



# Parental Views on Digital Device Use of Primary School Students

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**EN Abstract.** This research aims to examine parents' views on their primary school-aged children's use of digital devices. The study was designed in a descriptive phenomenology pattern. Thus, the data in the research were collected through semi-structured interviews, which is one of the qualitative research methods. As a result of the analysis, three main categories were created: "Parental Views on Digital Device Use, Parental Mediation in Digital Device Use, and Parental Awareness of Digital Device Use". The results drew attention to the fact that parents control the time their children spend with digital devices, as well as the need for time limitation and supervision in the digital media. Additionally, the results revealed that the parents allow their children to visit websites that they believe are safe to spend time on digital devices for learning purposes. The findings of this study are anticipated to alert parents of primary school-aged children to the importance of giving their children quality time on digital media while keeping them safe.

**Keywords:** parents; digital devices; elementary education; views.

## ES Opiniones de los padres sobre el uso de dispositivos digitales por parte de los alumnos de primaria

**ES Resumen.** Esta investigación pretende examinar las opiniones de los padres sobre el uso de dispositivos digitales por parte de sus hijos en la etapa de Educación Primaria. El estudio se diseñó siguiendo un modelo de fenomenología descriptiva. Así, los datos de la investigación se recogieron mediante entrevistas semiestructuradas, que forma parte de los métodos de investigación cualitativa. Como resultado del análisis, se crearon tres categorías principales: "Opiniones de los padres sobre el uso de dispositivos digitales, Mediación de los padres en el uso de dispositivos digitales y Conciencia de los padres sobre el uso de dispositivos digitales". Los resultados llamaron la atención sobre el hecho de que los padres controlan el tiempo que sus hijos pasan con los dispositivos digitales, así como sobre la necesidad de limitar el tiempo y la supervisión en los medios digitales. Además, los resultados revelaron que los padres permiten que sus hijos visiten sitios web que consideran seguros para pasar tiempo en dispositivos digitales con fines de aprendizaje. Se prevé que las conclusiones de este estudio alerten a los padres de niños en edad de asistir a la escuela primaria sobre la importancia de proporcionar a sus hijos tiempo de calidad en los medios digitales y, al mismo tiempo, mantenerlos seguros.

**Palabras clave:** padres; dispositivos digitales; educación primaria; opiniones.

**Sumario:** 1. Theoretical FrameworkEpígrafe. 2. The Purpose of the Study. 3. Ensuring Validity and Reliability. 4. Method. 5. Findings. 6. Discussion. 7. Conclusion and Recommendations. 8. References.

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## 1. Theoretical FrameworkEpígrafe

Today, with the rapid development of technology in the field of information and technology, the interaction of people with technological tools is increasing day by day. This has caused digital devices to become a more important part of family life. Internet and technological tools are easily accessible and become usable in almost every aspect of our lives. Therefore, keeping up with the developing technology is necessary not only for formal education at school, but also for informal education, including family education. However, technology, which facilitates human life on the one hand, also creates some problems on the other. It is obvious that if technological tools that can facilitate learning, communication and socialization are not used consciously, they isolate people and distance them from the outside world. People who are unconsciously immersed in the digital world can build a virtual world for themselves and move away from the real world.

Parents play an important role in introducing their primary school children to digital games and facilitating their use. Parents are perceived as intermediaries in their children's interaction with digital technologies (Plowman et al., 2012). Children are drawn to utilising digital tools as a result of seeing people using them in their daily lives (Toran et al., 2016). This is understandable because children are skilled observers. Parents who did not encounter any digital devices other than television and radio in their childhood may have difficulties in guiding their children. However, these parents may be more familiar with the usage areas of these devices thanks to the digital devices their children use.

Although the internet and mobile devices provide children with easy access to improper content and expose them to abuse and even bullying, digital access also provides children with new opportunities to connect and learn. Parents are particularly concerned about the detrimental effects that smart phones could have on their children, including how these devices might prevent their children from learning how to socialize with others. The use of digital technologies has increased over the last decade, and children's fascination with them has radically transformed their own learning habits. In terms of acquiring informal learning experiences, individual interaction with digital devices during the primary school years, which corresponds to the second phase of childhood, has both advantages and disadvantages. As a part of the digital interaction process, parents are more troubled with how their children will use digital devices rather than how they will benefit from them (Piotrowski, 2020). While this situation damages the child-parent relationship, it may cause the child to fall behind in technological developments (Neumann et al., 2018).

