



TELEVISION AND MOBILE AS BABYSITTER: PHYSIOLOGICAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL HAZARDS FOR PRESCHOOLERS

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ABSTRACT

Background- The SCREEN whether its computer, tablet, laptop, (video games) mobile, and television is a representation of our modern world. The study was conducted to examine the influence of television and mobile as babysitter and it's physiological and psychological hazards on Preschoolers, age 3-5 years.

Material and Method- A convenience sample of total 30 parents having children between the age group of 3 to 5 years were included. A semi-structured interview with a combination of open and close ended questions was conducted. The thematic analysis was done for analyzing the content of the interviews.

Result and Conclusion- It was concluded from the results that the greatest factor of mobile and television overuse by these preschoolers is the result of ignorant parental attitude. The consequences of using mobile and watching television are that screens might obstruct child's interaction with others and physical exploration of the world—both of which play a role in typical development during early childhood. Research is focusing more on watching television and mobile devices use, and findings indicate that the number of devices, the content, and the duration all play a significant role in determining the impacts of screen time. It was found that laziness/lethargy is the psychological consequence which had been seen in most children and the physiological consequences that had been found in most of children was difficulty in concentration.

Keywords: babysitter, physiological and psychological hazards, preschoolers, convenience sample, open-ended interview, parental benefit, parent's attitude

INTRODUCTION

For our children, who have grown up surrounded by digital content and entertainment on screens—the so-called "digital natives". Screen time has emerged to be a significant aspect of modern living. Concerns on how screens affect the health of children have grown (V. Gupta et al, 2023). The fact that screens might obstruct a toddler's interaction with others and physical exploration of the world—both of which play a role in typical development during early childhood—screen use during these formative years needs special consideration (Hill, D. L., et al. 2016). According to new research, there may be less family moments where parents spend time reading, playing, or chatting with their children. Preschoolers today frequently spend hours each day watching TV or playing video games—with little to no parental supervision or engagement, according to a tiny study of just 44 families. The University of Michigan study found that while most children aged 3 to 5 sat glued to the "electronic babysitter," very few had active involvement from their mothers. "Parents are off doing the dishes or folding laundry while the kids are plugged into their technology, and the parents aren't sitting with them and watching together," he stated. Fornari acknowledged that a lot of parents don't think about the potential effects of unsupervised media exposure on a preschooler's developing brain. He thinks that children's social and communicative skills may be harmed or altered. "We don't know the impact of this early and large dose of media exposure to young developing brains," Fornari stated (D. Thompson. 2016). Physiological hazards that were mainly focused are- obesity; eye problems; lethargy; and brain development which results in language delays, poor reading skills, poor math skills, etc. Psychological hazards that were focused upon include poor social skills; difficulty in sleeping, difficulty in concentrating; poor readiness for learning. AAP (American Academy of Pediatrics) policy statement Children, Adolescents, and the Media co-author Marjorie J. Hogan, MD, states, "Studies reveal that early screen exposure can negatively impact language development and also raise concern about longer term impact on attention and other developmental skills"(Dashevsky, E. 2014). According to senior editor of AllAboutVision.com Gary Heiting, OD, "it's well established that it causes eye strain and discomfort, but no one knows for sure at this point if prolonged use of digital devices actually causes permanent damage to the eyes." According to 2015 Vision Council research titled Hindsight Is 20/20/20: Protect Your Eyes from Digital Devices, nearly two out of every three Americans - or 61% of the population - have suffered from eye strain as a result of prolonged usage of electronic devices (Hill, S. 2015). Less reading time and more screen time have been linked to lower language development and executive functioning, especially in very young children (Horowitz-Kraus T, Hutton JS. 2018 and Duch H, Fisher EM, Ensari I, et al. 2013). Strong correlations have been shown between parents' and children' screen time, indicating that media use either replaces or hampers meaningful face-to-face parent-child interactions (Tang L et al. 2018; Common Sense Media,2013; Bassul C et al. 2021; Lauricella AR et al. 2015; Radesky JS, Kistin C, Eisenberg S, et al. 2016). A risk factor known as "technofence" has been identified as the regular disruption of activities, play, or relationships caused by the use of digital media (usually a parent's device) (Sundqvist A. et al. 2021). Sleep disturbances have been linked to prolonged TV watching. Cespedes et al. in 2014 found that every hour of TV was linked to a 7-minute reduction in the amount of time that children slept at night. The World Health Organization (WHO) recently released new guidelines, which state that children between the ages of 2 and 4 should not exceed one hour of "sedentary screen time" each day—and that less or no screen time is preferable [Science (S.) X].

