Balancing Technology Engagement and Quality Family Moments: Parents' Views

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to explore parents' perspectives on the balance between technology use and quality family time. In the current digital era, the use of technology, such as smartphones and computers, has become an integral part of families' daily routines. However, over-reliance on technology can disrupt social interactions and emotional relationships among family members. This study employs a qualitative approach using semi-structured interviews involving five parents selected through purposive sampling. Data were collected both face-to-face and online and analyzed using thematic analysis. The findings identify three main themes: challenges in managing technology use within the family, parents' strategies in balancing technology use and family time, and the impact of imbalance on family well-being. Identified challenges include time constraints, work pressure, and screen addiction among children. Parents' strategies include setting screen-free times, engaging in technology-free family activities, and implementing flexible household rules. The effects of technological imbalance include disrupted emotional relationships, impaired children's social development, declining parental executive function, and increased media use among children. This study emphasizes the need for active parental involvement, self-control, and a structured approach in building a balance between technology use and quality family time. Its implications suggest that these findings can serve as a reference for parents, educators, and policymakers in efforts to support family well-being in the digital era.

Keywords: Family Balance, Technology, Quality Time, Parents, Emotional Relationships.

INTRODUCTION

In the rapidly evolving digital era, technology has become a vital aspect of daily life for society. Smartphones, laptops, tablets, and various other digital devices have transformed the way humans interact, work, and entertain themselves. For most families, technology offers convenience in communication, learning, and household management. However, the emergence of this technology has also introduced new challenges, particularly in maintaining a balance between technology use and quality family time. Parents, as the cornerstone of the family institution, play a vital role in ensuring that technology use among family members does not undermine familial relationships or the social and emotional development of children (Livingstone & Blum-Ross, 2020).

Braune-Krickau et al. (2021) review the impact of parental smartphone use on sensitivity and responsiveness in interactions with children aged 0–5, finding that using a gadget interferes with attachment-related functions, making parents less sensitive and having a detrimental effect on child outcomes, such as self-control. This phenomenon, known as technoference, refers to disruptions in interpersonal relationships caused by the use of digital devices. For instance, parents who frequently use their phones during mealtimes or family activities may cause their children to feel neglected, overlooked, or unappreciated. In this context, quality family time is not merely about physical presence but rather about active, attentive, and meaningful interactions.

Consequently, this study is conducted to identify the challenges parents face in balancing technology use with quality family time, explore the strategies parents use to manage technology use within the family context, and analyze the impact of technological imbalance on emotional relationships and children's social development. The findings of this study are expected to provide a clearer picture of parents' actual experiences in addressing the challenges of the digital era, interpreting, and striking a balance between technology use and investment in their children's emotional and social development.

LITERATURE REVIEW

In an increasingly modern technological landscape, technology has become an essential part of daily life, including within the family institution. This technology is not only used for communication and entertainment, but it has also become an integral part of daily routines, such as meal times, rest periods, and family activities. While technology offers benefits for connecting family members and supporting children's learning, it also poses challenges in balancing time and social interaction. Parents now face a dilemma in adapting their roles as educators and protectors in an environment that is increasingly dependent on technology.

Excessive technology use by parents can disrupt quality family interactions. Denecker et al. (2023) found that parents' use of smartphones while with their children is associated with a decline in perceived quality time and an increase in behavioral issues among children. This phenomenon, known as "technoference," refers to disruptions in interpersonal relationships caused by digital device usage, which reduces parental attention toward children and subsequently affects their emotional well-being and social development. Additionally, Merkaš et al. (2023) demonstrated that parents' smartphone use during interactions with children is associated with a decline in interaction quality and children's emotional well-being. Children who frequently experience technoference reported feelings of anger and sadness, as well as lower well-being. Therefore, parents must be aware of the adverse effects of uncontrolled technology use and take steps to minimize disruptions during interactions with their children.

Zhang et al. (2025) indicated that when both parents engage in technoference, the risk of problematic media use among children increases significantly. This ongoing disruption can reduce parental attention to children, leading them to seek entertainment through digital devices, which may further affect their emotional and social development. Moreover, a study by Zurcher et al. (2020) found that parents' attitudes toward multitasking while using media can impair their executive functions, which are critical for managing children's behavior and emotions. Executive function refers to a set of high-level cognitive skills that enable individuals to plan, focus their attention, remember instructions, solve problems, and regulate their emotions and behavior. These skills are essential in daily life, particularly in making sound decisions, organizing daily activities, and managing oneself and others, including in the context of parenting (Anderson, 2020). This highlights the importance of parents' awareness of the effects of their technology use to ensure their children's development remains unaffected.