## 2. The Purpose of the Study

This study aims to examine parents' views on their primary school-aged children's use of digital devices. In line with this purpose, the sub-objectives of the research are stated below:

1. To find out the views of parents on how much time their primary school-aged children use digital devices.
2. To examine the views of parents on the reasons behind the digital device use of their primary school-aged children.
3. To ascertain how parents react to their primary school-aged children's use of digital devices.
4. To find out the views of the parents on what needs to be done for primary school students to use digital devices efficiently.

## 3. Ensuring Validity and Reliability

While validity in qualitative research expresses the suitability of the data collection tool and data, reliability gives a clue about the consistency of the study (Creswell, 2013). In this study, credibility and transferability were used to ensure validity, and consistency strategies were used to achieve reliability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). In studies focused on the experiences of the participants, the consent of the participants can be sought to increase the credibility (Creswell & Miller, 2000). Therefore, the collected data were deciphered by taking voice recording to ensure internal validity. The deciphered data were read to the participants and their consent was obtained. In order to obtain external validity, the sampling method used to specify the participants, how the data were collected and the data analysis process were described in detail. In order to ensure the reliability of the research data, expert opinion was sought during the preparation of the data collection tool, coding and analysis of the data (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2013). First, a pool of questions was created for the semi-structured interview form prepared by the researcher. A field expert was consulted to be evaluated in terms of meaning, clarity and suitability for the content. Following the feedback received, the interview form took its final form. The data collected through the interview form were coded and categorized by the researcher.

## 4. Method

### 4.1. Research Design

In this study, descriptive phenomenology design was used. In the descriptive phenomenology design, there is a conscious orientation towards the researched phenomenon through the memories, thoughts, perceptions and emotions of the participants' experiences (Reiners, 2012). The researcher avoids the critical point of view while presenting the perceptions and experiences of the participants as they are (Lopez & Willis, 2004). Small sample groups are preferred in the sample selection of the phenomenological selection. The reason for this is to make an in-depth analysis of the investigated event or situation (Özdemir, 2010).

## 4.2. Study Group

The study group for the research consists of seven parents whose children are studying at the primary school level. A purposeful sampling method was used to specify the participants. Five of the participants are female, and two are male parents. Two of the children of the parents participating in the study are in the third grade; two are in the fourth grade; and the others are in the second grade. Five of the participants participating in the research are teachers; one is a nurse; and one is an accountant.

## 4.3. Data Collection

In the study, the data were collected through a semi-structured interview form prepared by the researcher. The interview form consists of 10 questions in total, including sub-questions based on parents' views on their children's use of digital devices. The prepared questions were submitted to one expert in order to evaluate them in terms of meaning, language, clarity, and relevance to the subject. In line with the suggestions from the expert, some adjustments were made to make the ten questions more understandable, and some sub-questions were added. Thus, the interview form was designed for application.

The data for the study were collected from the parents whose children were studying at primary school in Biga district of Çanakkale in the fall semester of the 2022–2023 academic year. The research was conducted with volunteer participation. Before the audio and video recording, the participants were read the consent form and informed that the information would be recorded. The interviews were conducted with the parents at a convenient time after they indicated their interest in participating via the Zoom application. The questions were translated into English by two authorized interpreters using the back translation technique. Actually, one interpreter translated the statements of the interview form from Turkish into English, while the other did the reverse. That was followed by the formulation of the interview's last set of questions.

## 4.4. Data Analysis

The data in this study were analyzed with an inductive content analysis approach (Patton, 2002). In this approach, themes and categories take their source from the dataset (Zhang & Wildemuth, 2009). In other words, codes are formed from the expressions of the participants and sets of meanings emerge. Similar concepts and data are handled by grouping them together, and the documents that make up the data are systematically examined. Some of the codes developed in this direction include "game lover," "parental guidance," and "computer and tablet." After the coding was finalized, the similarities and differences between the codes were analyzed (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2013). The codes that are related to each other were brought together and three different categories were created: "Parental Views on Digital Devices, Parental Mediation in Digital Device Use and Parental Awareness of Digital Device Use." Thus, categories and subcategories were formed (Elo & Kyngas, 2008). The categories that emerged as a result of the inductive content analysis are shown in Figure 1.

