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The Effect of Screen Time on Attention and Social Interaction in Children Aged 6 to 10: A Parental Perspective

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The Effect of Screen Time on Attention and Social Interaction in Children Aged 6 to 10: A Parental Perspective

Abstract:

The increasing prevalence of digital media use among children has raised concerns about effects on developmental outcomes, particularly attention and social interaction. This quantitative cross-sectional study investigated parental perceptions regarding the impact of screen time on children aged 6–10 in Bangalore. A structured questionnaire was administered to 79 parents, measuring demographic details, screen time patterns, attention-related behaviors, and social interaction. Most children used screens for 1–2 daily hours, with moderate parental concern recorded. Statistical analysis (correlation, regression, ANOVA) indicated that screen time did not significantly predict attention or social interaction scores. Instead, contextual factors—such as content, parental mediation, and family environment—appear more influential. The findings support balanced approaches emphasizing content quality and parental involvement over rigid time restrictions.

Keywords: screen time, attention, social interaction, parental perception, children aged 6–10, Bangalore

Introduction

Children are increasingly immersed in digital environments, which has prompted global debate regarding the developmental effects of screen exposure. During middle childhood (6–10 years), key cognitive and social skills are consolidated. While excessive, unsupervised, or poorly structured screen use is linked with attentional and social problems, not all screen time is equivalent. The content, context, and degree of parental involvement are emerging as critical moderators. Existing

evidence is limited for the 6–10 age range in Indian settings—this study addresses this gap by focusing on parental perspectives in urban and semi-urban Bangalore.

Materials and Methods

Research Design

A cross-sectional survey design was used to capture parental perceptions at a single time point. Inclusion was limited to parents of children aged 6–10 residing in urban and semi-urban Bangalore who provided informed consent.

Participants

Seventy-nine parents met the study criteria. Demographic details such as child's age, gender, parental education, income, and residence were collected. Most families belonged to middle-income groups, with an even gender split among children.

Data Collection Tool

A structured, five-section questionnaire was developed: Sections included demographic details, screen use patterns, attention-related behaviors, social interaction, and parental perceptions, with most responses on a five-point Likert scale. The instrument was subject to expert review and piloted for clarity.

Data Collection Procedures

Surveys were distributed both in-person (via schools) and online. Participation was voluntary and anonymous, and ethical approval was secured from the Institutional Ethics Committee.

Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using Microsoft Excel, R, and Python: Descriptive statistics, Pearson's correlation, regression analyses, and two-way ANOVA were performed.

49 Composite sub-scores were computed for attention, social interaction, and parental
50 concern.

51 Results

52 Demographics

53 The 79 respondents were evenly distributed across the 6–10 age range. Most
54 parents had graduated or held postgraduate qualifications; children's screen access
55 was nearly universal.

56 Screen Time and Patterns

57 Most children (approximately two-thirds) used screens for 1–2 hours daily, typically
58 via smartphones and televisions. Usage patterns varied most by time of day and
59 device type.

60 Parental Perceptions

61 Parents reported moderate concern about attention but lower social interaction
62 issues. Mean Attention Score was 2.69 (SD 0.79); Social Interaction Score averaged
63 2.15 (SD 0.56).

64 Statistical Analysis

65 Correlation and regression showed screen time did not significantly predict
66 attention or social interaction. Two-way ANOVA found no group or interaction
67 differences by age or gender.

68 Discussion

69 The results confirm that in this Indian urban sample, screen time alone was not a
70 reliable predictor of attention or social difficulties. Consistent with recent literature,
71 quality, context, and parental mediation modulate developmental impacts. These

findings challenge universal screen time limits and underscore the importance of content and family routines.

Conclusion

Screen time in isolation appears to have limited impact on attention and social interaction outcomes among urban Indian children aged 6–10. Parental engagement, content quality, and environmental structure are the more critical determinants. Guidance should move away from rigid limits and toward nuanced, context-sensitive recommendations.

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Reference

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