

# Digital Media Engagement Among Preschool Children During the COVID-19 Pandemic: Parental Perspective

## COVID-19 Pandemisi Sırasında Okul Öncesi Dönemi Çocuklarının Dijital Medya Katılımı: Ebeveyn Perspektifi

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### ABSTRACT

This study aims to investigate children's usage among digital media during distance education because of the COVID-19 pandemic. The case study approach was used and the convenience sampling method is used. 270 parents who have children between 0-6 years old and did not send their children to preschools or day-care centers after the Covid-19 Pandemic. Results show that children mostly access televisions easily and they generally devote two hours a day to digital media. Parents said that they control their children for a while during their using digital media. However, some children could not reach some tools about distance education recommended by the Ministry of Education because of lack of material and technical problems. Parents say that both they and their children need more support from their teachers like more educational activities, written resources, and some guidance for handling the current situation. To conclude, it was determined that parents need information about using digital media correctly and more support for distance education. In addition, all children should have the same opportunities to join education activities so that teachers, school administrators, and policy-makers should increase their supports to parents.

**Keywords:** Preschoolers, Digital Media, Distance Education, Online Learning, COVID-19 Pandemic.

### ÖZ

Bu çalışma, COVID-19 salgını sırasında uzaktan eğitime maruz kalan çocukların dijital medya kullanımını araştırmayı amaçlamaktadır. Araştırmada durum çalışması yaklaşımı kullanılmış ve kolayda örnekleme yönteminden yararlanılmıştır. 0-6 yaş arasında çocuğu olan ve Covid-19 Pandemisi sonrasında çocuklarını anaokullarına veya kreşlere göndermeyen 270 ebeveyn araştırmaya katılmıştır. Sonuçlar, çocukların çoğunlukla televizyona kolayca eriştiklerini ve genellikle günde iki saatlerini dijital medyaya ayırdıklarını göstermektedir. Ebeveynler, çocuklarını dijital medya kullanımları sırasında bir süre kontrol ettiklerini söylemiştir. Ancak bazı çocuklar Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı tarafından önerilen uzaktan eğitimle ilgili bazı araçlara maddi ve teknik nedenlere bağlı olarak ulaşamamıştır. Ebeveynler, hem kendilerinin hem de çocuklarının öğretmenlerinden daha fazla eğitim faaliyeti, yazılı kaynaklar ve mevcut durumla başa çıkmak için rehberlik gibi daha fazla desteğe ihtiyaç duyduklarını belirtmektedir. Sonuç olarak, ebeveynlerin dijital medyayı doğru kullanma konusunda bilgiye ve uzaktan eğitim için daha fazla desteğe ihtiyaç duydukları tespit edilmiştir. Ayrıca, tüm çocukların eğitim faaliyetlerine katılmak için aynı fırsatlara sahip olması gerektiği, bu nedenle öğretmenlerin, okul yöneticilerinin ve politika belirleyicilerin ebeveynlere yönelik desteklerini artırmaları gerektiği sonucuna varılmıştır.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Okul Öncesi Çocuklar, Dijital Medya, Uzaktan Eğitim, Çevrimiçi Eğitim, COVID-19 Pandemi.

## Introduction

UNESCO (2020a) states that 155 million preschool level children's education has suffered from the disruption to the education system in the United Nations. UNICEF (2020) explains the number of preschool children who missed the education in their critical years because of closed schools as 40 million worldwide. As development is so rapid in the early years, children's development can be affected by big changes negatively (Ghosh et al., 2020). The living conditions were rapidly changed after the COVID-19 and these changes caused some problems like food shortages, suspended work, mandatory lockdown, being distant from education, and not able to cover the costs (Vessey & Betz, 2020).

Studies show that children's dietary patterns changed and ate more high-calorie food as a way of facing anxiety and boredom (Ammar et al, 2020), and also their physical activities declined (Cartanyà-Hueso et al, 2021). Besides, children's sleeping patterns became irregular, they had longer screen time, made fewer physical activities in addition to increased stress, and less social interaction after the pandemic released (Wang et al., 2020). However, UNESCO (2020b) explained that "interrupted learning" is the top adverse consequence of COVID-19 school closures.

