

Research Article

Preschool Children's Views Regarding Their Parents' Frequency of Internet Use at Home and Its Relevant Effects

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Abstract

This research aims to describe the intensity of parents' Internet use at home and its relevant effects on their children based on their preschool children's views. This study, a qualitative research, has a phenomenological design. The research group was selected using the criterion sampling and is composed of 23 children attending preschool between the ages of five and six. Research data have been collected through semi-structured interviews with the children and demographic forms from the parents. Based on the descriptive analysis technique, all data have undergone data reduction, visualization by conversion into systematic wholes, extrapolation, and lastly interpretation. The following are some significant findings of the current study. Children think their parents spend "too much" time on the Internet at home. According to children's views, parents use the Internet mostly to play games, browse social media, message others, and watch TV series and soccer matches. According to the children, mothers are the family members who use the Internet most often. Children are quite disturbed by their parents' home Internet use; they feel unhappy, lonely, bored and angry when their parents are online. When their parents are found online, a significant majority of the children spend their time using web-based applications on smartphones, tablets, and computers like their parents. Relying on game-based applications, more than half the children believe preschool kids should make use of the Internet.

Keywords

Preschool children • Parents' Internet usage habits • Internet addiction among parents • Effects of parents' home Internet use on children

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To cite this article: Erişti, B., & Avcı, F. (2018). Preschool children's views regarding their parents' frequency of Internet use at home and its relevant effects. *Addicta: The Turkish Journal on Addiction*, 5, 163–184. <http://dx.doi.org/10.15805/addicta.2018.5.2.0049>

Influential enough to transform all aspects of life in the 21st century, the Internet is a technological product used extensively on a global scale by an enormous number of people without regard to any personal, social, economic, communal, or geographical constraints due to its ample number of functional options (Brügger, 2013; Brügger, Ankerson, & Milligan, 2017; Goggin & McLelland, 2017; Haigh, Russell, & Dutton, 2015). The reasons for the Internet's extensive and widespread use can be listed as how it: eases life, offers multimedia options, saves time and money, eliminates environmental limits, supports personal and academic growth, facilitates access to an infinite amount of information and resources of all kinds, socializes the masses, and has various games and applications people can utilize in their leisure time (Kuss, 2013; Papacharissi & Rubin, 2000; Sang-Min Whang, Lee, & Chang, 2004; Spada, 2014; Tone, Zhao, & Yan, 2014).

The Internet's rise in areas, duration, and intensity of use undeniably seems unstoppable (McKay, 2008). Alongside making life easier multi-dimensionally, Internet's misuse for unintended functions and the time frame, frequency, and duration of this misuse have led to several essential issues with profound negative effects, even threatening people's mental, emotional, social, and physical well-being (Hampton, Sessions, & Her, 2011; Morley & Parker, 2017; Pantic, 2014; Pantic et al., 2012).

Facts that have been producing more and more ominous results with respect to the purpose, duration, frequency, and intensity of Internet use-also known as Internet behaviors-are currently labeled as problematic Internet use (Caplan, 2002; Griffiths, 2000), Internet addiction (Blaszczynski, 2006; Pontes, Kuss, & Griffiths, 2015), or pathological Internet use (Davis, 2001; Morahan-Martin & Schumacher, 2000; Widyanto & Griffiths, 2006) within the literature, and the number of studies focusing on relevant discussions and issues has recently increased. Individuals' Internet behaviors serve as the definitive criteria for related identification and assessment processes (Shaw & Black, 2008).

Internet usage habits are not a one-dimensional issue that can only be addressed with individual influences. Rather, this matter concerns all communal institutions and individuals in-depth and through various perspectives (Butcher, 2016; Dutton & Reisdorf, 2017; Haythornthwaite & Kendall, 2010; Kavanaugh, Perez-Quinonez, Schmitz, & Isenhour, 2008). Even the family, the most salient institution throughout the history of mankind, cannot escape from such changes (Hughes & Hans, 2001; Mesch, 2009; Tajalli & Zarnaghash, 2017). Internet usage habits reflected over family structures, domestic relations, and parents' attitudes should be thoroughly investigated in terms of various aspects, especially among families with children (i.e., parents' time allocated to their children, quality of communication, and contribution to their development). Regarding preschool children's development, the results of such an analysis pose vital consequences. The changing nature and increasing intensity of