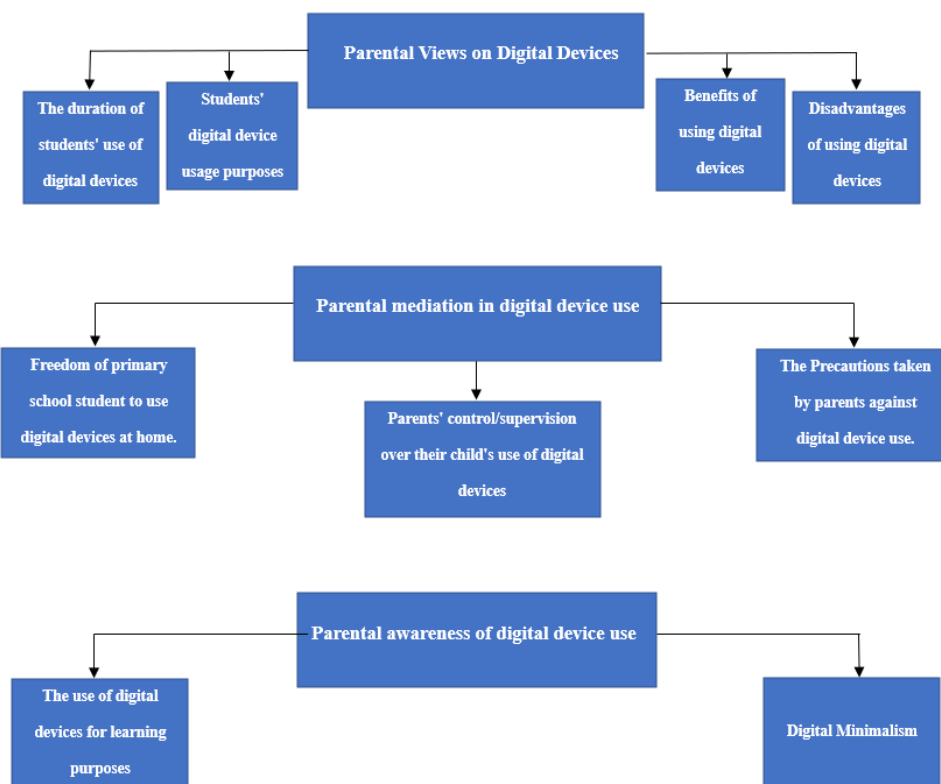


Figure 1. Analysis of Data

## 5. Findings

The data acquired from the research were found to be organised in three major categories as a result of the inductive content analysis. In light of this, the findings are explained as follows:

### 5.1. Parental Views on Digital Device Use

This category includes four subcategories, which are the duration of their children's use of digital devices, children's digital device usage purposes, and the disadvantages of using digital devices according to parental views.

#### 5.1.1. The duration of students' use of digital devices

In this subcategory, the statements of parents about how much time their children spend with digital devices are included:

*Ayşe: "Generally, it can take up to one, three, or four hours on holidays, but since she is at school from morning to evening on the days she is at school, it takes up to one or two hours, that is, two hours at the most, after school."*

*Aydın: "She spends less than half an hour."*

*Fatih: "I'm putting it at two to four hours a day on average. So... TV is involved. Watching videos online, on YouTube, or via a tablet or phone falls under this category. The child obviously needs a lot of time, but I do attribute this to something—mostly staying inside during the winter. Because the child is unable to go out much, you know. When he grows tired of his indoor toys, he is more drawn to the electronic devices. I'm not sure how attractive they still are..."*

*Zerrin: "He spends about two hours."*

*Burcu: "He spends about an hour."*

*Aysun: "About 2 hours on holidays, 45 minutes on other days."*

*Betül: "3-4 hours a day on weekends."*

It is clear from the parents' opinions that the amount of time their children spend using digital devices on weekdays and weekends varies. For instance, Ayşe stated that her child spends more time with digital devices on holidays. Aydın expressly pointed out that his child spends less than half an hour on digital devices. However, due to having to spend more time at home during the winter, according to Fatih, his child is more interested in digital devices. Zerrin reported that her child spends roughly two hours, while Burcu claimed that her child spends roughly an hour. Aysun reported that her child spends roughly two hours on weekends and only 45 minutes on weekdays. Finally, Betül expressed that her child uses digital devices for 3–4 hours on the weekends.

#### 5.1.2. Students' digital device usage purposes

This subcategory includes statements made by parents regarding the reasons why their children use digital devices:

*Ayşe: "She usually spends her time playing games, watching videos, watching videos on Youtube."*

*Aydın: "... some education, some games, some communication."*

*Fatih: "I think my child uses it mostly for playing games and watching videos. So, for example, I have a five-year-old and a ten-year-old child. The five-year-old watches more videos and listens to fairy tales. The videos are watching stuff like those fairy tale type videos. He watches cartoons. The ten-year-old both watches videos and plays games. So rather than playing games, he watches game videos or something."*

*Zerrin: "More for playing games, watching videos and movies..."*

*Burcu: "I think he uses it more for games and entertainment."*

According to the statements above, parents stated that their children use digital devices for playing games, watching videos and communicating. For example, Ayşe admitted that her child usually watches videos on Youtube. Likewise, Fatih stated that his child both watches videos and plays games. The opinions of the other two parents are as follows:

*Aysun: "It depends on the situation. If he is with his friends, he uses it to play games or solves exam preparation tests."*

*Betül: "She uses her tablet and computer for homework research, watching videos and listening to music, and using her phone to talk to her friends."*

According to the statements above, some parents stated that their child spends time for communication and learning as well as for entertainment purposes. For example, it can be understood from the statements that Aysun's child uses digital devices to study for exams and play more games in social settings. It can be understood that Betül's child uses digital devices to do her homework and uses the phone to communicate with her friends.