## Online Education

Online education improves online learning in which learning is experienced through the internet in a synchronous or asynchronous environment (Singh & Thurman, 2019). With the onset of a pandemic, most countries transferred to online education from face-to-face education. Before COVID-19, the use of screen devices by children had tripled from 2013 to 2017, and children under eight use screens for almost 3 hours per day (Common Sense Media, 2017). Studies show that children spent more time on screens during the pandemic. Increased screen time causes many problems like obesity, myopia, poor oral hygiene, health, and social or emotional problems (McDool et al. 2020).

Researchers have some suspicions about online learning. Accordingly, it was emphasized that children's readiness for school both emotionally and socially could not support by online learning (Zalaznick, 2019). Some researchers also emphasized that online learning creates some problems like social isolation, non-interactivity, lack of participation, delayed or insubstantial amount of feedback, addiction to videos and physical health issues (Khurana, 2016; Radesky, 2016). There are also some consequences of online learning for learning processes. Besides, the teaching and learning process via online learning had not run very well because of less preparation made by teachers, students, and parents (Atmojo and Nugroho, 2020). Hartatik and Bia'yuni (2020) investigated that teachers spend more time reaching all students in their classrooms. Also, some students could not reach online education due to a lack of devices and could not print out worksheets. In addition, not having digital advice and having limited internet connection caused children not able to participate in the learning process. Fison (2020) found that parents believe distance education is less effective than formal learning because teachers have more responsibilities for both children and parents to motivate them in distance learning. Pavlenko and Pavlenko (2020) also explained that most parents were not interested in remote work with children, did not seek advice from teachers, and did not want distance learning.

There are also positive outcomes of online learning. In addition, collaboration and interdependence between participants become easier with its' authentic learning ecology (Aldhafeeri & Khan, 2016). To promote children's physical and psychological well-being during a pandemic, parents should be careful about balanced and effective approaches toward screen use (King et al., 2020). With proper parenting approaches, the interaction between parents and children can improve by engaging in family activities more during mass quarantine at home (Wang et al., 2020).

### **The effects of COVID-19 Pandemic in Preschoolers**

The COVID-19 pandemic has significantly influenced the daily lives and developmental processes of preschool children. These effects include increased screen time, reduced physical activity, changes in nutrition and sleep patterns, and disruptions in cognitive and emotional development (Clarke et al., 2021; Susilowati et al., 2021; Brito et al., 2023).

During the pandemic, screen time among preschool children increased significantly. Studies indicate that digital media devices such as mobile phones (91.6%), television (86.1%), and computers (61%) were widely used (Susilowati et al., 2021). Although parents acknowledged the importance of limiting screen time, they struggled to prevent their children from using digital devices, particularly due to remote learning. Furthermore, a positive correlation between screen time and children's levels of anger and frustration has been reported (Fitzpatrick et al., 2023).

Increased screen time has also been linked to symptoms of inattention (Almeida et al., 2023). Additionally, interactive screen use (e.g., tablets) has been associated with higher levels of anxiety and withdrawal in children, whereas non-interactive screen use (e.g., watching television) has shown lower levels of anxiety and withdrawal (Ouyang et al., 2024).

Research highlights the need for greater awareness regarding screen time's impact on early childhood development. The increased use of digital devices has altered children's developmental environments, emphasizing the importance of structured digital engagement by educators and caregivers (Brito et al., 2023).

### **Children's Screen Time on COVID-19 Pandemic in Turkey**

In Turkey, schools and early childhood care centers were closed after the first COVID-19 case. Educational activities were done via only distance learning until June 2020 via online educational

tools. At that time, distance learning was done with both the online education platform which was established by Ministry of National Education called Educational Informatics Network [EBA] and the TV channel of this network. In EBA, some lessons and activities are provided for children at each level. However, this network could not include any content about early childhood education until October 2020. Therefore, most education activities of young children were done with other online platforms and teachers' and parents' efforts until preschools and early childhood care centers were opened in February. After that time, both face-to-face and distance learning were conducted depending on the current situation of regions.