parents' work routines as a byproduct of globalization and complicated commutes within metropolitan cities cause problems such as diminished quality family time, which can be noted as an unignorable sign of jeopardy for children in particular when combined with the duration and frequency of home Internet use. Conclusions drawn by relevant studies conducted on Internet addiction among adults (Fernandez, Honrubka-Serrano, Gibson, & Griffiths, 2014; McNicol & Thorsteinsson, 2017; Lyvers, Karantonisa, Edwards, & Thorberg, 2016; Yen, Yen, Chen, Chen, & Ko, 2007; Whang, Lee, & Chang, 2003) have fueled these concerns. The time children spend with their families, especially preschool children, bears an almost diagnostic significance with respect to children's development and future well-being. Frequent and non-functional home Internet use not only bodes ill for children's development and the time spared for familial communication, but also exposes children to role models that may trigger Internet addiction and even more worrisome behaviors (Bleakley, Ellithorpe Hung, & Romer, 2016; Eynon & Helsper, 2015; Lam, 2016; Livingstone & Bober, 2004; Park, Kim, & Cho, 2008; Smith, Hewitt, & Skrbiš, 2015).

An important part of the literature regarding pre-school children and Internet usage is on preschool children's Internet usage habits and usage aims (Huang, Lee, & Shim, 2007; Paudel, Jancey, Subedi, & Leavy, 2017; Vandewater et al., 2007), children's Internet usage intensity (McPake, Plowman, & Stephen, 2012; Prensky, 2001; Vandewater & Lee, 2009), the effects of Internet usage on preschool children (Bremer, 2005; Hsin, Li, & Tsai, 2014; Vanderloo, 2014), the relations of Internet use prevalence and addiction at early ages (Couse & Chen, 2010; Plowman & Stephen, 2003), parental controls on children's Internet use (Cankaya & Odabasi, 2009; Livingstone & Helsper, 2008; Woo et al., 2014), the influence of young children's technology use on their learning (Kalmus & Roosalu, 2011; McPake, Plowman, & Stephen, 2012), and Internet's opportunities and risks for children (Hasebrink, Livingstone, Haddonand, & Ólafsson, 2009; Livingstone & Haddon, 2009). Different from the literature, this research aims to determine the frequency of parents' home Internet use and its potential effects on children based on the views of preschool children. In this regard, answers have been sought to the following research questions:

1. How do preschool children perceive the meaning they attribute to the Internet?
2. How do preschool children perceive the time their parents spend online at home and their reasons for using the Internet?
3. How do preschool children perceive their own feelings and what do they do while their parents are online at home?
4. How do preschool children perceive their parents' home Internet use?
5. How do preschool children perceive Internet use by children?

Method

Research Design

This study is a qualitative research using a phenomenological design. Also defined as descriptive research, phenomenological studies examine perceptions and meanings assigned to certain phenomena in accordance with individuals' previous experiences (Leedy & Ormrod, 2001). In this sense, these types of research endeavors are primarily concerned with describing events and phenomena rather than reaching generalizable results (Liamputtong & Ezzy, 2009). Sources providing data for phenomenological research include individuals or groups who experience, interpret, and reflect the focal event or phenomenon. Interviews are utilized to ascertain what individuals have undergone with respect to the phenomena and what meaning they give to their experiences (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2011; Smith & Osbourne, 2008). During these interviews, interviewees unravel certain experiences and internal meanings of which they had previously been unaware (Bogdan & Biglen, 2007; Creswell, 2014; Cropley, 2002).

Research Group

The children in the research group attend kindergarten at a preschool education institution that accommodates a vast number of children from low and mid-level families

Table 1
Parents' Demographic Characteristics

Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage
Age	<i>f</i>	%
25-30	7	16.2
31-35	24	55.8
36-40	6	13.9
41-45	5	11.6
46-50	1	02.5
Total	43	100
Education		
Primary school	3	06.9
Middle school	6	13.9
High school	22	51.2
Associate	8	18.6
Undergraduate	4	09.3
Graduate	0	0.0
Total	43	100
Profession		
Worker	21	48.8
Official	6	13.9
Housewife	15	34.8
Tradesman	1	02.5
Total	43	100

in terms of economic, educational, and social demographic variables. This school offers children a half-day afternoon program. The research group involves a total of 23 children. Including too many participants in a qualitative study obstructs comprehensive data analysis. Generally, data are collected in depth and analyzed meticulously, even though participants are not high in number (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2006). Of the children, 21 are six and 2 are five years old; 12 are girls and 11 are boys, all of whom exhibit normal development patterns with no previous preschool education experience except for some short-term training. Criterion sampling, a purposeful sampling method, has been employed in selecting the participants. The variables serving, as selection criteria are age, normal developmental characteristics, Internet awareness, living with parents, parental Internet use, and voluntary participation secured after parents have granted consent through meetings and one-on-one interviews with the children.