Parents play a vital role in guiding children toward responsible technology use. Akter et al. (2022) suggest a co-monitoring approach between parents and teenage children to manage online safety and privacy. This approach involves open communication and collaboration among family members to establish appropriate rules and boundaries for technology use. A longitudinal study by Van Den Eijnden et al. (2021) found that parental rules prohibiting internet and smartphone use before bedtime are associated with earlier bedtimes and better sleep quality among teenagers. However, these positive effects were more pronounced among teenagers who were less intensely engaged with social media. By setting consistent rules and involving children in decision-making, parents can help them develop a better understanding of responsible technology use.

The rapid development of digital technology has brought significant changes to family dynamics in Malaysia (Wong et al., 2020). While studies have examined the impact of technology use on family interactions, a gap remains in research focusing on parents' experiences in balancing technology use with quality family time, particularly within the Malaysian cultural context. Previous studies have primarily focused on technology use in education and employment, with less attention given to how parents manage technology use in daily life to ensure family relationships remain unaffected. Additionally, factors such as the digital divide between urban

and rural areas, as well as differences in digital literacy levels among parents, add complexity to understanding the challenges faced by Malaysian families (Konca, 2021; Hammer et al., 2020).

Therefore, this study aims to identify the challenges faced by parents in maintaining a balance between technology use and quality family time, analyze the strategies they employ to manage technology use without compromising family relationships, and examine the impact of technology use on the quality of time spent within families. Using a qualitative approach through semi-structured interviews and purposive sampling, this study aims to provide a more holistic and contextual understanding of the issue, thereby contributing to the development of more effective policies and interventions that support family well-being in the digital era.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study employs a qualitative research design, specifically using semi-structured interviews to gather feedback from parents on the challenges and strategies they use to maintain a balance between technology use and quality family time. The qualitative approach enables an in-depth exploration of parents' perceptions and experiences regarding the balance between technology use and quality family time. This study adopts a phenomenological research design. Phenomenology can be defined as the study of individuals' lived experiences or as a method for exploring how individuals perceive experiences and assign meaning to phenomena.

Research Instruments

The researcher uses an interview guide and an interview form to collect data. The interview guide is prepared to ensure that the interviews remain aligned with the study's objectives and are structured based on the research goals. The interview form serves to record the outcomes of the interview. Additionally, the researcher uses digital audio recordings. The use of these tools is essential for documenting events during data collection, serving as a primary reference in case of confusion or data loss in the field.

Respondents and Data Collection Procedure

Respondents consist of parents who have at least one child aged between 3 and 20 years and live with their family permanently. The selection of respondents is conducted through purposive sampling to ensure the information obtained is relevant to the study's objectives. A total of five parents participated in semi-structured interviews to gather in-depth information about their experiences in managing technology use and implementing quality family time. Interviews are conducted face-to-face or via online platforms, such as Zoom or Google Meet, depending on the respondents' comfort level with online platforms. Each interview session lasts between 30 and 60 minutes and is recorded with the respondents' consent for transcription and further analysis. The diagram below displays the demographics of the selected respondents, categorized by pseudonym, age, occupation, and the number and age of their children.

Table 1: Respondents' Demographics

Respondent	Age	Job	Number of Children	Child's Age
Madam Aini	27	Teacher	1	1 Year Old
Madam Nurul	30	Teacher	1	10 Years Old
Madam Siti	40	Bank Executive	3	15-20 Years Old
Mrs Sam	35	Principal	1	4 Years Old

All respondents are working mothers in various fields such as education and finance, aged between 27 and 40 years. They come from small families, with one to three children, ranging in age from 1 to 20 years. This

diversity of backgrounds offers various perspectives on striking a balance between technology use and quality family time.

