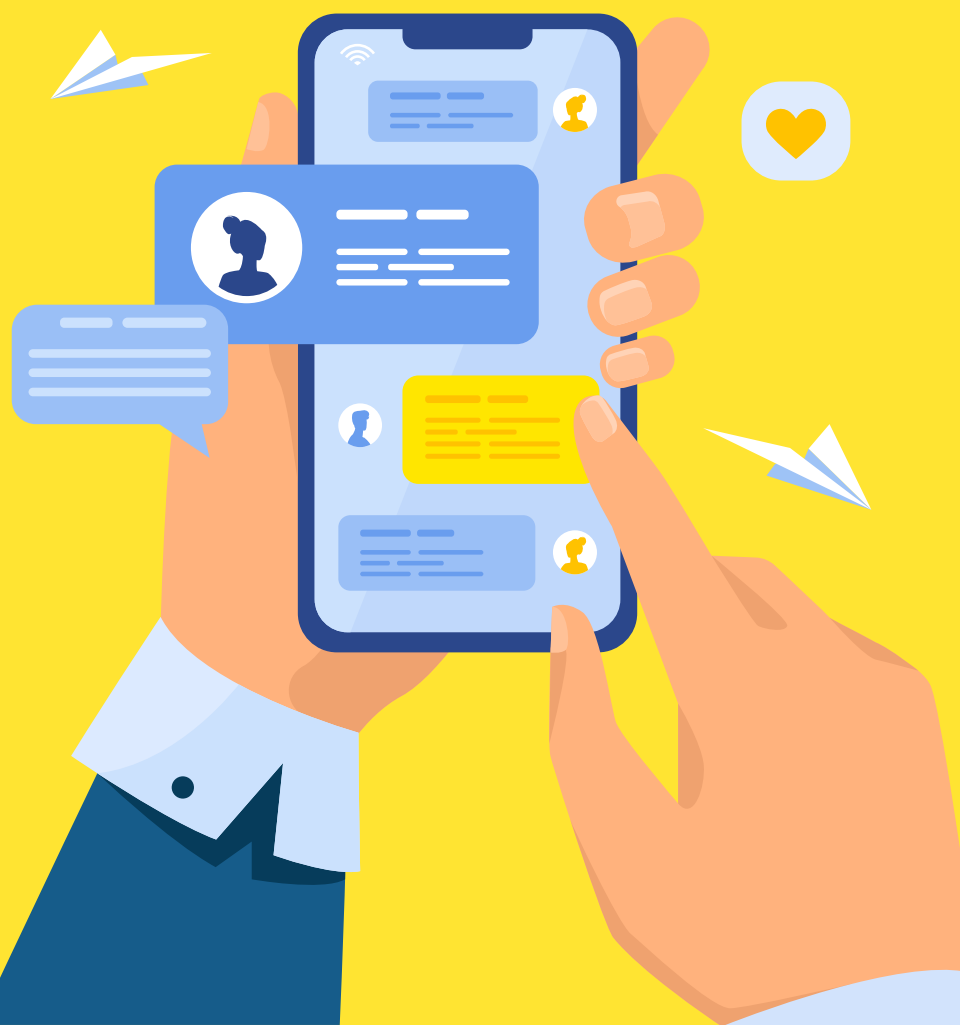
ATTITUDE TOWARDS ONLINE CLASSES

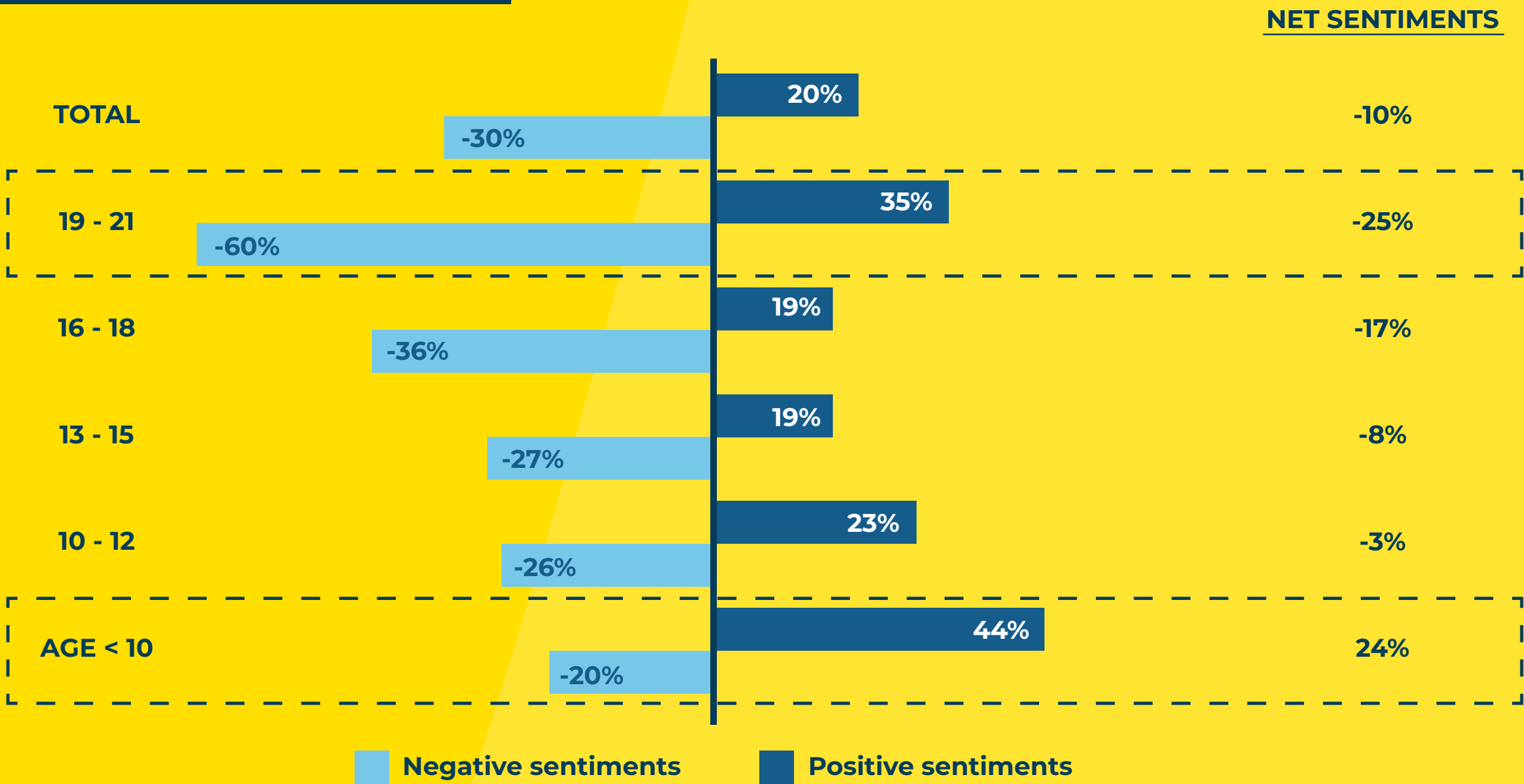| ✗ | I am worried about my grades and the uncertainty with exams | **39%** |
✗	I am stressed with online classes/tuitions *e.g., turning on video, cannot understand*	**31%**
✓	I like the flexibility of online classes	**28%**
✗	I am demotivated to study	**26%**
✗	I am not disciplined enough for online classes *e.g., lazy, overslept*	**25%**
✓	I enjoy my online lessons	**24%**
✓	I find my online classes interesting	**18%**
✓	I prefer online lessons compared to going to school	**12%**
	I don't have online classes/ tuitions to attend	**9%**

Note:
✓ Positive sentiments
✗ Negative sentiments

Negative sentiments towards online classes outweighs the positive. Worrying about grades, exams, and understanding their subjects are top concerns.

