



Mother's Commitment to Limiting Screen Time among Preschool-Aged Children and Its Influencing Factors

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ABSTRACT

Excessive use of gadgets harms children's health and development. Mothers' commitment to limiting screen time is key to preventing children from the negative impacts of gadget use. This study identifies factors associated with mothers' commitment to limiting screen time in preschool-aged children. It used a correlational design with a cross-sectional approach. The sample consisted of 60 mothers of preschool children, using a total sampling technique. The research instrument was a questionnaire. Data were analyzed using the Chi-Square statistical test, with a significance of $\alpha < 0.05$. The results showed that almost all mothers (85%) had moderate commitment to limiting screen time. Mothers' education, occupation, and motivation to limit children's gadget use, as well as the environment where children lived, correlated with mothers' commitment to limiting their preschool-aged children's screen time (p-values in sequence were 0.009, 0.001, 0.031, and 0.001). Meanwhile, mothers' age, number of children, and husbands' support in limiting preschool-aged children's screen time were not correlated with mothers' commitment to limiting their preschool-aged children's screen time (p-values in sequence were 0.339, 0.414, and 0.813). In conclusion, factors associated with mothers' commitment to limiting screen time in preschool-aged children include maternal education, occupation, and motivation, as well as the children's living environment. These findings highlight the importance of strengthening maternal capacity through targeted parental education and promoting supportive home and community environments to enhance effective screen time management in preschool children.

INTRODUCTION

Gadgets are one of the technological advancements that influence the human mind. They are a medium used for communication in the modern era (Itsna & Rofi'ah, 2021). Gadget use has become commonplace, even among preschool-aged children (ages 3-6). Excessive exposure to gadgets, known as excessive screen time, at this age has raised concerns among health and education experts. Its negative impacts include disruptions to children's language, emotional, cognitive, social, and motor development (Eva & Aulia, 2024). Using gadgets for too long can make children more likely to be lazy and less likely to engage in other physical activities (Rachmania & Ludyanti, 2022). Children who are too engrossed in their gadgets often forget to interact with those around them, including their families. Parents, especially mothers, play a crucial role in limiting children's screen time. Parents often allow their children to continue using gadgets, claiming it keeps them quiet at home or prevents fussing. Mothers need to be committed to limiting their children's screen time to avoid the negative impacts of gadget use on their development.

A 2020 survey by the Indonesian Child Protection Commission found that approximately 71.3% of school-age children owned gadgets and/or used them for extended periods each day. Furthermore, 55% of them spent time playing games, both online and offline. Thus, most of them spent their free time using gadgets (Musyaffa et al., 2025). A preliminary study conducted in Babadan Village found that 7 out of 10 mothers lacked the commitment to place limits on their children when playing with gadgets. They were less able to commit because of household work; some also worked in the fields, and some sold at home, so they let their children play with gadgets for longer than the allotted time. Meanwhile, three other mothers committed to complying with the rules on the use of gadgets for their children.

In 2016, the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recommended a new policy on media use for children, limiting screen time for children aged 2-5 years to 1 hour per day (Simanjutak, 2023). Limited screen time for children over 2 years of age is established to prevent inactivity caused by screen time. The obstacles parents face in limiting screen time include parents' busy schedules and environmental influences from friends who also use gadgets, so that, in the end, children become addicted due to a lack of attention and supervision (Sari et al., n.d.). The inability of parents, especially mothers, to supervise their children while they are playing with gadgets can expose them to negative content, such as violence or pornography. When children become addicted to gadgets, they will spend most of their time playing with them (Aprilia and Thaib, 2024). Furthermore, excessive screen time can harm early childhood development, disrupting or hindering children's cognitive function and academic achievement (Eva and Aulia, 2024).