Data Analysis

Data obtained from interview sessions is transcribed verbatim and analyzed using thematic analysis. Verbatim transcription means that the interview recordings are rewritten exactly as spoken by the respondents, including words, pauses, repetitions, and the linguistic styles used. This is crucial as it preserves the authenticity and context of the respondents' statements for accurate analysis. The process involves several key stages: Firstly, repeated reading to understand the overall content. Secondly, there is an initial coding phase, followed by the identification of central themes and their corresponding subthemes. Next, review and refine the themes, and then determine and name the final themes that are relevant to the study's objectives.

Study Reliability

Meticulous attention from the supervisor is required to execute each step of the process with precision, based on a structured and systematic approach (Bang, 2024; Suparliadi et al., 2023; Enworo, 2023). Therefore, this study is grounded in the criteria outlined by Lincoln and Guba, namely credibility, transferability, and confirmability. Additionally, the researcher employs triangulation, which involves using multiple data collection methods, including interviews, post-interview questionnaires, and obtaining data from various relevant stakeholders (Donkoh & Mensah, 2023).

To enhance credibility, the study uses peer evaluation, where group members assess and verify the accuracy of interview transcripts and their interpretations based on participants' responses (Bang, 2024; Suparliadi et al., 2023). This strategy allows participants to review the collected data and correct any errors or misinterpretations. Furthermore, the researcher's continuous engagement with respondents and observations during interview sessions helps gain a deep understanding of their context and experiences. Triangulation of data sources and methods is employed to enhance the reliability of findings through cross-verification from multiple perspectives (Suparliadi et al., 2023).

Transferability is addressed through detailed descriptions of the study context, including the research setting, respondent demographics, and data collection procedures. These details enable readers to judge whether the study's findings are relevant and applicable to similar contexts or populations. Comprehensive descriptions also facilitate comparisons and assessments relevant to specific situations (Enworo, 2023; Azman et al., 2024).

Confirmability is achieved through deep reflexivity, where the researcher actively acknowledges and documents potential biases and their impact on the research process (Enworo, 2023). All data, analyses, and findings are based on participants' narratives, with verbatim quotes used as evidence to support identified themes. Additionally, an external audit by qualitative research experts is conducted to verify the accuracy of data and ensure the objectivity of the findings. This approach ensures that the findings accurately reflect the participants' voices and are not influenced by the researcher's bias (Ahmed, 2024).

FINDINGS

Three main themes were identified in this study. The first is the primary challenge in maintaining a balance between technology use and family time. The second is the strategies parents employ to manage technology use within the family. Lastly, the impact or consequences on the family due to an imbalance in technology use. These themes are presented in Table 2 to facilitate a holistic understanding.

Table 2: Summary of Themes and Subthemes

Research Questions	Themes	Sub-Themes
What are the challenges faced by parents in	Challenges in maintaining a balance between technology	Disruption of family interactions due to excessive technology use by parents themselves.

ensuring a balance between technology use and quality family time?	and family time	Parents have limited time and work commitments.
		Occurrence of digital device addiction.
What strategies do parents use to manage technology use to avoid negatively affecting family relationships?	Strategies parents employ to manage technology use within the family	Parents set rules and time limits for using digital devices.
		Parents organize technology-free family activities.
		Parents implement joint supervision.
What are the effects of technology use on the balance of quality family time?	Impact of imbalanced technology use within the family	Parents' dependence on technology.
		Disruption of children's social development.
		Increase in children's negative emotions.

Challenges in Maintaining a Balance Between Technology and Family Time

Disruption of Family Interactions Due to Excessive Technology Use by Parents Themselves

This subtheme suggests that excessive technology use by parents themselves has disrupted family interactions. The researcher identified this subtheme when all respondents stated that their focus on devices led to reduced communication with their children, sometimes causing emotional reactions such as sulking or withdrawal from the children.

"Yes, it's definitely disruptive. For example, when we focus on technology, we often neglect communication with our family. When a family member is trying to communicate, it is best to pause technology use." (Madam Aini)

"For example, there was a time I was too busy replying to WhatsApp messages from parents, and I did not respond to Aiman when he wanted to talk. I noticed afterward that Aiman looked sad, like he was sulking." (Madam Nurul)
"For instance, when I am busy replying to work issues, it can sometimes be disruptive. But it is not just me; sometimes the kids are also busy with their phones." (Madam Siti)

"Yes, it has happened. Sometimes when I am too focused on work, messages on WhatsApp, or emails, I overlook when my children are talking to me. I realize this can affect our relationship, so I have started setting specific times to avoid touching my phone." (Mrs. Sam)

Parents Have Limited Time and Work Commitments

This subtheme highlights that time constraints and work demands are significant barriers for parents in managing their family's technology use. The researcher identified this subtheme when respondents explained that their jobs require them to be constantly available and connected, even during time spent with their children.