#### 5.1.3. Benefits of using digital devices

According to the parents' opinions, the parents' views on the benefits of their children's use of digital devices are as follows:

Ayşe: “... Sometimes, even though we try to prevent it, I realize that in the videos she watches, she also knows things that we couldn't tell her before, and that she shouldn't know. Of course, sometimes this can be beneficial and sometimes harmful. For example, I think you learned the names of the countries or the locations of the countries from there. I think the word memory sometimes expands from there. But of course, it also has negative effects.”

Zerrin: “Yes, I think so. I think it helps in your lessons. He's watching his classes from the Morpa campus. It's solving the test. That's why I think it will be useful for the lesson.”

Burcu: “I think there are beneficial aspects of using digital devices; because we are in the age of technology and children need to keep up with this change. For example, my daughter loves watching documentaries. He can explore the animal kingdom and unfamiliar places via the internet. He gets to know about them. In other words, it provides the fastest and shortest way to reach information and make research. In addition, through educational digital games, the child can learn and develop memory and attention.”

Aysun: “It is not useful when you use it for entertainment purposes, but it is useful when you use it for learning purposes.”

Betül: “Yes, it is definitely useful. Everything we want to research and learn in our age is available in the digital environment.”

It can be understood that parents lay emphasis on the necessity of using digital devices consciously and in moderation. Additionally, according to the statements, parents think that while using digital devices, their children have the opportunity to learn new things through different programmes and videos. For example, Ayşe stated that digital devices make it easier to learn the country names of her child and their location in the world, while Zerrin stated that educational websites are beneficial. Burcu similarly pointed out that thanks to technological devices, her child can recognize animals through documentaries about which she is involved, and digital games positively affect the child's attention and memory. Aysun argued that it is beneficial when used for learning purposes rather than entertainment. Finally, Betül reported that everything we want to research is available in the digital media due to the necessity of our age.

The other parents emphasised that their children can benefit from different learning apps and websites as long as they don't go overboard:

Fatih: “So... I think it's beneficial; But I think it's also harmful. For instance, he can watch useful things, such as scientific videos. Same with my older son and younger daughter. In this sense, he can improve himself by watching different science experiments or documentaries about space, whether it's on YouTube or something. He can watch scientific videos, but of course, he is different. It's the kind of game that will waste his time at work and so on, and of course he watches videos that are this and that. He doesn't just watch science-related videos.”

Aydn: “Sometimes it helps, yes. In other words, when you use programmes and applications that are useful, I think it is useful and necessary; but of course, provided that you don't get into these games too much.”

The aforementioned expressions make it clear that Fatih thinks that digital devices have both positive and negative aspects, making it important to use them with caution, while Aydn lay weight on the need to set time limitation for playing digital games.

#### 5.1.4. Disadvantages of using digital devices

The negative aspects of children using digital devices that parents consider are included in this subcategory. According to the statements, parents believe that allowing their children to use digital devices negatively affects both their physical and psychological health.

Ayşe: “... we first experienced this with a health problem. My child suffered from cross-eye problem. I'm frankly attribute this problem to the use of digital devices. When we spend too much time, we also encounter negative things. The videos he watches do not always contain very positive things. In this respect, we have also seen the damage. We also noticed that he heard the words he should never have heard from there. This is both positive and negative.”

Aydn: “Yes, it can cause screen addiction. It can cause attention deficit, that is, it can cause insomnia for a long time as a result of looking at the screen for a long time. This way has its drawbacks.”

Additionally, some parents claimed that rather than physical harm, their children's emotional and personality changes as a result of spending too much time online:

Burcu: “... In my opinion, I think that spending too much time with digital devices adversely affects eye and body health and also affects children psychologically. When my child spends a lot of time on the internet, I see that he behaves in a rush, fussy and his patience decreases.”

Betül: “... I think that uncontrolled digital content and games will not only destroy children's empathy, but also detach them from the real world and harm their brain development.”

Aysun: “He tires his eyes, becomes more active, has difficulty concentrating. It gets aggressive when the digital device is not given.”