Overall negative sentiments from older youths due to increased mental stress from grades, lack of discipline and motivation at home.
Younger students enjoy virtual interactions. However, across all age groups, online classes is ranked last in preference.

SENTIMENTS TOWARDS ONLINE CLASSES

NET SENTIMENTS

Age group	Positive	Negative	Net
TOTAL	20%	-30%	-10%
19 - 21	35%	-60%	-25%
16 - 18	19%	-36%	-17%
13 - 15	19%	-27%	-8%
10 - 12	23%	-26%	-3%
AGE < 10	44%	-20%	24%

■ Negative sentiments   ■ Positive sentiments

PROBLEMS WITH GOING ONLINE

Poor internet connection	**33%**
Not having enough internet data	**22%**
Having to share device with family	**20%**
Device with broken parts *e.g., camera or audio issue*	**6%**
Not having device at all	**3%**
None. All is good	**50%**

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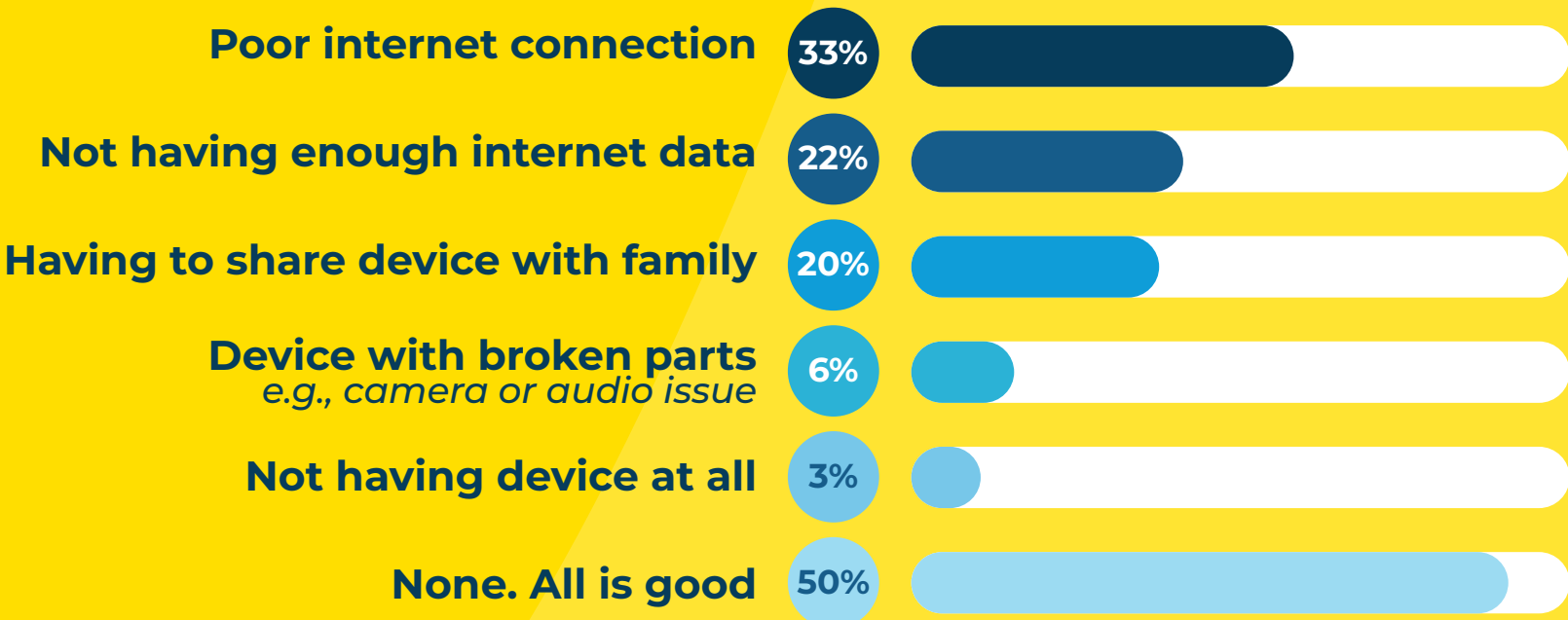
CYBERBULLYING

Online bullying is largely seen as a big problem, with threats online being the most identified form of cyberbullying.