The data displayed in Table 1 indicate that all parents can be considered young; the majority of educational backgrounds are below undergraduate, job diversity mostly clusters around workers and government employees, and a considerable number of mothers are housewives. A closer examination of Table 1 shows data regarding the parents of 23 children to have been collected from 43 parents, explainable through the inability to gather information from 3 children's fathers due to various reasons (e.g., divorce, no contact, death).

Table 2
Parents' Average Duration of Daily Home Internet Usage

Daily Internet usage	f	%
Less than one hour	12	27.9
1-2 hours	19	44.1
3-4 hours	6	14.0
More than 4 hours	6	14.0
Total	43	100

Furthermore, Table 2 points out a major portion of parents' daily home Internet use (72%) to not exceed two hours, while the rest (28%) spend three or more hours online.

Data Collection

Research data were collected during March and April of 2017. Prior to collecting data and selecting the participant children, relevant permits were received from the school administration and parents were invited to the school for a 45-minute briefing on the research aim, research process, data collection procedures, data collection methods, and how the research data would be used. Within this period, the families were informed as to the aim of the research, the voluntary basis for participating in the study, what data would be obtained, what questions the children would be asked within the interview, how the data would be recorded and stored, the setting in which research data would be collected, the interview date and duration, their right to

reject the interview, the ethical principles considered in the data collection process, confidentiality, and the research data's intended use. Thereafter, they were asked whether or not they would volunteer to participate in the research. Identifying the children who would voluntarily participate in the research followed this stage. This process was carried out in two phases. Even though having the students' teachers carry out the data collection process was planned, families demanded designating children voluntarily so the teacher would not influence them. The families informed their children as to the research process and decided whether their children had volunteered to participate in the research. In the second phase, the preschool teacher once again talked to the students whose parents said they had volunteered and asked them whether they had really volunteered for the research. Copies of the written notes and voice recordings obtained in the research were delivered to children's own families. Subsequently, the voluntary parents were determined and the necessary consent forms were signed. Participating parents were provided with demographic information forms to be filled on site. Afterwards, the children were informed about the research process and volunteers were identified. Upon completing the ethical processes, these children were further informed about the research topic and procedures. After drawing up the data collection calendar, parents were requested to take their children to school 45 minutes earlier than usual on the interview days to not interfere with the children's learning experience during the research.

The children's teacher is who collected the data from them using interviews; she is also one of the study's researchers and has taken doctorate-level qualitative and quantitative research courses. As aforementioned, the children attend school as a half-day program starting at 1 pm. The semi-structured interviews conducted with them took place between 12:00 and 12:45 pm during the week in an interview room containing only desks and chairs, free from distractions, face-to-face and one-on-one fashion with only the teacher and child. Parents were not included in the children's interview sessions under the assumption their presence in the room might cloud children's objectivity regarding their parents' frequency of Internet use and effects on the children. Generally, children were re-informed about the research through small talks before the interview sessions and were allowed to terminate the interviews if they wanted; this facilitated preparing children for the research process. The interviews ranged from 18 and 30 minutes. Children's responses were noted on the interview form developed by the researcher, and an audio-recording device was always present in the room to prevent data loss during the interviews. Children were offered an option to either continue or end the session when they did not know what to say for a question or when they were reluctant to answer a question without being forced; the session duration was at their discretion. In this way, controlled, comforting, and motivating interview sessions were completed in the manner of a social conversation.