RATIONALE

Young children's exposure to screen media has drawn a lot of attention, particularly in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. It's critical to comprehend the advantages and disadvantages of using screens, such as televisions, laptops, and mobile devices, as a form of entertainment or diversion for preschool-aged children. The American Academy of Pediatrics advises against letting kids under the age of 18 months use screens, and for kids between the ages of 18 and 24 months, only high-quality instructional content should be watched with parental supervision. At a young age, good screen habits are largely shaped by parents and other caregivers. Screen time during this early stage of development can impact habits and behaviors that last into adulthood. At this age, parents primarily regulate their children's screen time, consequently it's important to pay attention to the content and duration. While there is some educational value to screens, parents should remember that for their preschooler's best development, interactive play and real-world experiences are more important. Thus, preschoolers' screen time should be approached mindfully, considering both the pros and cons.

OBJECTIVE: To determine any possible physiological and psychological risks connected to screen use.

HYPOTHESIS: There would be a physiological and psychological effect of television and mobile on preschoolers.

TOOL: Thematic Analysis.

DATA COLLECTION METHOD: Parent interview, and observation.

PROCEDURE

The researcher decided the topic of their dissertation, focusing on “Television and Mobile as a babysitter: Physiological and Psychological hazards among preschoolers,” which was subsequently approved by their academic guide. Following approval, the researcher obtained a permission from the university and faculty to conduct data collection for their study. Subsequently, the researcher visited homes where parents have preschooler (children range from 3-5 years) to collect data for their research project with the consent of the parents to provide answers for research keeping in mind. Clear instructions were given to the parents, ensuring they understood the questions asked. Paraphrasing/ molded the questions in the manner they understand the question, had been done in order to get the appropriate answers from the parents. The same procedure was replicated across various homes where parents have children between the ages 3-5 years to ensure a diverse sample. After collecting data, the researcher proceeded with analysis and interpreting the collected data.

RESULT AND ANALYSIS

Themes which emerged are tabulated under 3 categories: personality traits (table 1), physiological issues (table 2) and psychological issues (table 3).

1. Personality traits

table 1

Personality Traits	Number of Participants	Percentage
Aggressive	20/30	66.66%
Impulsive	12/30	40%
Stubborn	20/30	66.66%
Demanding	5/30	16.667%
Caring and understanding	21/30	70%
Shy	10/30	33.33%
Anxious	15/30	50%
Moody	18/30	60%
Naughty	12/30	40%
Explorative	20/30	66.66%
Creative	3/30	10%
Cheerful	8/30	26.667%
Calm	6/30	20%
Expressive	25/30	83.334%
Energetic and Quick	17/30	56.667%
Helpful	4/30	13.33%
Friendly/ Extrovert	22/30	73.334%
Playful	6/30	20%
Well- Behaved	3/30	10%

2. Physiological issues

table 2

Physiological Issues	Number of Participants
Obesity	-
Eye problem	6/30
Difficulty in Concentrating	7/30
Poor Readiness Skill	4/30

3. Psychological issues

table 3

Psychological Issues	Number of Participants
Difficulty Sleeping	4/30
Poor Social Skills	7/30
Difficulty in Concentrating	12/30
Lethargy/ Laziness	14/30
Poor Readiness for Learning	7/30

DISCUSSION/ CONCLUSION

Expressive (25), Exploratory (20), Stubborn (20), Caring (21), and Friendly (22) are the most common traits.

Less Common traits: Helpful (4), Calm (6), Creative (8), Cheerful (6), and Well-Behaved (3). Balance: Both good and bad qualities are present. A significant fraction exhibits expressiveness, exploratory, and understanding, indicating an extroverted and inquisitive population. Still, a comparable proportion exhibit stubbornness, which may point to difficulties reaching an agreement.