The data of Turkish Statistical Institute [TSI] (2021) shows that children's usage of the internet increased during the COVID-19 pandemic. About 83% of children between 6 and 15 years old use the internet, while this percentage was %51 on 2013. Most of these children use the internet almost every day, and the reason for usage is mostly for homework or learning (TSI, 2021). Studies conducted in Turkey indicate that preschool children experienced increased screen time during the pandemic, posing risks to cognitive development, attention span, and digital dependency. A study in Turkey found that parents used digital screens as a form of childcare and education during the pandemic (Yildiz & Yalcin, 2023). Children cared for primarily by their mothers were at a higher risk of excessive screen exposure, which has been attributed to a lack of parental awareness regarding quality engagement (Caylan et al., 2021). Excessive screen time has been shown to negatively impact preschool children's cognitive process skills. Children with prolonged screen exposure were less engaged in educational activities, displayed shorter attention spans, and had difficulty focusing (Sapsaglam et al., 2023).

The pandemic also contributed to a rise in digital gaming addiction among preschool children. A study found that 56.5% of children engaged in digital play for more than an hour daily, with boys being more prone to gaming addiction. A negative

mother-child relationship was significantly associated with higher tendencies of digital gaming addiction (Emiroglu Ilvan & Ceylan, 2023).

The sustainability of preschool education in Turkey faced challenges during the pandemic. Teachers encountered difficulties reaching students and dealing with internet connectivity issues. Parents reported struggles such as incomplete assignments, lack of attention, and insufficient learning materials (Yildirim, 2021).

The COVID-19 pandemic has significantly impacted the developmental trajectories of preschool children worldwide, including in Turkey. Increased screen time reduced physical activity, and disruptions in nutrition and sleep patterns have had adverse effects on children's social and cognitive development. Studies show that Turkish children turned to digital games more often, and their parents did not take much responsibility (Günen, 2021; Yiğit & Mercan-Uzun, 2023). In addition, Yanık-Özgen (2022) found that children's participation level to distance education is low. Preschool teachers thought that distance education had positive aspects such as providing opportunities for different activities and increasing technology knowledge, as well as negative aspects such as creating focusing problems and not contributing to motor skills (Aktan-Acar et al., 2021). While these studies show that children's usage of dijital game or participation level, there is no study that examines the effects of children's digital media usage time, parents' control methods and online education materials on children together during the pandemic period. Therefore, this study aims to investigate children's behaviors among screen time during online learning due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The study tried to answer these questions:

1. Which digital media tools are used by young children?
2. How much do young children use digital media tools?

3. How do parents control children's behaviors among digital media?

4. How do online education tools have an impact on children's education?

5. What are children's needs for online learning?

## Methods

### Research design

The case study approach was used in this study. The case study approach aims to show the results for a particular situation and in-depth investigation of one or more situations is its most prominent feature.

A case study is a detailed study of a setting, a topic, or a specific event. Holistic approach is used to investigate the factors related to a situation and the focus is on how those factors affect the situation in question (Merriam, 2009). The case study pattern used in this study is a nested single-subject design.

### Participants and research context

The sample determined parents who did not send their children to preschool by the time of October 2020 by using the convenience sampling method. Totally, 270 parents participated in the study. Their permissions were asked with Informed Consent Form, which gives the detailed information of the study and states that it was a voluntary work, before filling the questionnaire.

As seen in Table 1, all the participants were women. Participants are predominantly between 20 and 24 (N = 8). Most participants have 1–5 years of professional experience (N = 9). In addition, an average of 15 children are in the participants' classrooms. Three teachers have 16 children in their classroom, five have 15 children, seven have 17 children, and two have 13 children. The participating children comprised 132 girls and 123 boys aged between 4 and 6 years. The majority of children (45.10%) are in the 5-year-old group. Two hundred nine participating children attend a half-