The other parents believe that it harms their mental health when their child spends too much time on digital devices:



*Fatih: "I think it has got many disadvantages. It is wasting too much of my child's time. I mean, when the child is living his childhood, instead of playing with his peers or spending quality time with his parents, sometimes he can break away from there and spend his time on that other tablet or at work by watching the video. It can even shut down the child's perceptions. Sometimes his head gets so full, I think. So he forgets what he knows. "*

*Zerrin: "... I think it blunts children's thinking power and memory because they have access to ready-made information. I think that it prevents children from dreaming, getting stuck in certain patterns, adopting the world and dreams created by others and living it. "*

When the statements above are examined, it is seen that the majority of parents think that the use of digital devices has some disadvantages. For example, Ayşe claimed that using digital devices and spending time on digital media damaged her child physically. Similarly, based on her observations, Burcu emphasized that digital devices cause some personal changes in her child. Aydın focused on screen addiction, while Betül and Zerrin emphasized the possibility of digital devices harming children's empathy and imagination.

## **5.2. Parental Mediation in Digital Device Use**

This category consists of three subcategories: the freedom of primary school students to use digital devices at home, parents' control/supervision over the child's digital device use, and the precautions taken by parents against digital device use.

### **5.2.1. Freedom of primary school student to use digital devices at home**

In this subcategory, parents expressed their views on whether their children can access digital devices whenever and as much as they want:

*Aydın: "We do not allow him to use it whenever he wants. We only give permission when it is needed. He can't use it as much as he wants. "*

*Fatih: "It depends on the situation at the moment. If it has a logical explanation or is suitable for us, then it can be used, but he can't use it whenever he wants. So, on certain days. "*

*Zerrin: "He cannot use it whenever he wants. It can only be used when we allow it. Definitely she can't get it if we don't let it... between certain hours. It is used limited. Yes, he has a limited time. When that time comes, he finishes it, he doesn't use it. "*

*Burcu: "My child uses digital devices when he wants to rest at a certain time... He spends limited time with digital devices..."*

*Betül: "He is using it under my control. If he exaggerates his time with the device, I will intervene. I give permission for purpose. "*

*Aysun: "In no way do I allow her to use it whenever she wants and as much as she wants. "*

From the aforementioned statements, it is clear that parents place limitations on their kids' use of digital devices. It is acknowledged that these limitations are the result of the parent, not the child. It is a fact that parents do not give their children unrestricted access to digital devices.

Finally, Ayşe explained that due to her child's eye problem, she placed more restrictions on spending time with digital devices and did not allow her child to access digital devices such as phones and tablets:

*Ayşe: "Not every time she wants it. Sometimes when we are in a difficult situation, I think parents use it more. Well, sometimes we give it to her, too. It's not always at his request. So, he cannot reach the phone whenever he wants. No, he cannot use it as much as he wants. It's within our control. For instance, nobody ever suggested that the phone or tablet was to blame for her cross-eye condition when she had it, but as I observed it, I saw that the eye grew tired and there was a more noticeable shift in the eye. Because of this, he was unable to use his phone or tablet over the summer, for example. We can therefore control it. "*

### **5.2.2. Parents' control/supervision over the child's digital device use**

In this subcategory, the views of parents on whether they provide a controlled environment for their children's use of digital devices are as follows:

*Ayşe: "When we say a controlled environment, we use Youtube Kids; I'm trying to control myself what is watching and what is not. For example, there are some game sites that I do not want her to access, or the things he watches sometimes seem to enliven the game, but we can hear bad words. I intervene right there; I take it away. So he obviously knows that we shouldn't watch them. He follows the rules because he is not aggressive. "*

*Aydın: "Yes, we are trying to control it. We usually let him use it with us so we can look at his phone. So we check it out. For example, his phone does not have internet access. She can connect with us. It can only connect to our wifi. "*

*Zerrin: "Yes, I do; I can go and check it once in a while. I just take his smartphone and check it out by myself. "*

*Betül: "Yes, I think I can. I take care to be in the same environment when dealing with digital devices. Then, check the search history. "*

*Aysun:... "We prefer to play games together. So, I can see more closely which websites he visits. Sometimes I warn him."*

When the aforementioned claims are examined, it becomes clear that most parents desire to restrict their children's use of digital devices, and they use the strategies they have created to make this happen. The statements above indicate that parents try to provide control of children in digital media by accompanying their children and examining the search history of digital devices used by their children. For instance, Ayşe underlined the importance of her involvement with her child in order to create a safe environment for them in the digital world. Aydın claimed that he uses his own devices to give his child access to the internet.