While online bullying have claimed to slightly decrease during the pandemic, among those who are still being bullied, half still encounter it at least once a week, mainly from social media and messaging platforms.
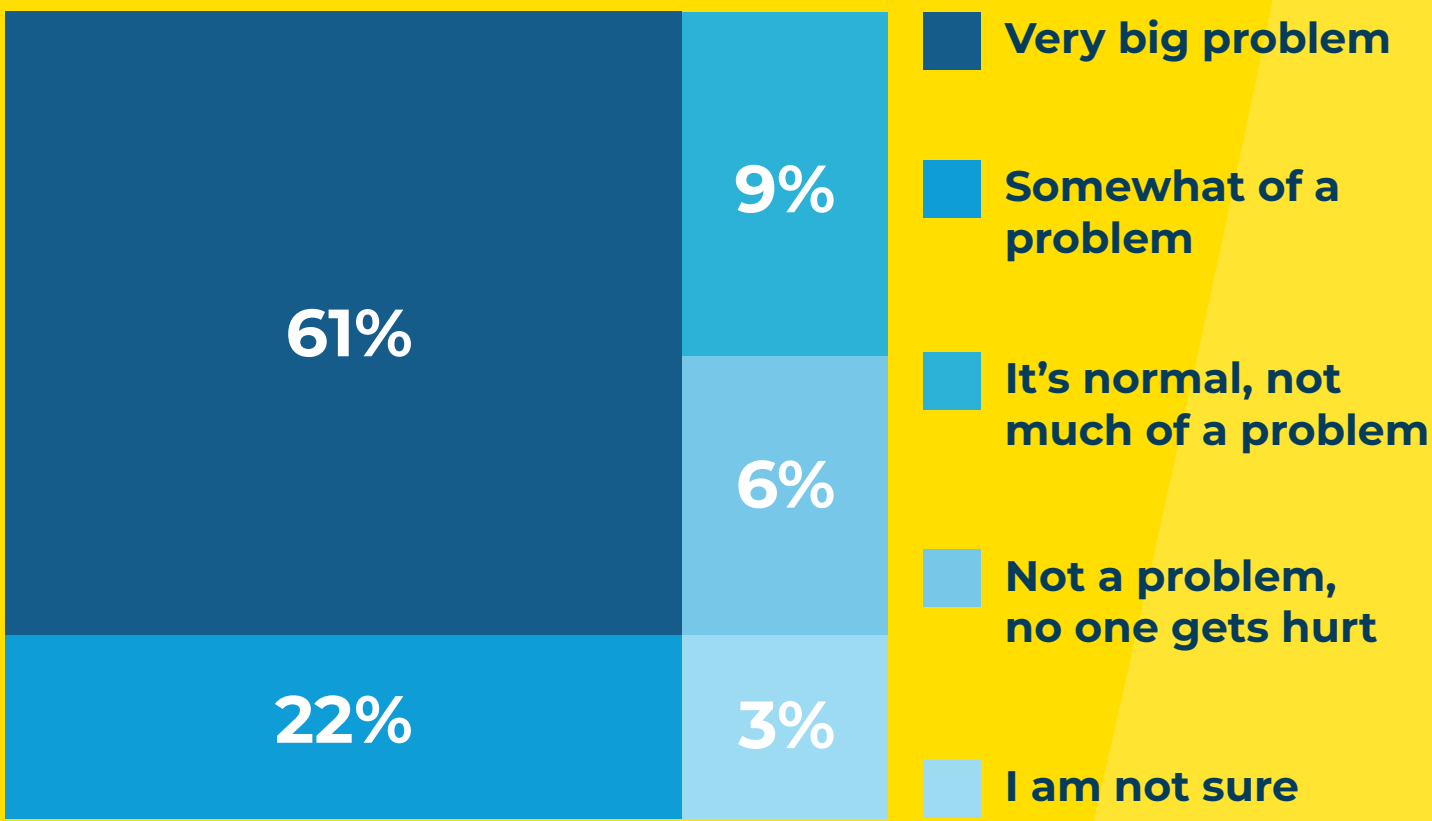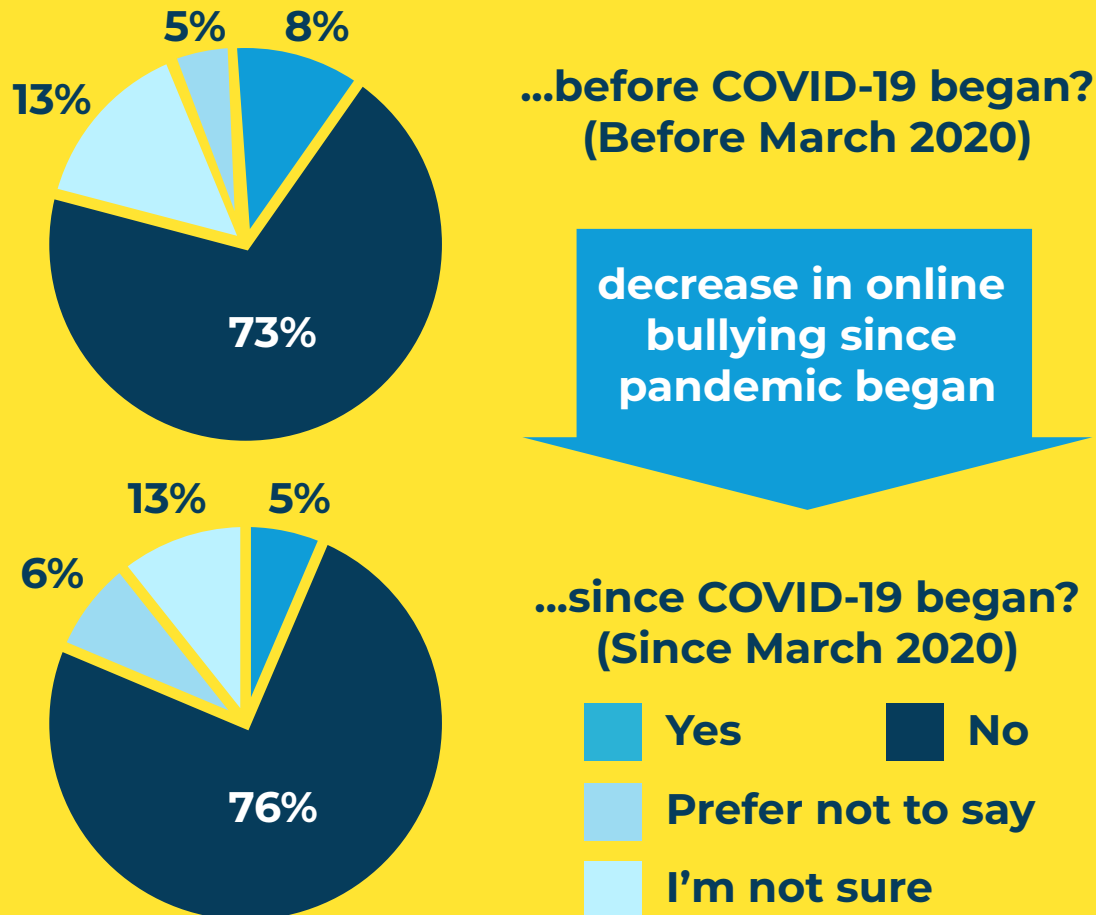
FORMS OF ONLINE BULLYING

	%
When someone threatens me online	64%
When someone sends a mean message to me	51%
When someone shares an embarrassing photo or meme of me	49%
When someone uses swear words in chats with me	44%
When someone posts lies or untruthful things about me online	39%
When someone shares a photo of me without my permission	32%
When someone calls me a rude name while playing a video game	29%
When someone pretends to be me online, intentionally or for fun	27%
When someone disagrees with me online	26%
When I am not allowed to join in (e.g., games, etc.)	11%
I am not sure	8%

ONLINE BULLYING AS A PROBLEM

- 61% Very big problem
- 9% Somewhat of a problem
- 6% It's normal, not much of a problem
- 22% Not a problem, no one gets hurt
- 3% I am not sure

ENCOUNTERED WITH ONLINE BULLYING

...before COVID-19 began? (Before March 2020)

- 73% No
- 13%
- 5%
- 8%

decrease in online bullying since pandemic began

...since COVID-19 began? (Since March 2020)