Parents, especially mothers, play a crucial role in limiting their children's screen time. Mothers need to be good role models by reducing their own device use in front of their children. Diverting children's attention away from devices is crucial, and this can be achieved by providing a variety of physical and interactive activities, such as playing outside, reading books, or playing educational games. Establish and enforce clear rules regarding the duration and timing of device use, and create device-free areas at home, such as during mealtimes. Maternal commitment to limiting her child's screen time is crucial and has profound implications for her child's development. A mother's consistent commitment creates a stable and predictable environment for her child. It is highly effective in preventing gadget addiction in young children (Astria, Rahmawati, and Firnanda, 2024). By setting clear time limits and sticking to them, children learn discipline and self-regulation. This study identifies factors associated with mothers' commitment to limiting screen time in preschool-aged children.

METHOD

This study used a correlational design with a cross-sectional approach. It was conducted in Babadan Village, Kediri Regency, in October 2025. The sample consisted of 60 mothers of preschool children,

using a total sampling technique. The inclusion criteria were mothers with preschool-aged children, mothers with mobile phones with active mobile data, and mothers willing to participate in the study. The exclusion criteria in this study were mothers who did not complete the questionnaire completely. The variable studied was the mother's commitment to limiting screen time in preschool-aged children. The instrument used was a questionnaire. A 20-question questionnaire was used to collect data on mothers' commitment to limiting screen time and was tested for validity and reliability (Cronbach's Alpha = 0.952). The commitment parameters measured in the questionnaire included fulfilling promises and responsibilities, discipline, and consistent behavior. Data were analyzed using univariate and bivariate analysis. The univariate test was a descriptive statistic that details the characteristics of respondents. A bivariate analysis used the Chi-Square test to identify factors related to maternal commitment in limiting screen time among preschool-aged children, with a significant p -value < 0.05 .

RESULT

All of the respondents in this investigation were married (100%). Almost half of the respondents were 26-30 years old (35%). Most of them had graduated from Senior High School (70%), and were housewives (85%). Half of the respondents had 1 child (50%). In addition, all of the respondents had the motivation to limit the children's gadget use (100%), most of the respondents received support from their husbands and families to limit children playing with gadgets (70%), and almost all respondents lived in an environment where many children played with gadgets (95%) (Table 1).

Table 1. Respondent characteristics

Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Age		
20-25 years old	15	25,0
26-30 years old	21	35,0
31-35 years old	12	20,0
36-40 years old	12	20,0
Education		
SD (elementary school)	0	0
SMP (Middle school)	18	30,0
SMA (High school)	42	70,0
Sarjana (Bachelor's degree)	0	0
Work		
Housewives	51	85,0
Self-employed	9	15,0
Farmers	0	0
Civil servants	0	0
Livestock breeders	0	0
Others	0	0
Number of children		
1	30	50,0
2	24	40,0
3	6	10,0
>3	0	0
Mothers have the will (motivation) to limit their children's use of gadgets.		

Ever	60	100,0
Never	0	0
Support from husband in limiting children's use of gadgets		
Received husband's support	42	70,0
Did not receive husband's support	18	30,0
The environment where children live (many children play with gadgets)		
Many children play with gadgets	57	95,0
No children play with gadgets	3	5,0
Total	60	100,0

Furthermore, almost all respondents (85%) had moderate commitment to limiting screen time among preschool-aged children. In contrast, a small portion of respondents had low (15%) (Table 2).

Table 2. Identification of mothers' commitment to limiting screen time for pre-school children.

Commitment Criteria	Frequency	Percentage (%)
High	0	0
Moderate	51	85
Low	9	15
Total	60	100

Mothers' education, occupation, and motivation to limit children's gadget use, as well as the environment where children lived, correlated with mothers' commitment to limiting their preschool-aged children's screen time (p -values in sequence were 0.009, 0.001, 0.031, and 0.001). Meanwhile, mothers' age, number of children, and husbands' support in limiting preschool-aged children's screen time were not correlated with mothers' commitment to limiting their preschool-aged children's screen time (p -values in sequence were 0.339, 0.414, and 0.813) (Table 3).

Table 3. Crosstabulation of factors related to mother's commitment in limiting screen time in preschool-aged children and Chi Square test analysis with a significant p -value < 0.05.