It can be understood from the statements that some of the parents prefer different applications as a means of controlling their children's use of digital devices:

*Fatih: "Yes, we provide an environment. I use parental guidance. Whether it's on my child's tablet or in my accounts, I control it from there. Can't access banned videos or sites. Other than that, of course... in the room all the time. I'm watching what he's doing. So I can control it that way."*

*Burcu: "We try to use content and programmes that are appropriate for my child's age and development. We try to be with you when using digital devices. Our phones have a child lock. Child lock has games, programmes with suitable content and has a certain time."*

When the aforementioned parents' claims are taken into consideration, it is evident that child lock and parental guidance are also used as parental controls over how their kids use digital devices. Fatih mentioned using parental guidance as an example. Burcu, on the other hand, claimed that she uses a child lock to make sure that the required supervision is provided.

### **5.2.3. The precautions taken by parents against digital device use**

Parents' precautions against the use of digital devices are expressed in this subcategory. The following are the precautions parents have taken to ensure that their children spend quality time online safely:

*Ayşe: "We actually used to spend a little more time before. She used to watch only during the hours I mentioned, but she was diagnosed with visual impairment in one of her eyes, and this is what I thought that this was caused by the tablet and the smartphone. Then we took a break this summer... I can say that he did not use a phone or tablet during the summer; never accessed into the digital media. Right now, she just uses it a bit. Sometimes he comes to me so that she can watch the phone while he completes her homework, or we just hand him the phone. I mean, I could say I'm making an effort to be a little more restrained. Otherwise, she might become engrossed in the game."*

*Betül: "I don't want him to use it on weekdays. I help him use it at certain times."*

*Fatih: "... We can take many precautions regarding the use of digital devices. For example, we say that when there are more schools, there is no restriction, for example, you can play for an hour or so a day. Apart from this, we increase the time a little more on Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays. Because when we do not make a restriction other than that, something happens, so there is no limit to it. He doesn't want to quit, he seems to be addicted to games. That's why we put a day and time limitation in this way."*

*Aydın: Of course, I think it is necessary to take precautions. If precautions are not taken, children are more likely to play games."*

The findings draw attention to the fact that the majority of parents impose restrictions on their children to spend safe and quality time in digital media. For example, Ayşe emphasized that her child started to use digital devices only for homework because the digital device used by her child caused physical damage to her body. It can be understood that Betül does not want her child to use digital devices on weekdays. Fatih pointed out that while allowing his child to increase the time to use digital devices on weekends, he reduced it to 1 hour on weekdays. Aydın, on the other hand, is of the opinion that children will be more inclined to play if no precautions are taken. The statements of other parents are as follows:

*Zerrin: "... I put a password on his phone. From time to time, I pick up his phone and look at the programmes he's been on; in which programmes. I take such precautions."*

*Burcu: "We usually watch animated movies together. We chat about it while watching or when it's over. If I'm busy, I follow the progress of the game with the phone volume up."*

*Aysun: "I try to be with my child when he uses digital devices, and I prevent it by explaining what kind of content is not suitable for him, and if such inappropriate content comes, by explaining why."*

The aforementioned statements indicate that some parents have created various strategies to control their kids' use of digital devices. For instance, Zerrin claimed that she secured her child's phone with a password. It can be understood that Burcu follows her child while they play when she is present, and that when she is not present, she does so by keeping the phone's volume on. As a final point, it should be noted that Aysun instructs her daughter on how to block objectionable content when using the Internet and blocks content that is not appropriate for her.

### **5.3. Parental Awareness of Digital Device Use**

This category includes two subcategories: the use of digital devices for learning purposes and digital minimalism.

### 5.3.1. The use of digital devices for learning purposes

This subcategory describes how parents believe their children should utilise digital devices for learning purposes.

*Ayşe: "Let me tell you about an event we experienced last night, for example. We are now in the second grade, there was sometimes an assignment given at work about doing homework. Frankly, I had to get some support for the math question in that homework. We wrote from the internet, from Youtube, and at that moment there was a question about the decimal system. It was in the content of the lecture there. For example, she learned the subject matter by watching it again and again. She had a chance to repeat. Maybe that could be useful."*

*Aydın: "There are applications for learning. She can use them. She can watch videos in English. These are the ones that come to mind."*

*Zerrin: "He can take tests and do her homework. Morpa Kampüs is good website. So I think it is very important to make research as well."*

*Aysun: "The child can be asked a question and told to search for the answers on the internet."*

*Betül: "... While we were preparing for the first stage of the BILSEM exam, we bought a package online, and the solutions to the questions there benefitted my child."*