- 76% No
- 13%
- 6%
- 5%

- Yes
- No
- Prefer not to say
- I'm not sure
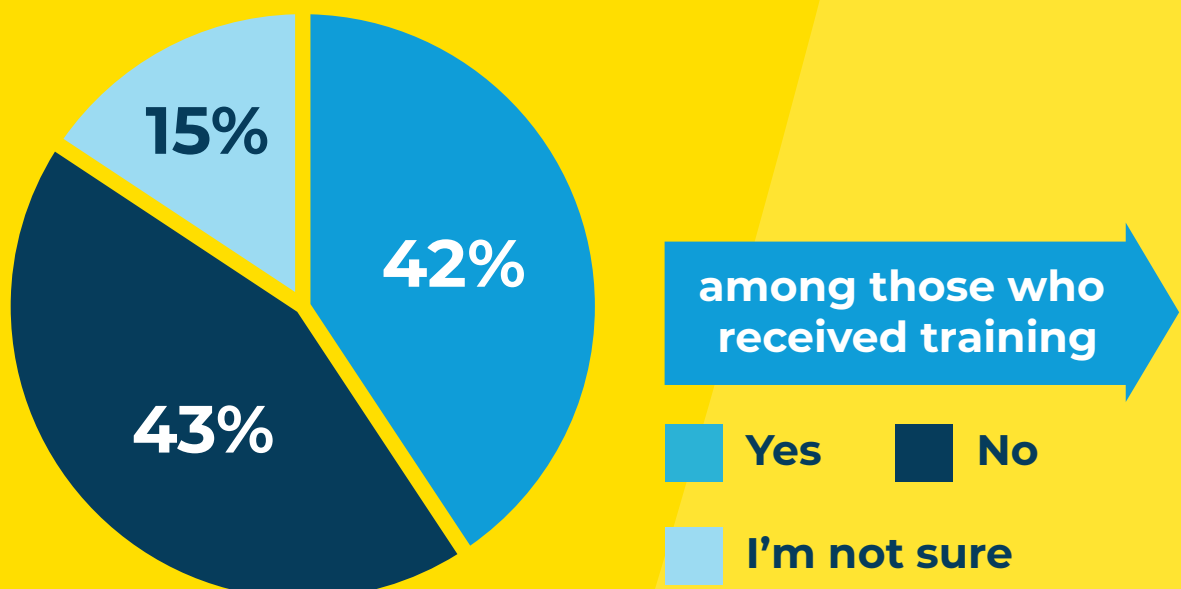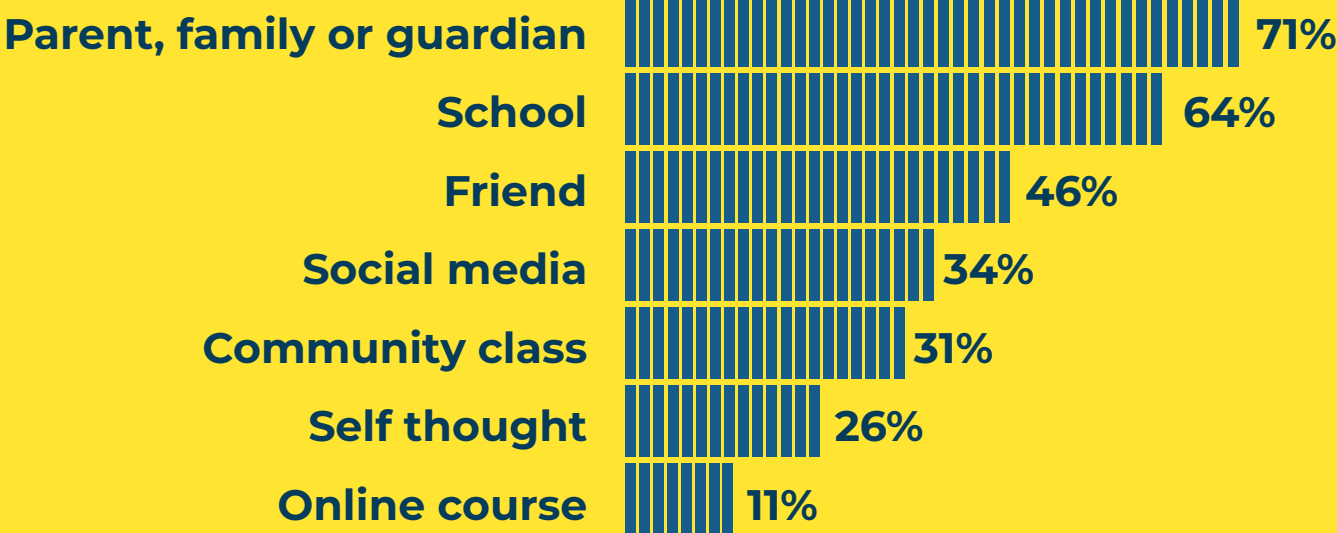
4 out of 10 children have received some form of guidance in protecting themselves from online bullying.

Top desired training revolves around dealing with bullies on social media, online games and messaging apps and ways to protect online privacy.

EXPOSURE TO ONLINE BULLYING PREVENTION TRAINING

- 42% Yes
- 43% No
- 15% I'm not sure

among those who received training

If yes, who provided the training or guidance or where did you get it?

	%
Parent, family or guardian	71%
School	64%
Friend	46%
Social media	34%
Community class	31%
Self thought	26%
Online course	11%

EXPOSURE TO ONLINE BULLYING PREVENTION TRAINING

64% How to deal with online bullies on social media *e.g., TikTok, Snapchat, Instagram, Facebook*

49% How to deal with online bullies in online games and game streams *e.g., PUBG Mobile, Call of Duty, Twitch*

49% How to deal with online bullies on messaging apps *e.g., WhatsApp, Telegram, Line, Messenger*

49% How to protect my privacy online

46% When to report to authorities or police about online bullying

45% When to tell a parent or guardian about online bullying

42% How to improve my mental health/well being

33% How to deal with online bullies on education & learning platforms *e.g., online learning and virtual classes*