"Okay, the challenge is when it involves work. When work is involved, we must use technology, but at the same time, family members, especially our children, need our attention. Meanwhile, work often requires prolonged use of technology and must be done. If it is not work-related, I do not think there is any issue with putting technology aside." (Madam Aini)
"Aiman often asks for the phone to watch cartoons. He throws tantrums or whines when we do not give him the phone. I myself sometimes find it hard to let go of my phone because work is all on it, so I have to stay alert." (Madam Nurul)
"My job requires me to be on standby all the time because my department head might ask questions at any moment, and I need to respond as quickly as possible. As for my kids, sometimes it is hard to get their

attention to put down their phones." (Madam Siti)
"The main challenge is ensuring work is not disrupted, especially if there are urgent messages from teachers or parents of students that require immediate responses." (Mrs. Sam)

Occurrence of Digital Device Addiction

This subtheme reveals that addiction to digital devices occurs among both parents and children, making it challenging to reduce usage. The researcher identified this subtheme when respondents noted that their children displayed reactions, such as tantrums, when not allowed to use devices, and parents themselves struggled to let go of their phones due to work demands.

"My child will throw a tantrum and scream, trying all sorts of things to get attention if we ignore him while using technology." (Madam Aini)
"When my husband or I are busy with our phones, Aiman usually whines for attention. Sometimes he acts unexpectedly, like shouting or going to his room. I have noticed our communication gets disrupted, and he becomes uninterested in sharing stories." (Madam Nurul)
"For example, when we are too focused on our phones, someone might ask something, but we are not paying attention. When we do not hear them, it can make us feel annoyed. There is definitely a communication issue, and it affects our relationship." (Madam Siti)
"My children will start seeking my attention by speaking loudly or hugging me. Sometimes they show impatient behavior when I am slow to respond." (Mrs. Sa**m)**

Strategies Parents Employ to Manage Technology Use Within the Family

Parents Set Rules and Time Limits for Using Digital Devices

This subtheme indicates that respondents establish rules and time limits for gadget use. The researcher identified this subtheme when respondents stated that they set rules and time limits to control their children's activities prudently. Three out of four respondents, namely Madam Aini, Madam Nurul, and Mrs. Sam, agreed that setting rules and time limits for gadget use can help reduce the challenges of balancing technology and quality family time.

"For example, during meals, we do not use technology; we focus on eating and communicating with family. Another example is before bedtime—there is no screen time. We spend time with the kids before they go to bed. So far, my child, who is one year and three months old, does not get any screen time except for the television… I allow about 20-30 minutes of TV watching per day." (Madam Aini)

"I set a rule for one hour after dinner where all phones are placed in the living room. Implementing it was challenging at first, but we stayed consistent, and over time, we got used to it." (Madam Nurul)

"Yes, we have a 'no-screen' rule during meals and one hour before bedtime. We also use a 'phone box' in the living room; all phones are placed there during family time." (Mrs. Sam)

Parents Organize Technology-Free Family Activities

This subtheme shows that respondents engage in technology-free activities with their families. The researcher identified this subtheme when all respondents reported participating in technology-free activities with their children, such as going for walks, playing outdoors, and spending quality time without digital devices.

"On weekends, we do a lot of outdoor activities, like taking the kids for a walk, going to the playground, or visiting interesting places for family bonding." (Madam Aini)

"On weekends, we try to spend time together, like going fishing, visiting our hometown, or watching a movie." (Madam Nurul)

"On weekends, we usually spend time together, often going to the mall or visiting their grandparents." (Madam Siti)

"On weekends, I try to make time for family activities like going to the park, playing at home, or attending school events if there are any." (Mrs. Sam)

Parents Implement Joint Supervision

This subtheme suggests that parents engage in joint supervision to monitor their children's use of digital devices. Three respondents agreed that direct parental involvement in supervision helps prevent children from being exposed to inappropriate content and fosters more responsible technology use habits.