Data Collection Tools

Based on the relevant literature review, research data were collected through semi-structured interview forms and demographic information sheets were devised in accordance with the research aim, which increased data variety. The semi-structured interview form was developed after scrutinizing national and international theses, articles, books, and research and project reports either directly or indirectly focusing on frequency of Internet use, problematic Internet use, Internet addiction, effects of Internet use over family life, and parental Internet addiction (Armstrong, Philips, & Saling, 2000; Batıgün, Durak, & Hasta, 2010; Batıgün & Kılıç, 2011; Bozkurt, Şahin, & Zoroğlu, 2016; Chau & Hsiao, 2000; Christakis, 2010; Döner, 2011; Griffiths, 1999; Günüç, 2013; Günüç & Kayri, 2010; Greenfield, 1999; Lee & Chae, 2007; Kaess et al., 2016; Ögel, 2012; Reiner et al., 2017; Şenormancı, 2013; Young, 1998); it was finalized after being subjected to expert opinion.

To ensure validity, two language field specialists were asked to evaluate the data collection tool with respect to language use, clarity, and comprehensibility. The appropriateness of the preschool children's interview form was evaluated by three preschool teachers and the school counselor. The interview form was finalized in accordance with the specialists' feedback. The semi-structured interview form consists of 10 questions following a systematic order. Initial questions, mostly introductory in nature, are directed to diagnose children's knowledge of the Internet and are conducive to eliciting their relevant interpretations. The subsequent questions, on the other hand, regard parents' Internet use and its effects. Additional questions were also used during the interview sessions, providing that a discernable indicator had been spotted within the children's answers. Similarly, the demographic information form is composed of two parts: Part one includes questions designed to determine parents' ages, educational backgrounds, and professions whereas part two involves questions prepared for uncovering parents' home Internet usage habits.

Data Analysis

Data distilled from the semi-structured interviews with the children and the demographic information forms filled out by the parents were analyzed and interpreted in accordance with the descriptive analysis technique. The data analysis process was conducted using data reduction, visualization by way of conversion into systematic wholes, extrapolation, and interpretation (Miles, Huberman, & Saldana, 2014; Özdemir, 2010). When reducing the research data, the audio-records and notes kept during the interviews were first transcribed and parsed then sorted in line with the research aim. The steps completed during this process are as follows: semantic analysis of the data collected from the children, segregating what would be used from the research's entire data set from what would be excluded, and classifying

what would be used. Concerning data visualization, the segregated and classified data were combined to represent children's views about the same research question and displayed in tables. Using direct quotes has been another technique applied in this phase to support and strengthen the data set (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2006). In the extrapolation, the significance of the data gathered from the children has been related to the theoretical knowledge and interpreted in line with the research aim. Due to ethical concerns, children's names, genders, and ages have been coded (e.g., P1[M6] is Participant #1, male, and 6 yrs. old; P2[F5] is Participant #2, female, and 5 yrs. old) during data analysis and reporting. Frequencies (*f*) and percentages (%) have been employed for the responses provided on Internet habits and the demographic data presented from the parents' fact sheets.

Efforts exerted to construct research validity include not only receiving field experts' opinions' on both the research questions and other processes such as data analysis, coding, reduction, and visualization, but also on recording all the research data in writing and digitally. Obviously, Miles, Huberman, and Saldana (2014) formula (reliability = agreement ÷ [agreement + disagreement]) was used to appraise the reliability of the current study, which produced values over .82 for every single step. Research reliability was also supported by converting the research data into digital form using frequency and percentage analyses, as well as using students' direct quotes.

Findings

Children's Opinions on the Functions of the Internet

This research question has two sub-dimensions. The first is to identify children's perceptions of the Internet and the second is to determine whether children think the Internet is useful or harmful. All children reported more than one opinion about the Internet's function, a total of 66 opinions gathered in six clusters. Findings obtained regarding the first sub-dimension of the first research question indicate girls and boys think differently about what the Internet is. As for the boy participants, the Internet is primarily a vast field of computer games. Other prominent remarks the boys made about the Internet mostly regard watching videos, cartoons, and soccer matches. The foundation of the girls' Internet perceptions is composed of shopping online and social media. The responses girls provided point to the Internet being a tool whereby they can purchase new clothes and check photos of their friends, others, and selves through social media applications such as Instagram and Facebook. Of course, the girls think the Internet means having fun, watching films and videos, and playing games, too.