According to the parents' statements above, it can be seen that some of the parents stressed the value of the internet in order to give their kids a better learning environment. For instance, Ayşe claimed that YouTube helps her child with math problems. Aydın expressed that English videos can help kids learn English. While Zerrin stated that children could solve tests using Morpa Campus, Aysun reported that questions to be asked to children could be aroused by asking them to search on the internet. Betül, on the other hand, seems to have made statements that the question-containing package they receive over the internet is beneficial for her child's preparation for the Science and Art Centre (BILSEM) exams. The other parents' views are as follows:

*Fatih: "I think that digital devices should be used for learning purposes; something should be taught in computer classes in schools or in another place, for example, in the computer technologies course. This should be included in the curriculum of every school. It is already too late, I think, now that the digital environment has penetrated all houses and everywhere, and this is really something that is very difficult to control. School counselors at school or computer teachers at work should recognise this as an achievement in lessons."*

*Burcu: "I think some games develop imagination. In my opinion, the most effective method is for teachers to guide the use of digital devices for learning purposes. Prohibitions and insurances imposed by parents can have adverse effects on children."*

According to the findings above, some parents emphasized that teacher guidance is needed in order to use digital devices for learning purposes. For example, Fatih pointed out that especially computer teachers at school should provide guiding guidance to children. Burcu, on the other hand, stated that teachers at school, rather than parents at home, can create a more effective learning environment for children with digital devices.

### 5.3.2. Digital minimalism

In this subcategory, parental views on what should be done to eliminate the possible damages of digital device use for their children are included:

*Ayşe: "Restrictions may be imposed when it is given to the child. In other words, the channels she can watch can be limited. Content that is useful can be preferred, but we should have a chance to block those that are not useful. I think there is a YouTube Kids channel for this."*

*Aydın: "So... parental control can be done. There are parental control programmes. They can be used. So you can look at the privacy settings."*

*Betül: "The harms of digital devices should be explained well in an environment where the child is with their peers. Proper use of digital devices can be encouraged through interesting projects."*

*Zerrin: "I don't want him to play too many games. It is necessary to set a password; that is, I put a password on the phone. We check it once in a while. So I think he is not very good, and no matter how much he plays, it is not good for them."*

Considering the statements of the parents, it can be understood that parents think that they should be a part of the control to be created in order to eliminate the harms of digital devices. For example, Ayşe reported that this control can be achieved with some programmes on digital devices by introducing a time limitation. Aydın stated that possible harms of digital devices can be reduced by controlling parental control programmes and privacy settings. Both parents emphasized that parental control programmes should be used. Some parents mentioned the necessity of being a role model for their children in this regard:

*Burcu: "Digital devices should definitely be used under the control of parents. In other words, the content of digital devices, programmes, and games should be filtered according to the age, interests, and needs of the children, and a certain time limitation should be imposed on the use of digital devices. In addition, devices such as computers and tablets in the house should not belong to the child but should be the*



*common property of the people in the house. The family should inform the child about how to use these devices, what content to use, and be a role model for the child in the use of digital tools. ”*

*Aysun: “If we parents leave our comfort zones and spend more time with our children, we will protect them against the negative effects of this digital age. As such, we need to protect ourselves first and reduce our digital device usage time. Although we attach importance to education, we, as parents, need to get away from the screens and experience it with our children. ”*

*Fatih: “In my opinion, time control needs to be done very well, especially in digital use. For example, as I said, computer teachers and counsellors in schools often need to provide guidance about these for an hour, such as once a week or once every two weeks. At the same time, I think parents should allow them to watch videos on a tablet, phone, or video during limited hours on weekdays. ”*

It is clear from the statements above that some parents feel that teachers and parents at home should serve as role models for children in order to prevent negative effects of digital devices. For example, Burcu mentioned that digital devices, programmes, and digital games need to be controlled by an authority and presented to the child by limiting the usage time to ensure that children are less harmed by digital devices. Likewise, Aysun stated that they should be role models for their children by restricting their use of digital devices. Fatih, on the other hand, reported that parents should limit the time they use digital devices at home and that especially computer and guidance teachers at schools should provide guidance training for the use of digital devices to children.

## 6. Discussion

This study examined the views of parents whose children are studying at the primary school level regarding the use of digital devices. Examining the findings derived from the interviews with parents reveals that the data were gathered into three major categories: ‚Parental Views on Digital Devices, Parental Mediation in Digital Device Use and Parental Awareness of Digital Device Use‘. In light of the results, it is clear that primary school-aged students generally use digital devices, such as computers, tablets, and smartphones.