25% How to deal with online bullies on video streaming *e.g., Netflix, Disney+, YouTube*
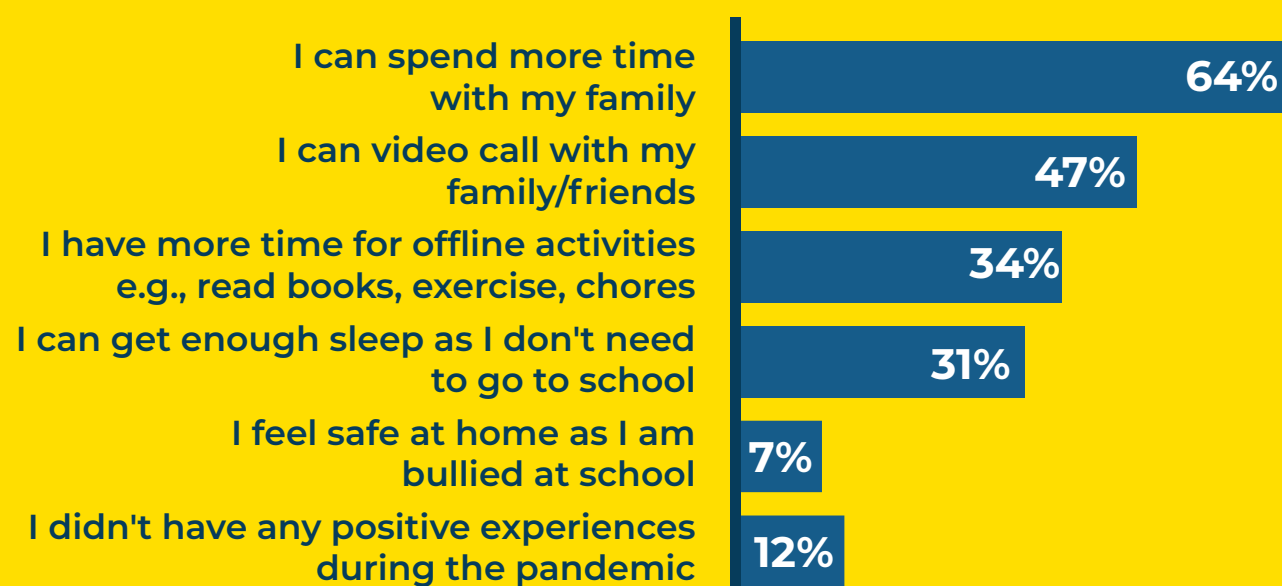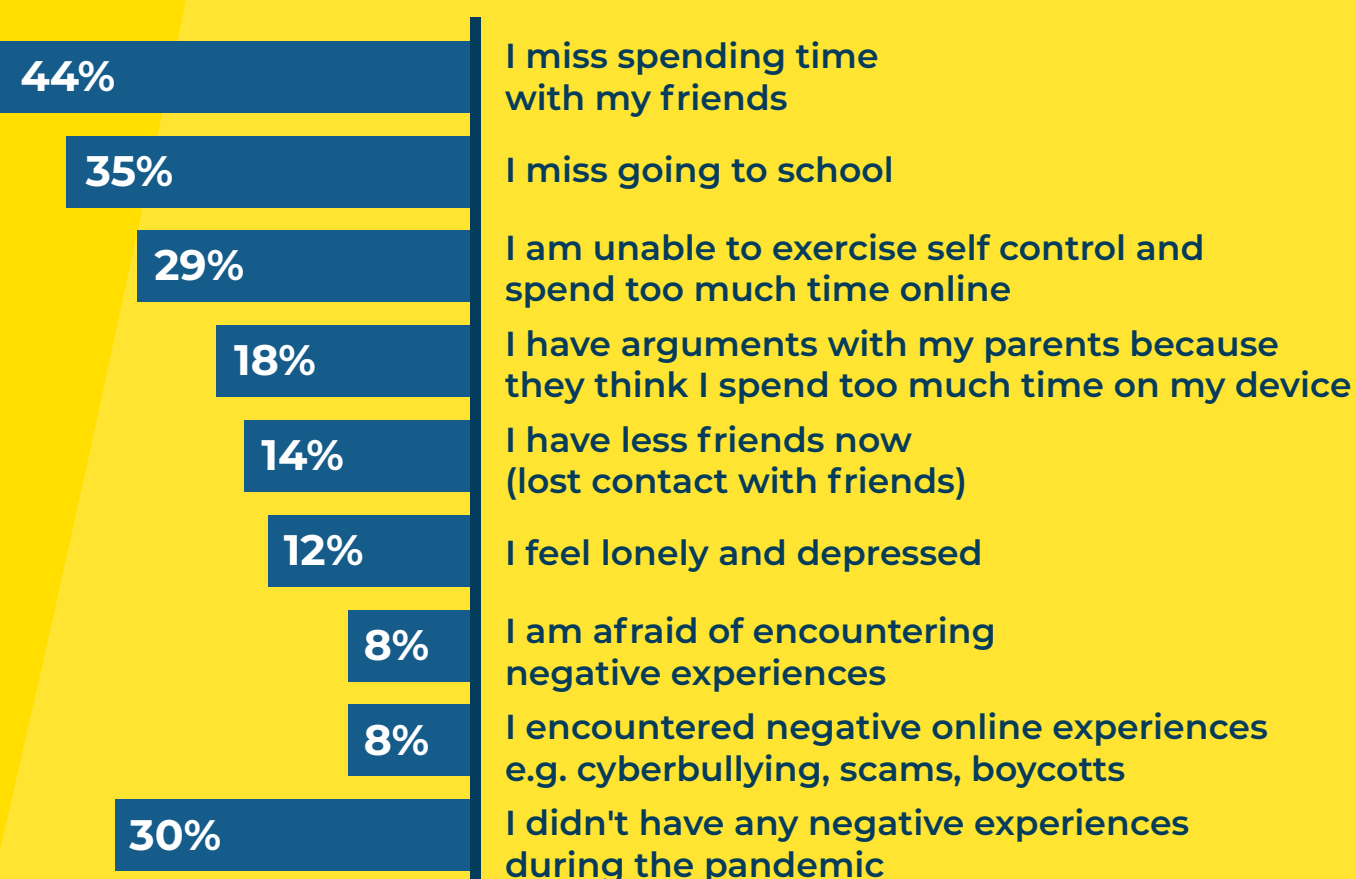
MENTAL HEALTH WELLBEING

Overall, Malaysian children appreciate the additional family time during this pandemic period. However, negative sentiments still persist as most children miss socialising with their friends in school, especially older youths and those in the higher rural region (East Coast & East Malaysia)

POSITIVE EXPERIENCES 👍

Experience	Percentage
I can spend more time with my family	64%
I can video call with my family/friends	47%
I have more time for offline activities e.g., read books, exercise, chores	34%
I can get enough sleep as I don't need to go to school	31%
I feel safe at home as I am bullied at school	7%
I didn't have any positive experiences during the pandemic	12%

NEGATIVE EXPERIENCES 👎

Percentage	Experience
44%	I miss spending time with my friends
35%	I miss going to school
29%	I am unable to exercise self control and spend too much time online
18%	I have arguments with my parents because they think I spend too much time on my device
14%	I have less friends now (lost contact with friends)
12%	I feel lonely and depressed
8%	I am afraid of encountering negative experiences
8%	I encountered negative online experiences e.g. cyberbullying, scams, boycotts
30%	I didn't have any negative experiences during the pandemic

Among some of the other mentions of positive and negative experiences:

✅ **POSITIVE**
"I can do my homework at night!!"

✅ **POSITIVE**
"that i feel safer at home as i have some socials problems when i meet people at school"

✅ **POSITIVE**
"I can have better strategies on learning, and I can learn what I want to learn at home"

✅ **POSITIVE**
"i participated in some gaming tournaments and won 2 out of 4"

⊗ **NEGATIVE**
"always unable to join google meet class because of poor internet connection"

⊗ **NEGATIVE**
"hard to follow online class"

⊗ **NEGATIVE**
"i got unhealthy habit for spending much time on my device, no more outdoor activities"

⊗ **NEGATIVE**
"Arguments with parents but not due to spending time online"