Table 3
Children's Opinions about the Functions of the Internet

What is the Internet?	<i>f</i>	Gender
Playing computer games	19	11 M; 8 F
Watching videos	13	8 M; 5 F
Social media	12	4 M; 8 F
Watching cartoons	11	6 M; 5 F
Online shopping	7	1 M; 6 F
Watching soccer matches	4	4 M; 0 F

M: Male; **F:** Female

Some of the views children stated about what the Internet is involve the following: “The Internet is where there are games.” (P9[F6]), “It helps us play games” (P18[M6]), “There are Superman games on the Internet. When I close my eyes and think about the Internet, games come to my mind immediately” (P19[M5]), “My mom puts our photos on Facebook, we look at them and ‘like’ them” (P1[F6]), “My dad and mom have Facebook accounts. Dad looks at photos of his friends while watching TV” (P6[F6]), “Sometimes, we can’t go downtown. It’s too far. Shopping online is easier, and so my mom does this” (P23[F6]), “I play computer games on my tablet every day. Mom doesn’t get mad that I play computer games because she cleans the house while I’m playing” (P15[M6]), “My mom downloaded games on her phone for me. I used to play, but all games got erased when mom’s phone broke down. There are games on my dad’s phone, too. I’m playing on it now. The game is not bad. There are just enemies” (P13[M6]), “My mom plays games on the phone, I play that game, too. But mom deleted the game and I got mad at her” (P4[M6]), and “My mom plays games on the computer, my father too. Dad plays games with guns” (P8[F5]).

Findings concerning the second dimension designed to determine whether children think the Internet is useful or harmful show more than half the participants (12) to believe the Internet is more harmful than useful. Additional questions directed at children during the interviews show that radiation, poor eyesight, and expensive Internet bills were among children’s reasons for believing the Internet to be unhealthy. Families must be the source of this perception. When children who assumed the Internet to be harmful were further encouraged to state how they had learned such information, parents appeared as the source (P2, P7, P5, P6, P8). On the other hand, 11 children expressed finding the Internet healthy or useful. Opportunities to play games and watch films and videos comprise the framework of this thought. Only two children referred to the Internet as something that contains knowledge helpful for their homework assignments when providing reasons as to why they believe the Internet to be useful.

Table 4
Children's Opinions on Whether the Internet is Useful or Harmful

Is the Internet...	<i>f</i>	Gender
Harmful?	12	4 M; 8 F
Useful?	11	7 M; 4 F

M: Male; **F:** Female

Children's remarks concerning the Internet being healthy or harmful are as follows: "The Internet is not useful. We'll develop poor eyes if we stare at it for a long time" (P1[F6]), "The Internet is not healthy. It damages our eyes if we use it too much. It might harm our brains, and damages us more if we watch bad videos" (P7[F6]), "It is useful because it offers us chances to play games and watch videos, otherwise we wouldn't play games" (P8[F5]), "It is helpful because we can play games and watch cartoons" (P2[M6]), "It is beneficial. I'd be sorry without it. I wouldn't be able to download games or watch police videos" (P5[M6]), and "It is beneficial because it gives us access to anything. It gives us information. We can find whatever we want" (P18[M6]).

Preschool Children's Views on Their Parents' Home Time Spent Online and Why They Use the Internet

More than half the children (13) consider the time their parents spend online at home "too much" and find it boring. Eight of the interviewees preferred the word "some" when judging the time their parents are online, and two noted that their parents either did not go online much or only for a short time some days.

Table 5
Children's Opinions about Their Parents' Time Spent on the Internet at Home

How much time do they spend on the Internet?	<i>f</i>	Gender
Too much	13	8 M; 5 F
Some	8	4 M; 4 F
Little	2	0 M; 2 F

M: Male; **F:** Female

Selected relevant quotes from the interviews are as follows: "Neither mom nor dad put their phones down at home. I feel unhappy. I often see mom watching funny videos" (P8[F5]), "I constantly see mom using the Internet and, she watches series on the phone, too" (P2[M6]), and "Both my mom and dad spend too much time on the Internet. I feel sad" (P23[F6]).

Of the participating children, 14 indicated their moms used the Internet more often at home. Meanwhile, the rest of the research group (9 children) indicated their fathers had more intensive home Internet use. When answering this question, children provided their observations with respect to the reasons for their parents' Internet use in order to give examples that support their ideas.