Factors related to commitment	Mother's commitment in limiting screen time in preschool-aged children		p-value	Corellation
	Moderate	Low		
Age				
20-25 years	12 (20%)	3 (5%)	0,339	Not related
26-30 years	18 (30%)	3 (5%)		
31-35 years	9 (15%)	3 (5%)		
36-40 years	12 (20%)	0 (0%)		
Education				
SD (elementary school)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0,009	Related
SMP (Middle school)	39 (65%)	3 (5%)		
SMA (High school)	12 (20%)	6 (10%)		
Sarjana (Bachelor's degree)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)		
Work				
Housewives	51 (85%)	0	0,001	Related
Self-employed	0	9 (15%)		
Farmers	0	0		
Civil servants	0	0		
Livestock breeders	0	0		
Others	0	0		
Number of children				
1	24 (40%)	6 (10%)	0,414	Not related
2	21 (35%)	3 (5%)		
3	6 (10%)	0		

>3	0	0		
Mothers have the will (motivation) to limit their children's gadget use.				
Ever	36 (60%)	6 (10%)	0,031	Related
Never	15 (25%)	3 (5%)		
Husband's support in limiting children's gadget use				
Receiving husband's support	36 (60%)	3 (5%)		
Not receiving husband's support	15 (25%)	6 (10%)	0,813	Not related
Children's living environment (many children play with gadgets)				
Many children play with gadgets	51 (85%)	6 (10%)	0,001	Related
No children play with gadgets	0	3 (5%)		

DISCUSSION

The statistical test results for the mothers' profession ($p=0.001$) and education ($p=0.009$) showed $p<0.05$, indicating a highly significant correlation between the mothers' profession and education and their commitment to limiting screen time among preschool-aged children (Table 3). Most respondents had graduated from Senior High School and were housewives (Table 1). Housewives essentially have plenty of time to supervise and limit their children's screen time. In addition, mothers with a high school education generally have basic knowledge about parenting methods and the impact of gadget use on children. Both ultimately result in a fairly good maternal commitment to limiting screen time. Working mothers, especially full-time working mothers, face limitations in their ability to accompany their children. They tend to be more fatigued than stay-at-home mothers or mothers who do not work because they juggle multiple roles. Individuals who juggle multiple roles are at risk of role conflict and fatigue, which can compromise the consistency of their parenting. It aligns with research by Nurhafizah et al. (2023), which also found that time constraints and fatigue among working parents often led to the use of digital media as a substitute caregiver, resulting in poor control over children's screen time (Nurhafizah, Hidayati, and Syam, 2023). Direct parental involvement significantly affects children's behavioral control, indicating maternal commitment to limiting screen time. Non-working mothers have more flexible time and tend to have greater opportunities to supervise their children's activities, establish rules about device use, and provide alternative activities such as playing, reading, or physical activity.

The statistical analysis also showed a p -value of 0.031 ($p<0.05$), indicating a significant relationship between maternal motivation and commitment to limiting screen time in preschool-aged children (Table 3). Thus, mothers with high motivation are more committed to managing and limiting screen time in preschool-aged children. Motivation is an internal or external drive that influences a person to perform a behavior consistently. According to the Health Belief Model, a person's motivation is influenced by their perceptions of the benefits and risks of a behavior (Salari and Filus, 2017). Mothers who strongly perceive the negative impacts of excessive screen time, such as impaired concentration, delayed language development, and sleep disturbances, are more motivated to limit screen use in preschool-aged children.

This study aligns with research by Lammers et al. (2022), which found that parental motivation was associated with screen time management behavior in early childhood (Lammers *et al.*, 2022). Parents with high motivation tend to be more consistent in enforcing digital media use rules. The Authors believe that maternal motivation plays a crucial role in determining the extent to which mothers can enforce screen time restrictions for preschool-aged children. Mothers with a strong motivation are expected to be more consistent and firm in dealing with their children's resistance, which often leads to fussy behavior.