⊗ **NEGATIVE**
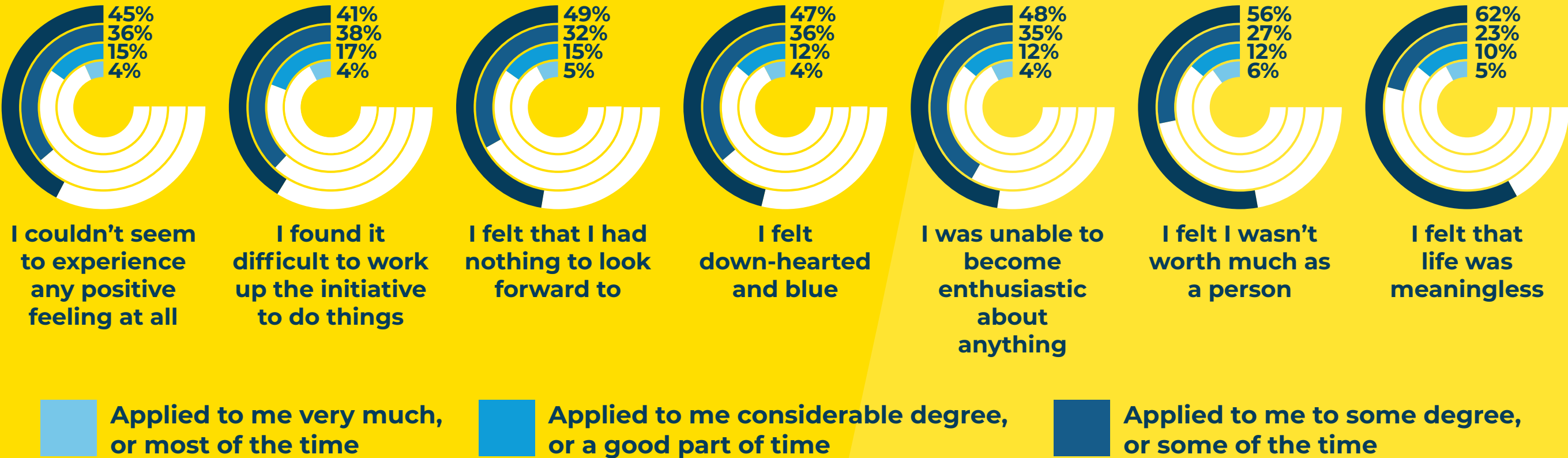"I'm unable to join events and performances/ competitions, which is a waste of my youth"

⊗ **NEGATIVE**
"This year i am Spm so its make me feel scared to face the SPM because i am not ready yet"

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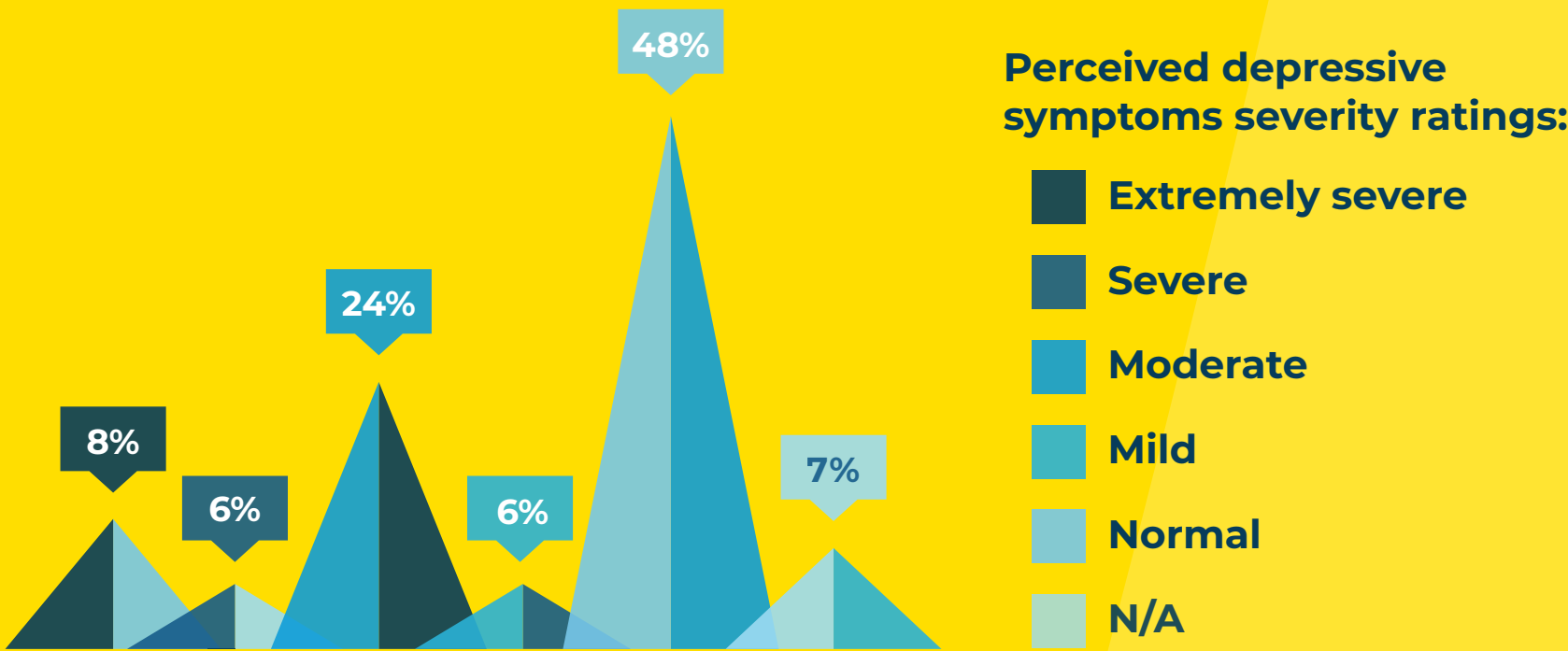Yellow Heart
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Almost half of the respondents reported feeling some degree or higher degree of perceived depressive symptoms. According to the Depression Anxiety Stress Scales (DASS-21) assessment, around 44% of the respondents reported mild to extremely severe perceived depressive symptoms.