Table 6
Children's Opinions about Who Uses the Internet Most at Home

Who uses the Internet the most?	<i>f</i>	Gender
Mother	14	9 M; 5 F
Father	9	2 M; 7 F

M: Male; **F:** Female

The relevant participant quotes are as follows: “Mom gets online more often at home; I get angry at her for she never puts her phone down in the evenings. Then she gets mad back at me; we experience the same thing every day” (P8[F5]), “My mother uses the Internet too much. She looks at photos on Facebook and texts people” (P5[M6]), “My dad checks Instagram and Facebook when mom does the cleaning, and he listens to music” (P7[F6]), “Dad watches soccer on the net in the evenings. He plays Okey and other games. I let him watch for a while, but he watches too much” (P4M6), and “My mom has a Facebook account. She looks at our class’s photos and her friends online” (P19[F5]).

All children (23) reported more than one opinion about the reasons their parents’ use the Internet, reporting a total of 44 opinions on the subject gathered in 6 clusters. Firstly, children expressed their parents get online to share and follow shared contents on social media such as Instagram, Facebook, and Snapchat and to message. Secondly, the children complained that their parents play online games and spend too much time on these games. Likewise, some children noted their parents, especially mothers, to use the Internet to watch TV series, shop online, and message friends. Lastly, three children stated the father to constantly be online watching soccer.

Table 7
Children's Opinions about the Internet Usage Purposes of Their Parents

For what purpose do your parents use the Internet?	<i>f</i>	Gender
Social media	13	7 M; 6 F
Playing computer games	11	7 M; 4 F
Messaging	9	3 M; 6 F
Shopping online	7	2 M; 5 F
Watching movie	5	1 M; 4 F
Watching football match	3	3 M; 0 F

M: Male; **F:** Female

Quotes from the interviews conducted with the participants on this are as follow: “Mom takes her laptop, gets online, and watches her favorite TV series. My dad has his Facebook account and checks it. He sometimes watches soccer online, too” (P10[M6]), “My father uses Instagram and Facebook. He likes photos there, and sometimes listens to music. Meanwhile, mom does housework” (P7[F6]), “My mom plays online games, and my dad plays Okey online and watches videos sometimes” (P11[M6]), “Mom uses WhatsApp to text people and uses the net for her work” (P20[F6]), “My mother uses her phone very often because it has games” (P11[M6]), “There are games on my mom’s

phone. My dad watches TV when my mom plays games” (P21[M6]), and “My dad uses his phone for work, but my mom plays games” (P16[F6]).

Children’s Opinions on How They Feel When Their Parents are Online at Home

All the children reported more than one opinion about how they feeling while their parents are online at home, reporting 62 opinions gathered in five clusters. Children provided answers as bored, unhappy, lonely, and frustrated to this question. Of all the children, 19 stated feeling lonely due to being bored when their parents were online. On the other hand, four noted not having any negative feelings while their parents were using the Internet. According to the children, the reason why they had no bad feelings was because they themselves were also engaged in similar activities.

Table 8

Children’s Opinions as to How They Feel while Their Parents Use the Internet

How do you feel?	<i>f</i>	Gender
Boredom	19	8 M; 11 F
Unhappiness	18	7 M; 11 F
Loneliness	12	4 M; 8 F
Frustration	9	6 M; 3 F
Neutral	4	3 M; 1 F

M: Male; F: Female

The participants’ relevant quotes are as follows: “At that time, I play on my tablet and watch cartoons, too” and “I go to my room and play with my toys. When I’m done with my toys, I go to sleep” (P2[M6]), “I get angry at mom for she never puts her phone down, then she gets mad back at me; we experience this same thing every day” (P8[F5]), ‘I get bored to death when my parents are online. I go to them and tumble down and over, yet they don’t look at me. I want them to look at me” (P4[M6]), “My mom logs onto Facebook in the evenings and shares photos. My dad does the same thing and he ‘likes’ the photos. I get pretty lonely” (P9[F6]), and “Mothers who constantly surf the net cannot take care of their children” (P1[F6]).

On the subject of how they pass time while their parents are on the Internet, 23 children reported 35 opinions. Students’ opinions mostly stated either going online and playing games or watching TV, while the others noted going to their rooms and playing with their toys while their parents were on the Internet. Likewise, one girl reported going to her room to play with books, and another reported drawing as she is fond of it.