**Table 1**

Demographic information about parents

<i>Characteristic</i>	<i>Groups</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>
Age	20-30	64	23,4
	31-35	106	39,0
	36-40	79	28,8
	40+	24	8,8
	Total	273	100
Region	Central Anatolia	99	36,7
	West of Turkey	83	30,2
	South of Turkey	36	13,1
	East of Turkey	40	14,5
	North of Turkey	15	5,5
	Total	273	100
Educational Degree	Undergraduate	140	51,6
	Graduate	43	16,4
	Associate	38	13,8
	High School	34	12,4
	Middle School	8	2,9
	Elementary School	8	2,9
Monthly Income	Total	273	100
	8001 TL and above	90	33,5
	4001-6000 TL	60	21,8
	6001-8000 TL	51	18,5
	2301-4000 TL	45	16,4
	0-2300 TL	27	9,8
Current employment status	Total	273	100
	not working	115	42,5
	going to work every day	56	20,4
	working from home every day	47	17,1
	working for two or three days a week	24	8,7
	rotational work (on alternate days)	12	4,4
	quitting the job after the pandemic	10	3,6
	part-time (2-4 hours in a day)	9	3,3
	Total	273	100
	2	131	48,0
Number of Children	1	114	41,8
	3+	29	10,3
	Total	273	100

day preschool, and 46 follow full-time preschool. None of the children received special education or mainstreaming. All the children came from families where their parents lived together.

**Table 2**

Demographic information about children

<i>Characteristic</i>	<i>Groups</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>
Age	0-36 months	39	14
	37-48 months	66	24
	49-60 months	94	35
	61-78 months	74	27
	Total	273	100
Have not of special needs	No	264	97
	Yes	9	3
	Total	273	100
The school type	Public	141	52
	Private	132	48
	Total	273	100

Parents' demographic information was given in Table 1. Mostly, mothers were engaged to this study (%94,9) and also most of them were between 31-35 years old (39%). In addition, most of them were from the central (%36,7) and followed by west (%30,2) regions of Turkey. The majority of the participants (%81,8) have high education levels (College, Postgraduate, Associate). Most of families(%66,5) has a poverty level income (7.973 TL). 42.5% of parents do not work and 20.4% go to work every day. The percentage of children aged 2 is 48 percent of participants.

In Table 2, information about children, which are obtained from parents, is shown. 35% of the children's age are 49-60 months old. Mostly, they have no special needs (%97). The special needs of children parents stated are visual impairment by one, speech retardation by one, developmental delay by one, and diabetes by one. One parent said the special need of her child had not been diagnosed yet. Three parents noted that their children were allergic. Most children are enrolled in public schools (%52).

## Ethical Issues

To collect all data, all required permissions were firstly obtained from the Scientific Research, Publication, and Ethics Committee of Hacettepe University, as per the decision numbered 76942594-600/00001099976, dated 29/05/2020. It is announced to all parents that participation in the research was voluntary.

## Data Collection Tools

Researchers formed a questionnaire to find answers to research questions, which was titled "Questionnaire for Parents about Their Children's Media Usage". The questionnaire had four parts: Informed Consent Form, Form for Demographic Information of Parents, Form for Demographic Information of Children, and Form for Children's Media Usage Skills. Firstly, there are six questions for parents, three questions for children, and eight questions for children's media usage. After getting the opinions of five experts, some necessary corrections were done. Three questions were eliminated in Form for Children's Media Usage and some word corrections were done.

A pilot study was applied with 10 parents. These parents were not who were engaged to main the study. They suggested some word corrections and these corrections were represented to the forms. Forms for parents and children remain the same, while the form for media usage is qualified as five questions.

## Data Analysis

Three researchers collected the data for all research questions separately and created codes and subcodes by conducting content analysis.

After that, they compared their codes and matching and most appropriate codes were selected for related sections. Then, frequency analysis was conducted for all the codes.

## Reliability of the study

The reliability coefficient between Encoder I and II was found as .81, while it was found .84 for Encoder II ve III and .78 for Encoder I and III. It was concluded that the reliability coefficients were high (Miles and Huberman, 1994).

## Findings

### Media tools young children use

Firstly, the media tools used by young children are examined through parents' answers. Table 3 also displays accessible media tools by children.