Firstly, how much time children spend using digital devices was examined in this study. The results indicated that children mostly spend time with their smartphones. Likewise, the study of Sergi et al. (2017) showed that children have more mobile phones or smart phones than other digital devices. In the studies of Yiğit (2017) and Kurtbeyolu (2018), similar results were obtained at the point that students primarily prefer smart phones.

The results revealed that parents have differences of opinion about their children's spending more time in the digital media. The participants stated that their children mostly spend time in the digital media between half an hour and four hours. It was reported that long-term exposure to digital screens causes disruptions in social development, internet addiction, and psycho-social problems rather than physiological disorders related to obesity, vision, and the muscle system (Gürcan, zhan, & Uslu, 2008).

Additionally, parents stated that their children mostly use digital devices for educational, gaming and communication purposes. Similarly, Arnas (2005) evaluated the use of digital tools in adolescence and pre-adolescent age groups and concluded that students mainly use these tools for playing games. Gür (2017) stated that parents support their children's use of digital technologies for educational purposes and have a positive perspective. Likewise, it was found that students benefitted from laptops and tablets for learning purposes other than playing games and watching videos in this study.

Parents emphasised that they control the digital devices through programmes like Youtube Kids and parental guidance, stressing that their children cannot access digital devices as much or whenever they want. With conscious guidance from parents, it is possible to ensure that children are minimally affected by both the advantages and disadvantages of technology (Akkoyunlu & Turul, 2002). According to American studies, parents who feel little parental control over their children are more likely to let them use digital devices (Radesky et al., 2016).

In the study conducted by the Ministry of Family and Social Policies named „Family Structure Research in Turkey“ (2011), 20% of parents stated that they have problems with their children regarding the use of the internet or digital games; however, when the students' reactions to the precautions taken by their families in the use of digital games in the current study were examined, it was concluded that most of them did not give negative reactions. Today, it has been stated that when digital games are used in moderation, they improve the child's self-confidence, increase problem solving, and increase multi-processing power (Tüzün, 2006).

In the current study, the results indicated that the students spend more time on digital devices when they aren't given an alternative to choose from. Additionally, the parents pointed out that they limit the time their children spend in the digital media. The issue of parents' attitudes towards limiting the time students spend on digital screens was examined in Karacaoğlu's (2019) research, and it was revealed that a positive correlation was found between students' addiction tendencies and authoritarian parental attitudes.

Parents emphasised that in order to enable their children to use digital devices effectively, they resort to videos on the internet in order to better understand the subject matters on which they have difficulty in academic lessons, especially by taking advantage of applications such as Youtube and Morpa Campus, taking tests, and watching English videos. This behaviour of parents may be due to the fact that they find websites such as Morpa Campus and Youtube safe.

## 7. Conclusion and Recommendations

In this study, the digital device use of primary school students was examined from the perspective of parents. The results revealed that, according to the parents, their children are harmed when they use digital devices at home when there is no limitation, supervision, or control. Especially in cases where there is no alternative to digital devices, it is vital for parents to guide their children studying at the primary school level properly. Although parents state that they take some precautions to prevent their children from being harmed in the digital environment, educational activities that will improve the child's self-control is needed in this process, as this can be the story of a lifelong pathway. Furthermore, the parents stated that their children mostly use digital devices to watch educational videos and play games by accessing the internet. The measures taken by the parents to prevent children from being addicted to digital devices include Youtube Kids and parental guidance applications. In addition, the parents reported that they impose a time limitation on their children in the digital media.

The parents highlighted that they directed their children to applications or websites such as Morpa Campus and Youtube for the use of digital media for learning purposes. The parents, who stated that these websites are crucial for research, complained that their children spend too much time playing digital games. Parents who share their children's digital experiences could increase their awareness of digital devices. In order to teach their children how to use digital devices properly and to support their cognitive development, parents need to make an effort to create a suitable environment. Parents who have the responsibility to create this environment should be informed as much as their children, and their awareness should be enhanced. Prohibition and reward processes should be carefully regulated. It was shown that when digital games are banned, children are more interested in digital devices and tend to stare at screens more (Chaudron et al., 2018). Beyond restricting and prohibiting their children's digital interaction, parents should take additional steps (Budak & Işkolu, 2022).

Finally, the parents stated that they took special care to secure their kids' smartphones with passwords, modify their privacy settings, and restrict the channels they could access. It was concluded that parents help their children spend time in the digital media in moderation; however, in this process, children can be taught self-control skills to spend safe and quality time in digital environments. The main responsibility of every parent should be to limit the amount of time spent using digital devices at home, teach kids how to use the internet responsibly, and restrict their own use as well. It is essential to raise parents' awareness in the context of digital addiction and safety.

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