Moreover, the statistical test results showed a p -value of 0.001 ($p < 0.05$), indicating a highly significant relationship between the child's environment and mothers' commitment to limiting screen time in preschool-aged children (Table 3). Almost all respondents in this investigation lived in environments where many children played with gadgets (Table 1). It presented a significant challenge for mothers in committing to implementing appropriate screen time. This condition affected mothers' commitment, leaving it in the moderate category (Table 2). A child's environment includes the family, social, and physical surroundings, such as the presence of television, gadgets, and digital media usage habits at home and in the surrounding area. A conducive environment will make it easier for mothers to consistently implement screen time restrictions (Theopilus *et al.*, 2024). It aligns with research by Khan & Rahman (2024), which also found that the social environment and family's digital media habits influenced parents' ability to control their children's screen time. A permissive environment regarding device use tends to weaken parents' consistency in setting rules. It can be a challenge for mothers to maintain their commitment to limiting screen time (Khan and Rahman, 2024). Providing an environment that supports physical activity and social interaction, and limits screen use, in early childhood is crucial to preventing excessive screen time. Children in environments with high levels of screen use, both from family members and peers, tend to have a greater desire to use screens. An environment that provides creative activities, play spaces, and family support will make it easier for mothers to implement these recommendations. In a supportive environment, mothers' commitment to limiting screen time in preschool-aged children can be more easily implemented and sustained.

In addition, the statistical test results showed a p -value of 0.339 ($p > 0.05$), indicating no significant relationship between maternal age and maternal commitment to limiting screen time in preschool-aged children. This result suggests that differences in maternal age, whether younger or older, do not directly influence the level of maternal commitment to regulating and limiting screen time in preschool-aged children. Research conducted by Yilmaz & Kucuk (2024) also indicated no significant relationship between maternal age and behaviors limiting screen time in preschool-aged children (Çalhan and Göksu, 2024). The study emphasized that access to information and parenting education played a more important role than age. Age is often associated with emotional maturity, life experience, and decision-making ability. However, in digital parenting, maternal age is not always the primary determinant of parenting

behaviors, including limiting screen time. Mothers will demonstrate a strong commitment to limiting screen time if supported by adequate knowledge, strong motivation, and a supportive family environment. Furthermore, the statistical test results showed a p -value of 0.414 ($p > 0.05$), indicating no significant relationship between the number of children in the family and mothers' commitment to limiting screen time for preschool-aged children. This result indicates that the number of children a mother has does not directly influence her level of commitment to managing and limiting screen time for preschool-aged children. The lack of a relationship between the number of children and mothers' commitment indicates that mothers' commitment to digital parenting is more influenced by the quality of their care than the number of children they have. If families have clear rules regarding device use and strong values about healthy parenting, the number of children will not be a major obstacle to implementing screen time restrictions.

The statistical test results in this paper also showed a p -value of 0.813 ($p > 0.05$), indicating no significant relationship between husband's support and mothers' commitment to limiting screen time for preschool-aged children. Theoretically, husband's support is a form of social support that can strengthen mothers' role in childcare (Ding *et al.*, 2024). This support can be emotional, informational, or instrumental. However, in this study, the husband's support was not always the primary determining factor in limiting screen time. If the mother has a strong commitment, motivation, and understanding of the impact of screen time, the decision to limit screen use is more determined by internal factors than external support from the husband. Husband's support is important in parenting in general, when it comes to limiting screen time, individual factors within the mother and the family environment play a more dominant role. Therefore, digital parenting interventions should focus on increasing maternal capacity through education and strengthening the parenting role, without relying too heavily on spousal support.

CONCLUSION

Factors associated with mothers' commitment to limiting screen time in preschool-aged children include maternal education, occupation, and motivation, as well as the children's living environment. Mothers with secondary education and those who were full-time homemakers tend to exhibit sufficient commitment to limiting screen time, driven by basic parenting knowledge and greater availability of time, although challenges with consistency persisted. Additionally, a residential environment with high peer gadget use posed a substantial barrier to optimal control of screen time. These findings highlight the importance of strengthening maternal capacity through targeted parental education and promoting supportive home and community environments to enhance effective screen time management in preschool children.

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