Accordingly, most children (132 children from public school and 116 children from private school) have access to television. Smartphones are also another media tool children access mostly (184). Tablets (110) and computers (81) are the other accessible media tools. One parent stated that her children did not access any media tools. In addition, 145 parents noted that their children

**Table 3**  
Accessible media tools

Tool	n (accumulated)			% (accumulated)		
	Public	Private	Total	Public	Private	Total
Television	132	116	248	48,7	42,8	91,5
Smartphone	101	83	184	37,2	30,6	67,8
Tablet	59	51	110	21,7	18,8	40,5
Computer/Laptop	52	29	81	19,1	19,7	38,8
Access to internet	83	62	145	30,6	22,8	53,4

could reach to media tools.

### Children's usage time of digital media

Most parents stated that their children's usage of digital media was mostly 1-2 hours in a day (41%) (Table 4). 28% of them also noted that their children spent 2-4 hours with digital media. The percentage of children who use digital media for less than 1 hour is %17. Those who use 4-6 hours are 10%. 3% of children use media for more than 6 hours.

### Parents' controls on children's usage of digital media

Table 5 shows the ways parents preferred to

control their children while using digital media.

Accordingly, the most preferred controlling method is to control what their children do with media tools occasionally (70%). The other methods are to stand by kids (13,5 %), to use security modes for children (12 %). Four parents allow children to watch or use only chosen programs or channels by them while two parents prefer to watch together with their children. Also, four parents did not control their children during their usage of digital media, as they stated.

### Online educational tools children could access

Table 6 represents the information about parents'

**Table 4**

Time to use digital media

Hour	n			%		
	Public	Private	Total	Public	Private	Total
1-2 hours	58	54	112	21,4	19,9	41,3
2-4 hours	41	36	77	15,1	13,2	28,3
Less than 1 hour	23	24	48	8,4	8,7	17,1
4-6 hours	14	13	27	5,2	4,8	10
More than 6 hours	5	4	9	1,8	1,5	3,3

**Table 5**

Controlling during using digital media

Theme	n			%		
	Public	Private	Total	Public	Private	Total
Controlling once in a while	103	90	193	37,7	32,9	70,6
Stand by children	14	23	37	5,1	8,4	13,5
Using security modes for children	20	13	33	7,3	4,8	12,1
Not controlling	3	1	4	1,1	0,4	1,5
Allowing to watch/use only chosen programs/channels	3	1	4	1,1	0,4	1,5
Watching together	1	1	2	0,4	0,4	0,8



and children's access to online education tools. Most parents (%53) stated that they could access online education tools like EBA TV, video and audio calls. Most parents (%34) whose children could access online education tools stated that the impacts of these tools on children's education are at medium-level. Besides, 26% of them also said that the impact level is inadequate and 21% of them found the impact of these tools so inadequate.

### Children's online educational needs

Table 7 shows the children's online educational needs according to parents. The most stated needs

are online materials to carry out educational activities (134) and offering more rich content via online education (128). Written resources to support educational activities (120) and to guide educational activities (107) are the other most stated online educational needs of children. Parents also stated that they need some recommendation about how to conduct the education of activities to do with children (97), and how to execute the educational activities of the child on the online platform (77); to spare more time for their children by their teachers (76), easier access to online education (70), affordable access to online education (57) and more activities supplied by teachers (49).

**Table 6**  
Access to online education tools

Theme		n			%		
		Public	Private	Total	Public	Private	Total
Having access to online education tools (EBA TV, video/audio calls)	Yes	84	60	144	30,7	22	52,7
	No	57	72	129	20,9	26,4	47,3
Impacts of online education tools on children's education according to the parents	so inadequate	25	31	56	9,1	11,4	20,5
	inadequate	30	40	70	11	14,7	25,7
	medium-level	51	41	92	18,7	15	33,7
	sufficient	22	14	36	8	5,1	13,1
	so sufficient	13	6	19	4,8	2,2	7