table 1: personality traits

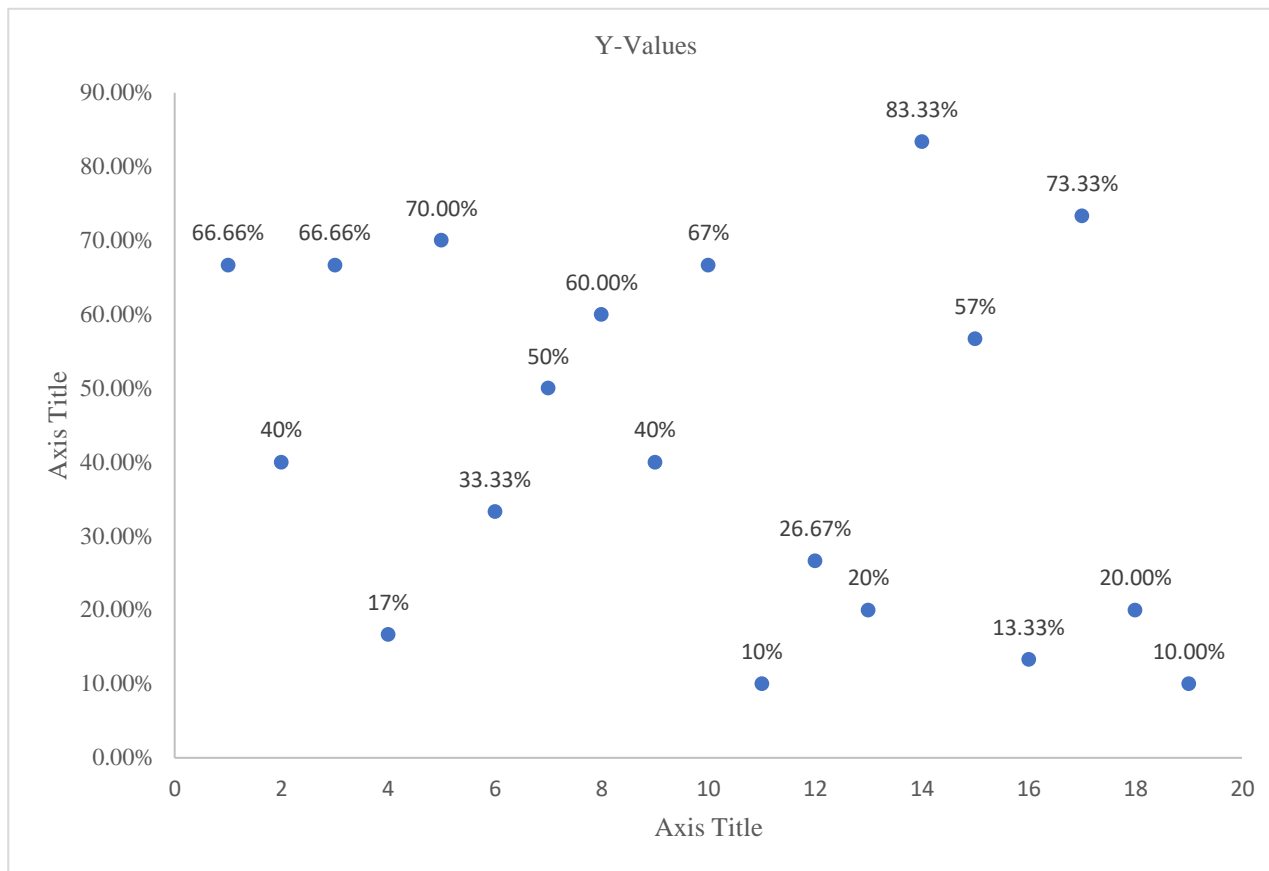
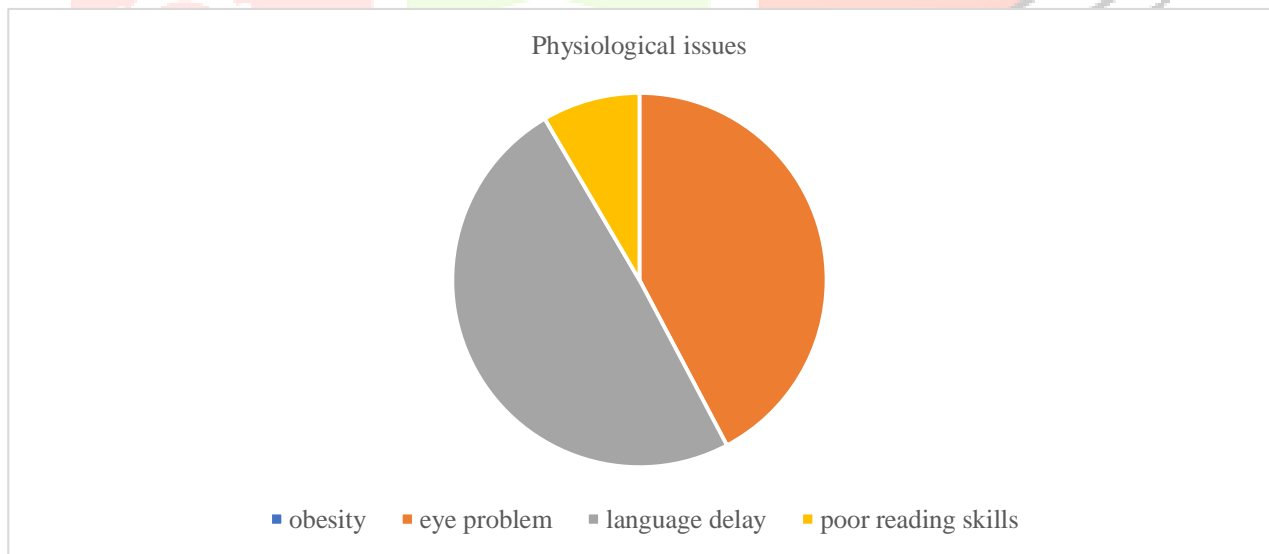
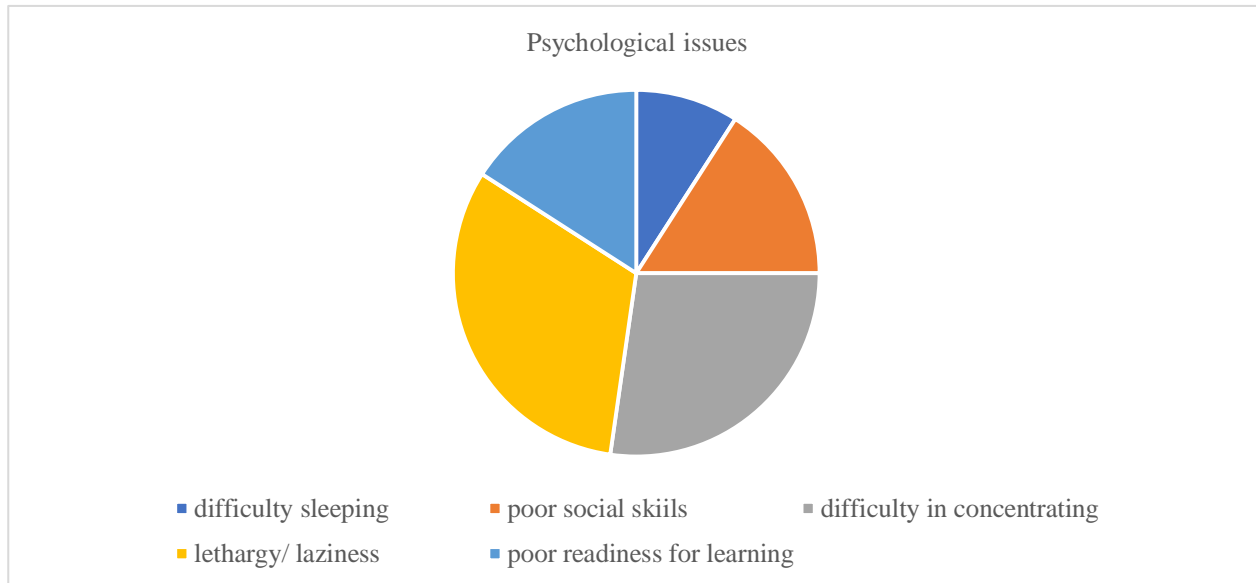


table 2: physiological issues



Focus: Reports of eye issues (6), concentration issues (7), and poor readiness skills (4) have been made.

table 3: psychological issues

The most prevalent problems include poor social skills (7), lethargy/laziness (14), difficulty sleeping (4), and difficulty concentrating (12).

Motivation and Concentration: A considerable percentage exhibits lethargy and difficulty concentrating (as seen in the psychological and physiological tables), which may indicate problems with motivation to learn new information

Based on the data available, it appears that this group is expressive, and curiosity-driven, although they may face difficulties with motivation to do things, concentration, and interaction with others.

Parents, teachers, and regulators can all benefit from this research's insightful findings about how to responsibly allow preschoolers to use mobile devices and televisions. Parents who are aware of the possible risks should demonstrate learning and entertainment alternatives that support healthy development and make educated decisions regarding screen usage.

This study will add to the expanding body of the information about how screen usage affects the development of young children. It can motivate parents and other caregivers to establish a media-balanced environment that promotes preschoolers' healthy physical, emotional, and cognitive development by drawing attention to potential hazards. For babysitter, it was also observed that parent's attitudes toward television and mobile phones which influenced increasing time spent watching television and using mobile.

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Conflicts of interest

There are no conflicts of interest.

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