Questions in this section guided by the Department of Medical Sciences, Sunway University.
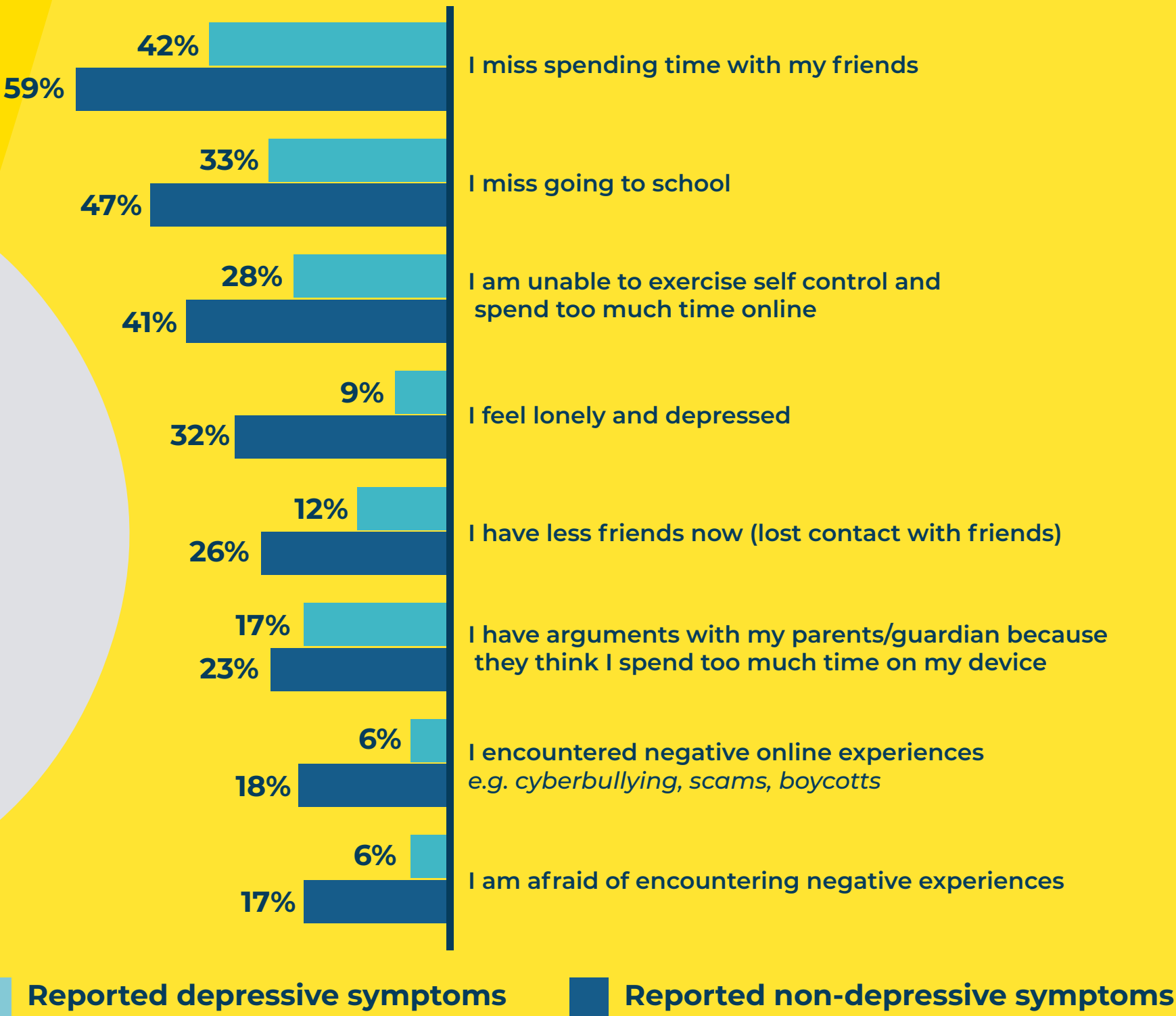
DEPRESSIVE SYMPTOMS REPORTED BY YOUTHS

I couldn't seem to experience any positive feeling at all
45%
36%
15%
4%

I found it difficult to work up the initiative to do things
41%
38%
17%
4%

I felt that I had nothing to look forward to
49%
32%
15%
5%

I felt down-hearted and blue
47%
36%
12%
4%

I was unable to become enthusiastic about anything
48%
35%
12%
4%

I felt I wasn't worth much as a person
56%
27%
12%
6%

I felt that life was meaningless
62%
23%
10%
5%

Applied to me very much, or most of the time

Applied to me considerable degree, or a good part of time

Applied to me to some degree, or some of the time

DEPRESSION ANXIETY STRESS SCALES (DASS)

8%
6%
24%
6%
48%
7%

Perceived depressive symptoms severity ratings:

Extremely severe

Severe

Moderate

Mild

Normal

N/A

COMPARISON OF NEGATIVE EXPERIENCES

Respondents who reported depressive symptoms skewed to upper secondary students, due mainly to lack of social interaction during the pandemic period.

42%
59%
I miss spending time with my friends

33%
47%
I miss going to school

28%
41%
I am unable to exercise self control and spend too much time online

9%
32%
I feel lonely and depressed

12%
26%
I have less friends now (lost contact with friends)

17%
23%
I have arguments with my parents/guardian because they think I spend too much time on my device

6%
18%
I encountered negative online experiences *e.g. cyberbullying, scams, boycotts*

6%
17%
I am afraid of encountering negative experiences

Reported depressive symptoms

Reported non-depressive symptoms

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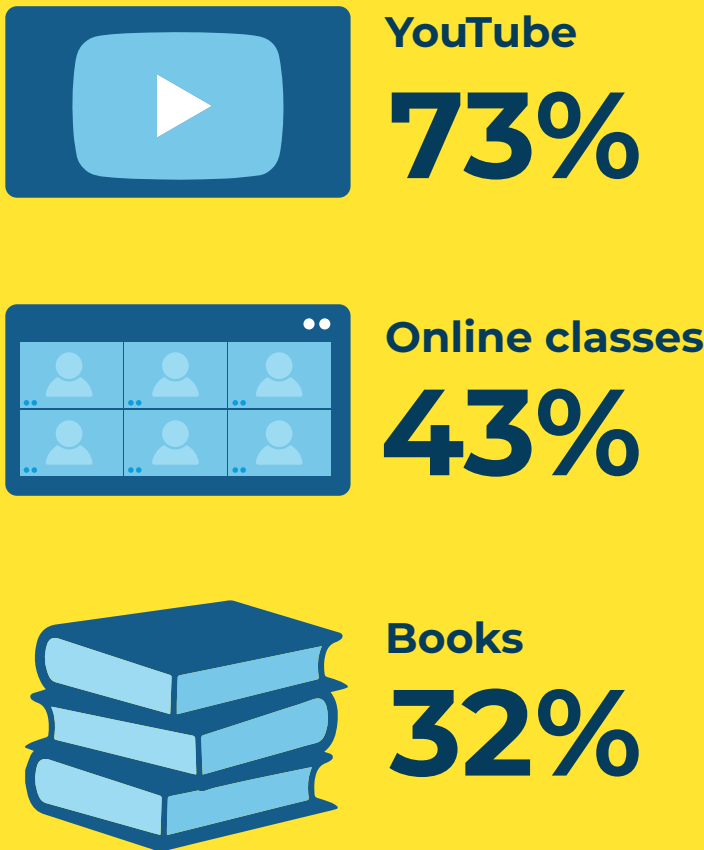
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FUTURE DIGITAL SKILLS

- Close to 50% of the respondents claimed that they learn new things through forums, webinars and online workshops.

- Respondents are still learning despite going virtual.