**Table 7**  
Children's online educational needs

Theme	n (accumulated)			% (accumulated)		
	Public	Private	Total	Public	Private	Total
Online materials to carry out educational activities	67	67	134	24,5	24,5	49
Offering rich content via online education	72	56	128	26,4	20,5	46,9
Written resources to support educational activities	61	59	120	22,3	21,6	43,9
Written resources to guide educational activities	58	49	107	21,2	17,9	39,1
Teachers' suggestions to the families about the educational activities	47	50	97	17,2	18,3	35,5
Sparing more time to the child by teachers	40	37	77	14,6	13,5	28,1
Teachers' suggestions on how to carry out the educational activities of the child on the online platform	42	34	76	15,4	12,4	27,8
Easier access to online education	42	28	70	15,4	10,3	25,7
Affordable access to online education	38	19	57	13,9	7	20,9
More activities by teachers	25	24	49	9,2	8,8	18



## Discussion and implication

This research aimed to examine children's behaviors among digital media during distance learning. Firstly, it was tried to answer which media tools are used by young children. Accordingly, television was found as the most accessible media tool for children. Smartphones are also used by children very much. Besides, tablets and computers or laptops are preferred as media tools. Jamali et al. (2017) also found that children aged 3-6 mostly used TV. The other studies also explained that TV is the most used digital media tool by children even before the pandemic (Jamali et al., 2017). Postman (1994) stated that television is at the top of all digital media tools because other tools are learned through television. This information shows that TV programs are highly important for children during the pandemic because TV is the most used media tool.

The findings show that most children use digital media during 1-2 hours a day. Parents Together (2020) showed that children's daily screen time had risen since the beginning of the pandemic by approximately 3 to 6 hours. While most parents stated that their children spend 1-2 hours on digital media, the number of children who use digital media during 2-4 hours is also high. With this finding, it can be said that the usage of digital media was high and parents should be careful about their children's behaviors.

Most parents in this current study said that the control method they used is controlling children occasionally in the time that they are using digital media. To remove or decrease the effects of the pandemic, parents have a protective role by engaging in positive behaviors, appropriate practices, and preventive interventions (Racine et al. 2020). They are seen as mediators to prevent harm and control children's activities via online platforms by rules for using technology (Nouwen & Zaman, 2018). Parent-assisted behavioral change can be effective for reducing children's screen time (Samaha & Hawi, 2017; Thompson et al., 2018). Studies show that children's media habits are affected by their parents' beliefs about media

(Rideout, 2007), and setting rules for screen time decreased the screen time of children (Birken et al., 2011). American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry (2020) warned that if parents did not continue to limit children's screen times and their rules, significant daily activities can disappear, and screen habits become dominant in children's life during the COVID-19 pandemic. Ozturk- Eyimaya and Yalcin-Irman (2020) found that not having rules for screen time and inconsistent parenting practices are significant predictors for increased screen time. Therefore, it can be said that controlling children once in a while could not be enough to decrease the screen time of children. Parents should have more precautions about controlling their children's screen use.

According to the findings, most children are able to reach online education tools which are recommended by MoNE, most of them could not access these tools. The other studies also show that some children could not reach online education (Hartatik & Bia'yuni, 2020). In addition, most parents of whom children can access these tools stated that online education tools have medium impacts on their children's education. Parents in other studies also thought that online education is less effective than formal education and they did not want distance learning (Fison, 2020; Pavlenko & Pavlenko, 2020). These findings show that there are some educational problems about online education such as not accessing online education and not benefiting from these educational activities enough.

The findings represent that children have some needs while conducting online education, according to parents' answers. The most stated online educational needs are online materials to carry out educational activities at home. Besides, they need teachers to offer educational activities for children at home. Parents also stated that they need written resources to support and guide educational activities. In addition, it is seen that children from public schools have more difficulties accessing online education because of not easily accessing and not affordable internet conditions.

Accordingly, it can be that distance learning has some difficulties for parents, as well as children. Besides, children's accessibility to media tools differs for children from public and private schools.

## Conclusion

This study explores that children use digital media, mostly TV, and during 1-2 and 2-4 hours in a day. Parents control their children once a while during digital media usage, which is found inadequate to decrease screen time. In addition, most children could not reach online educational tools and their parents did not find online education very effective for their children's learning. Besides, parents need more support for distance education at home.