Table 9

Children's Opinions as to How They Spend Time while Their Parents Are on the Internet

What do you do when your parents spend time on the Internet?	<i>f</i>	Gender
Playing computer games	11	9 M; 2 F
Watching TV	11	6 M; 5 F
Playing with toys	11	5 M; 6 F
Reading child books	1	0 M; 1 F
Painting	1	0 M; 1 F

M: Male; F: Female

Several related sentences participants verbalized include: “I play computer games. If I get bored, I go to mom and watch whatever she is watching” (P11[M6]), “They ignore me, so I play with my toys in my room” (P15[M6]), “I spend time drawing when they’re online because I like drawing too much” (P18[M6]), and “I feel completely bored when mom goes online and looks at things on the net; then I grab my tablet and play games” (P3[M6]).

Children's Opinions about Parents' Home Internet Use

The findings of this study have revealed children to be extremely disturbed by their parents' home Internet use. Twelve of the participating children underlined not wanting their parents to use the Internet at home. Six think their parents' should get online quickly just to check messages and work. Five, however, believe their parents have things to do online and should be free to do so.

Table 10

Children's Opinions about Parents' Home Internet Use

Should parents use the Internet at home?	<i>f</i>	Gender
No	12	6 M; 6 F
Sometimes	6	3 M; 3 F
Yes	5	2 M; 3 F

M: Male; F: Female

Some children said the following concerning this research question: “Parents shouldn't use the Internet at home” (P5[M6]) and “They can use it sometimes to check their messages. They can read and reply, but then they should get offline as they won't play with me otherwise. Actually, we rarely play together” (P10[M6]).

Children's Opinions about Children Using the Internet

Similarly, research findings indicate 10 of the participating children to think children should not use the Internet. When questioned about their reasons, they mostly noted that using the Internet for a long time can be unhealthy for them and their parents might get angry at them. On the contrary, 11 children (8 boys and 3 girls) believe children should use the Internet because there are good games to play. Lastly, two children think quick uses of the Internet cause no harm.

Table 11
Children's Opinions about Children Using the Internet

Should the kids use the Internet?	<i>f</i>	Gender
Yes	11	8 M; 3 F
No	10	2 M; 8 F
Little	2	1 M; 1 F

M: Male; F: Female

Relevant quotes are as follows: "I play with my tablet all the time. I have one. My mom does the cleaning when I play tablet games" (P15[M6]), "I don't have to ask for permission to grab my tablet and download any game I like. Children should be free to use the net" (P2[M6]), "Children should not be online very often. It should be less because their eyes might get hurt and hands may get tired. My mother warns me when I play online games more than she approves. Actually, I have a headache and my eyes hurt when I play for a long time" (P3[M6]), "I think the Internet is harmless. My mom lets me go online. I pick up her phone and go online. Children should use the Internet" (P21[F6]), "Children should not use the Internet as it may harm their eyes. Sometimes there are some bad pictures and videos on the net. I do not go online by myself; my sister accompanies me" (P18[M6]), and "I can only go online when my mom says it is okay. Sometimes I tell my mom that I'll check the pictures and get her phone. Instead, I go online and watch whatever I like" (P8[F5]).

Conclusion and Discussion

Research findings concerning the first question developed to uncover what meanings children assign to the Internet have yielded that children mostly regard the Internet as a platform to play games, watch videos and cartoons, check social media, and shop. Interestingly, the meanings vary in terms of gender. One can conclude this discrepancy to stem from the differences among parents' aims for going online as they are the role models at home. Girls seem to mostly adopt their mothers' ways and boys to imitate their fathers in terms of how they use the Internet. As mentioned in the previous section, research data obviously show that boys play games, check social media, and shop with their fathers, whereas girls accompany their mothers during these same activities. This is consistent with our conclusion. Additionally, another body of data also exists that indicates playing games to be more common among male children. This also supports our conclusion as well as relevant data produced by other research studies (Chiu, Lee, & Huang, 2004; Hartmann & Klimmt, 2006; Horzum, Ayas, & Çakır Balta, 2008).

More than half the children believe the Internet to be harmful. When further encouraged to talk about their reasons, they mostly underlined radiation, expensive Internet bills, and its potential to harm the eyes. Deducing that families are again the source of such beliefs would not be wrong. When asking children who think

the Internet is harmful about how they had learned such information, they indicated their parents as the source. Playing games and watching cartoons and videos appears as the foundation for children who believe the Internet can be a useful tool. Results and conclusions from other studies conducted on children's Internet use, Internet addiction, and parents' roles also support these findings (Ayas & Horzum, 2013; Büyükşahin, Çevik, & Çelikkaleli, 2010; Çavuş & Ayhan, 2014; Jeong & Kim, 2011; Park, Kim, & Cho, 2008; Valcke, Bonte, De Wever, & Rots, 2010; Young, 2009).