- On top of basic practical digital skillsets, most of them are also keen on learning more creative skillsets like app creation/coding, music, and even e-commerce.
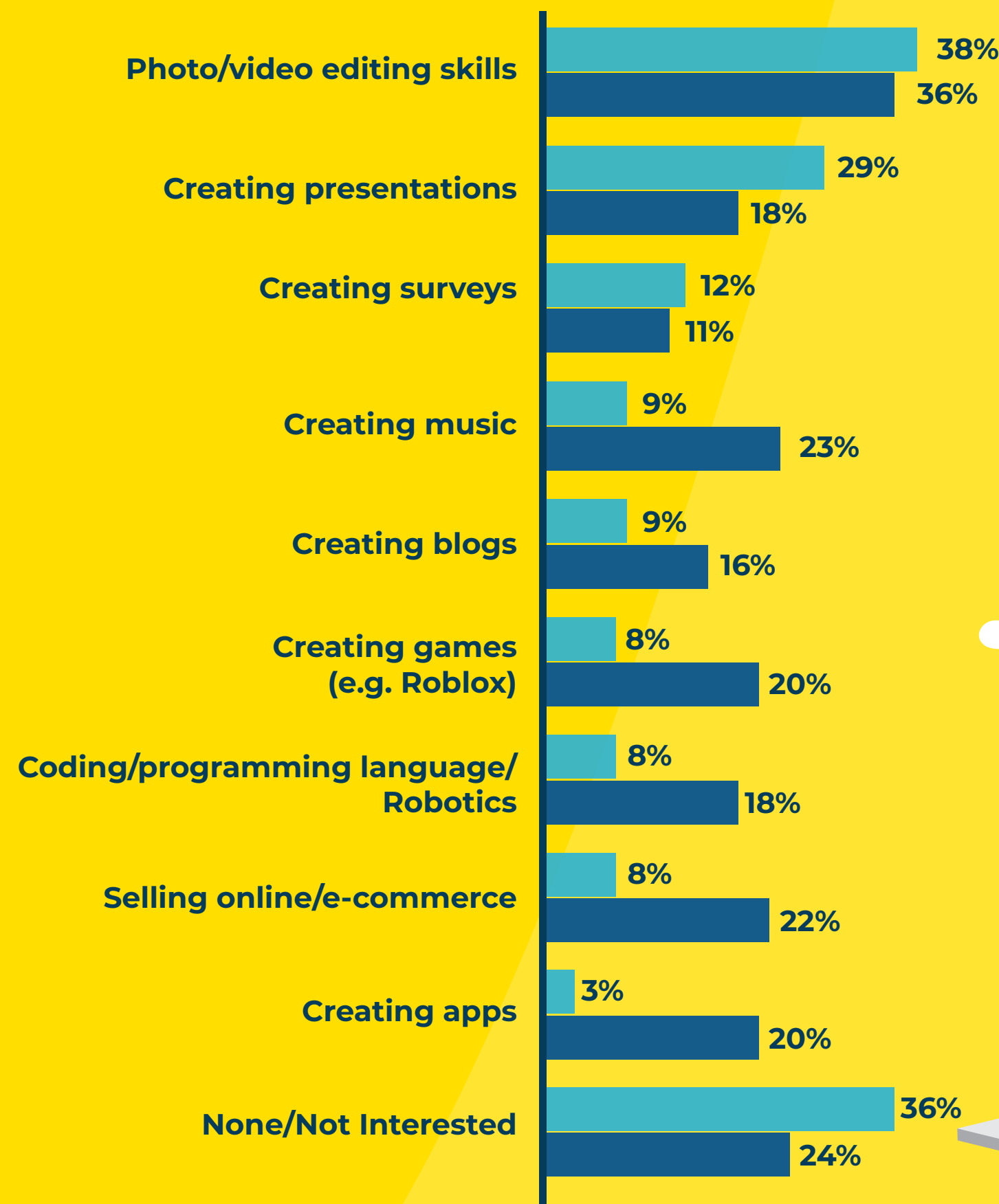
KNOWLEDGE GAINED DURING PANDEMIC

Knowledge	%
Experiences – I learn new things through forums, webinars, online workshops	46%
News, Documentaries, Stories – I know more things now	41%
Discovery – I discovered new activities online (e.g. Google Earth, editing sites)	36%
Vocabulary – I visited and learnt many new words/language	34%
Digital skills – I visited and learnt new coding or photo/video editing skills	30%
Other things learned	3%
Nothing. I hardly learned anything during this period	14%

PREFERRED LEARNING METHOD

YouTube
73%

Online classes
43%

Books
32%

DIGITAL SKILLSETS

Skillset	Have now	Would like to learn
Photo/video editing skills	38%	36%
Creating presentations	29%	18%
Creating surveys	12%	11%
Creating music	9%	23%
Creating blogs	9%	16%
Creating games (e.g. Roblox)	8%	20%
Coding/programming language/ Robotics	8%	18%
Selling online/e-commerce	8%	22%
Creating apps	3%	20%
None/Not Interested	36%	24%

■ Digital skills that I have now ■ Digital skills I would like to learn

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- 60% of respondents claimed to have some sort of digital skills with photo/video editing ranked top.

- Close to 40% of respondents revealed they have not learned any digital skills. Around 50% of them who are not interested to pick up any digital skills are skewed to lower secondary students, mainly from key urban centres.

What kind of digital skills do you have now?

What king of digital skills would you like to learn?

	n	%	Photo/video editing skills	Creating presentations	Creating surveys	Creating musics	Creating blogs	Creating games (e.g., Roblox)	Coding/Robotic programming	Selling online/ e-commerce	Creating apps	Not interested
Photo/video editing skills	664	38%	44%	21%	12%	40%	25%	29%	26%	35%	32%	4%
Creating presentations	514	29%	41%	19%	16%	32%	23%	28%	33%	31%	31%	11%
Creating surveys	214	12%	45%	22%	16%	30%	30%	41%	44%	39%	53%	2%
Creating music	155	9%	52%	28%	22%	49%	27%	30%	36%	34%	32%	3%
Creating blogs	148	9%	44%	22%	30%	32%	32%	30%	34%	42%	30%	2%
Creating games (e.g. Roblox)	147	8%	44%	26%	20%	25%	25%	41%	17%	21%	26%	3%
Coding/programming language/Robotics	139	8%	40%	23%	21%	29%	26%	30%	34%	35%	43%	3%
Selling online/ e-commerce	140	8%	52%	27%	23%	43%	32%	37%	37%	49%	52%	3%
Creating apps	58	3%	43%	34%	24%	48%	33%	25%	34%	28%	41%	8%
I haven't learned any digital skills	633	36%	24%	18%	8%	11%	7%	9%	9%	12%	9%	53%
OVERALL	**1746**	**63%**	36%	18%	11%	23%	16%	20%	18%	22%	20%	24%

Indicators:
- Photo/ video editing skills
- Creating presentations
- Creating surveys
- Creating musics
- Creating blogs
- Creating games (e.g., Roblox)
- Coding/Robotic programming
- Selling online/ e-commerce
- Creating apps
- Not interested

Majority digitally savvy, with most of them skilled in navigating the internet, with the exception of verifying misinformation/fake news.

DIGITAL LITERACY

Solving routine problems
e.g. close programmes, re-start computer, re-install/ update programmes, check internet connection
70% claims they know how to solve these problems

Finding information online
39% knows how to find and check if it's true or useful
52% knows how to find but unsure if truthful or reliable

Producing simple digital content
e.g. text, tables, images, audio files
73% claims they know how to create simple digital content

Configuring privacy settings on social media
72% have an account and only their friends can see their profile
11% have an account, but someone helped them with their settings
3% do not have social media accounts

PLAYING WITH OTHER PEOPLE

- 61% I play with friends I know in real life
- 59% I play single player online games
- 37% I play with my family
- 24% I play games with everyone
- 24% I play with friends I haven't met in real life
- 6% I play games with the chat feature turn on

REASON FOR GAMING

What are the main reasons you like to spend time playing games online?

- 63% Gameplay is fun
- 48% Gaming helps me relax
- 42% I like the challenge
- 38% Playing with my friends/ siblings/relatives
- 16% I can't think of anything else to do
- 15% Gaming is what I am best at
- 10% My online friends are my best friends

Digi Yellow Heart "Life under COVID-19 for children: Values and challenges (2021)" digi.com.my/sustainability-yellow-heart