"I educate my child by demonstrating good usage habits… teaching them about online safety and limiting screen time." (Madam Nurul)

"I get involved with my children… so I can also monitor the content they are viewing." (Madam Siti)

"They are only allowed to use tablets for educational apps, and I am with them during their usage." (Mrs. Sam)

Impact of Imbalanced Technology Use Within the Family

Parents' Dependence on Technology

Respondents demonstrated varying levels of daily technology use, depending on their individual needs and roles.

"Admittedly, I use technology a lot; I use it every hour." (Madam Aini)

"About three to four hours a day." (Madam Nurul)

"I use technology for more than 10 hours a day because it is used for work both at school and at home. At school, I heavily use laptops and smartphones for management, communication with parents and teachers, and monitoring digital learning. At home, I still need to check work messages and prepare administrative materials or lesson plans." (Mrs. Sam)

The primary purposes of technology use in families include work, education, and entertainment, with varying emphases depending on the respondent.

"For phones and laptops, the first use is for communication, second for work, and third for entertainment." (Madam Aini)

"For work matters, meetings, online classes, or watching K-dramas." (Madam Siti)

Disruption of Children's Social Development

All respondents acknowledged that the use of technology disrupts family interactions.

"Yes, it's definitely disruptive. For example, when we focus on technology, we often neglect communication with our family. When a family member is trying to communicate, it is best to pause technology use." (Madam Aini)

"For example, there was a time I was too busy replying to WhatsApp messages from parents, and I did not respond to Aiman when he wanted to talk. I noticed afterward that Aiman looked sad, like he was sulking." (Madam Nurul)

Increase in Children's Negative Emotions

Children displayed various adverse reactions when parents were preoccupied with technology during family time.

"My job requires me to be on standby all the time because my department head might ask questions at any moment, and I need to respond as quickly as possible. As for my kids, sometimes it is hard to get their attention to put down their phones." (Madam Siti)

"The main challenge is ensuring work is not disrupted, especially if there are urgent messages from teachers or parents of students that require immediate responses." (Mrs. Sam)

The findings show that technology use in families is driven by work, education, and entertainment needs. However, this has adverse effects on family interactions. Varying usage patterns reflect differences in lifestyle and responsibilities, while disrupted communication and children's emotional reactions underscore the need to strike a balance between technology and quality time. These data support the assertion that technology use must be managed to prevent it from negatively impacting family relationships.

DISCUSSION

This discussion addresses the first research question, specifically the challenges parents face in striking a balance between technology use and quality family time. The findings suggest that work pressure and children's dependence on screens are significant barriers to maintaining high-quality family interactions. Respondents, such as Madam Aini and Madam Siti, explained that they need to be constantly available to respond to work matters, even when at home, making it difficult to separate their professional duties from time spent with their children. This reflects the growing cognitive burden and psychosocial stress that parents experience in the digital era. A study by Tarullo et al. (2022) found that parents feel stressed when balancing work demands through smartphones with the emotional responsibilities toward their families, which require consistent physical and mental presence.

Additionally, children's challenging behavior when device use is restricted poses a daily challenge in households. As shared by Mrs. Sam, her children often throw tantrums when they are not allowed to use their phones. Tarullo et al. (2022) found that using screens to soothe young children's emotions can increase their long-term emotional reactivity. Moreover, parents' excessive focus on screens serves as a model that children emulate. Radesky et al. (2021) explain that exposure to parents who frequently neglect social interactions due to device use can lead to children experiencing reduced attention and increased negative behaviors. Thus, these findings suggest that challenges in controlling technology use stem not only from external factors, such as work, but also from parenting patterns practiced in daily life.

Addressing the second research question regarding parents' strategies for managing technology use within the family, the findings show that parents who establish rules such as "no screens during meals" and "one hour before bedtime," along with consistent enforcement of these rules, can reduce technology-related challenges and maintain a balance in family time. A qualitative meta-synthesis revealed that parental screen management strategies frequently incorporate clear time limits and contextual rules. For example, prohibiting device use during meals or before bedtime can help balance activities involving digital devices with those that are free from them (Chong et al., 2023). Additionally, parenting styles such as active control and screen restrictions play a role in children's psychological well-being, with mutually agreed-upon device-use limits associated with better family well-being (Rabbani et al., 2022). This aligns with the finding that consistent enforcement of rules enables families to form healthier technology-use habits.