A majority of participants feel the time their parents spend online to be "too much," and they find this disturbing, frustrating, and boring (Batgün & Hasta, 2010). According to the children, mothers are the ones who make use of the Internet most often at home. However, nine children noted the father as the one who gets online more. Playing games, checking social media, messaging, and watching TV series and soccer matches are the activities parents online, based on children's observations. Considering the fact that most families have either middle or low socio-economic levels, this finding is compatible with others stating online game addiction among adults to be inversely proportionate with their social and educational background (Çavuş, Ayhan, & Tuncer, 2016). On the other hand, this finding distilled from children's evaluations is also consistent with the findings of other research conducted on Internet addiction and Internet habits among adults (Bargh & McKenna, 2004; Cao & Su, 2007; Caplan, 2002; Günüç, 2013; Subrahmanyam & Lin, 2007). The facts that many participants' mothers are housewives and that children spend most of their time with their mothers may be a factor as to why mothers have been determined as the family member who uses the Internet most often. Results from a relevant study (Büyükşahin, Çevik, & Çelikkaleli, 2010) indicate a connection between the Internet addiction scores of teenagers with their mothers' educational levels, which can be interpreted as a vital sign of danger when coupled with our finding that mothers get online more than any other family member.

Boredom, unhappiness, loneliness, and frustration are the feelings children described to answer how they feel while their parents are online. Only a few participants (four children) reported not having any negative feelings during such times. The feelings they expressed are compatible with the findings from other research studies focused on insufficient time being spared for children's development and education (Bayraktutan, 2005; Kırık, 2014). As for the participants who are undisturbed by this situation, the main reason is the fact that they are also doing similar activities. The views of the children reported not having any negative feelings when their parents are online reveal that they play computer games by themselves or watch online TV series together with their parents. On the other hand, the views of the children expressed having negative feelings while their parents are online show that they play with their toys, or spend time on their own when their parents are online. These findings are supported by the relevant literature (Ayas & Horzum, 2013; Rehbein & Baier, 2013; Saville, Gisbert, Kopp, & Telesco, 2010).

The participating children noted being significantly disturbed by their parents' home Internet use. Accordingly, more than half (12 children) do not want their parents using the Internet at home. According to a few participants (6), parents can make use of the Internet to check their messages and finish work. Meanwhile, as far as five participants are concerned, parents should be free to go online anytime they want.

Ten of the 23 children interviewed within the scope of this research believe children should not use the Internet. Their reasons for this are thinking that spending long hours online can be hazardous for their health and parents can get angry at them. A similar number of participants (11) noted children should be allowed to use the Internet. The main reason for this thought seems to be the presence of good quality games online, as was able to be concluded from the relevant quotes. That the children underlined only physical and economic drawbacks about frequent Internet use can be interpreted as a sign showing these children to be uninformed about the mental, emotional, psychological, and educational aspects of overusing the Internet. In addition, the quotes indicate that their parents either get mad at or warn them instead of adopting a more constructive, informative, and directive attitude when the children spend too much time on the Internet. Furthermore, the lack of relevant studies conducted on this topic over this type of sample accentuates this study's significance and value. However, the number of demographic variables within this research can be noted as a limitation. This research contributes to the field as it unveils that children in preschool between the ages of 5 and 6 are aware of Internet use and their parents' home Internet usage habits and consider their parents' goals in using the Internet to be a problem; this is a serious danger because children will automatically copy parents' behaviors (Çubukcu & Bayzan, 2013; Kuzu, 2011; Ögel, 2012; Shen, Liu, & Wang, 2013; Valcke, Bonte, De Wever, & Rots, 2010). This danger is not confined to just children, though. Compatible with other research findings showing the existence of a relation of socio-demographic variables with adults' Internet usage habits and levels of addiction (Captan, 2010; Huang, 2010; Zhou & Li, 2009), the findings of the current study signal a very important and multi-dimensional danger not only for children but also for parents.

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