In this context, respondents also agreed that spending weekends on outdoor activities, such as visiting playgrounds, fishing, or spending time with family members without using digital devices, can help restore children's social and emotional connections. This reflects efforts to balance screen use with direct experiences that support children's physical, social, and emotional development. A systematic review and meta-analysis show that outdoor activities provide psychological benefits, enhance social connections, and increase

environmental awareness among children and adolescents (Vasilaki et al., 2025). Furthermore, Dankiw et al. (2023) emphasize that exposure to nature supports cognitive, emotional, and social development and can serve as an alternative strategy to screen-based activities. Thus, technology-free activities not only reduce screen-induced information overload but also support children's holistic development through direct interactions, aligning with respondents' findings.

Addressing the third research question regarding the impact of imbalanced technology use on families, the findings indicate that disrupted emotional relationships between parents and children are a primary consequence. For instance, Madam Aini and Madam Nurul reported that excessive phone use led to neglected family communication, resulting in feelings of sadness and anger among children. Adverse reactions such as sulking, speaking loudly, and impatience reported by Mrs. Sam highlight children's heightened emotional sensitivity to a lack of parental attention. Additionally, imbalanced technology use disrupts children's social development, leading to reduced interaction skills and increased aggressive behaviors. Moreover, parents' multitasking with technology impairs their executive functions in decision-making and emotional regulation, consistent with Anderson's (2020) findings. Zhang et al. (2025) also support the finding that increased parental technology use is closely linked to increased screen use among children.

Furthermore, parents' direct involvement when children use educational apps aligns with the concept of "active mediation," in which direct engagement helps monitor content, provide online safety guidance, and instill responsible device-use habits. A meta-synthesis notes that parents use active control approaches, such as accompanying or discussing screen content with children, to reduce exposure to inappropriate content (Chong et al., 2023). Chong et al. (2023) also report that parents control access to educational apps and accompany children during device use to ensure learning objectives are met while minimizing negative disruptions. Thus, joint supervision not only reduces the risk of exposure to inappropriate content but also leverages digital devices as learning tools, while strengthening family communication to promote greater well-being and harmony.

Through comprehensive observation, the findings reveal that family technology use varies, influenced by demands for work, education, and entertainment. Different usage patterns among respondents, such as Madam Aini's unrestricted hourly use, Madam Nurul's three to four hours daily, and Mrs. Sam's over ten hours daily, reflect variations in technology dependence based on individual roles and professional demands. The purposes of use, such as communication, work, and entertainment, as reported by Madam Aini and Madam Siti, indicate that technology serves as a versatile tool but also negatively impacts the balance of family life.

Disruption of children's social development is a significant issue resulting from imbalanced technology use within families. Madam Aini and Madam Nurul reported that excessive phone or gadget use led to neglected family communication, resulting in sadness and anger among children, as expressed by Madam Nurul and Madam Siti. Adverse reactions such as sulking, speaking loudly, or impatience, as observed by Mrs. Sam, highlight children's sensitivity to parental attention. This challenge is compounded by urgent work demands, as noted by Mrs. Sam, which require immediate responses to essential messages, indicating a conflict between professional responsibilities and family emotional needs.

In conclusion, while technology offers benefits such as convenience in communication and learning, its imbalanced use has significant adverse effects on family relationships. Parental dependence on technology highlights the need for technology management approaches, while disruptions in children's social development and emotional reactions underscore the importance of setting usage limits. This study suggests that strategies such as designating technology-free times and providing alternative family activities can mitigate negative impacts, aligning with Pham et al.'s (2023) recommendations for balancing technology use. Thus, interventions focused on technology awareness and management can be crucial steps to ensure technology does not harm family relationships.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that, in facing the challenges of the digital era, parents play a crucial role in striking a balance between technology use and quality family time. The findings indicate that while technology offers

daily convenience, its excessive and uncontrolled use can hurt emotional relationships, communication, and children's social development. Through self-discipline, family rules, and engagement in technology-free activities, parents can create an environment that supports positive interactions and emotional well-being within the family. Overall, this balance requires awareness, spousal collaboration, and support from schools and the community. The results of this study are expected to serve as a foundation for developing more effective guidelines and parenting support interventions for healthy technology use in modern families.

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