It is recommended to inform parents about how to control their children's usage of digital media. The controlling methods like Program Rating Symbols, and family protection programs can be defined for all parents so that they can set more effective rules and more control in their children's usage of digital media. To reach these recommendations, some informative activities for parents should be designed by teachers, school administrators, or policy-makers. Besides, more accessible online materials should be supplied to children by policy-makers to prevent disparities.

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## Genişletilmiş Özet

**Amaç:** COVID-19 pandemi döneminin ilk safhasında Türkiye’de okullar ve erken eğitim merkezleri kapatılmıştır. Eğitim aktiviteleri 2020 yılının Haziran ayına kadar çevrimiçi eğitim araçları aracılığı ile uzaktan eğitim yolu ile devam etmiştir. Aynı zamanda, uzaktan eğitim Eğitim Bilişim Ağı (EBA) olarak adlandırılan Millî Eğitim Bakanlığı’nın çevrim içi eğitim platformu ile de desteklenmiştir. EBA’da her sınıf düzeyinde çocuk için dersler ve çeşitli aktiviteler sunulmuştur. Fakat bu ağ 2020 yılının Ekim ayına kadar erken çocukluk eğitimine ilişkin herhangi bir içerik sağlamamıştır. Bununla birlikte, çocuklara yönelik birçok eğitsel aktivite diğer çevrim içi platformlar aracılığıyla ve ebeveynlerin ve öğretmenlerin çabası ile gerçekleşmiştir. Bu durum 2021 yılının Şubat ayına kadar devam etmiş, daha sonra okul öncesi eğitim merkezleri yüz yüze eğitime açılmıştır. Daha sonra, bölgelerin mevcut durumlarına göre eğitim yüz yüze veya uzaktan olarak devam etmiştir. Çevrimiçi öğrenmenin olumlu ve olumsuz etkileri bulunmaktadır. Bu etkiler düşünüldüğünde, bu araştırmanın amacının COVID-19 pandemi döneminde uygulanan çevrim içi öğrenme faaliyetleri sürecinde çocukların kitle iletişim araçlarına yönelik davranışlarını araştırmak olarak belirlenmiştir. Araştırma aşağıdaki sorulara yanıt aramaktadır:

1. Okul öncesi dönem çocukları hangi kitle iletişim araçlarını kullanmaktadır?
2. Okul öncesi dönem çocukları kitle iletişim araçlarını ne kadar kullanmaktadır?
3. Ebeveynler çocukların kitle iletişim araçlarına yönelik davranışlarını nasıl kontrol etmektedir?
4. Çevrimiçi eğitim araçlarının çocukların eğitimine etkisi nasıldır?
5. Çocukların çevrimiçi öğrenmeye yönelik ihtiyaçları nelerdir?

**Yöntem:** Bu çalışmada nitel araştırma yöntemlerinden biri olan durum çalışması

kullanılmıştır. Araştırma deseni iç içe geçmiş tek durum desendir. Elde edilen veriler içerik analizi yöntemi ile analiz edilmiştir. Araştırmaya uzaktan eğitime katılan ve pandemi öncesi okul öncesi eğitim kurumlarında eğitim gören okul öncesi dönem çocuklarının ebeveynleri katılmıştır. Katılımcılar uygun örnekleme yöntemi kullanılarak seçilmiştir. Uygun katılımcılar çevrimiçi bir şekilde hazırlanan ankete katılmaya davet edilmiştir. Toplamda 270 ebeveyn çalışmaya katılmıştır. Katılımcıların çoğunluğunu anneler oluşturmaktadır ve yaşları 20 ile 45 arasında değişmektedir. Katılımcılar, Türkiye'nin yedi bölgesinden seçilmiştir. Aynı zamanda katılımcıların çoğu lisans mezunudur. Katılımcıların çoğu araştırma sırasında çalışmamaktadır. Katılımcıların çocukları 0-78 ay arasındadır.

Araştırmanın amacına uygun olarak katılımcılar için "Çocukların Medya Kullanımına İlişkin Ebeveyn Anketi" çevrimiçi platformlar aracılığı ile oluşturulmuştur. Anket dört bölüm olarak hazırlanmıştır: Bilgilendirilmiş Onam Formu, Ebeveynlere Yönelik Demografik Bilgi Formu (6 soru), Çocuklara Yönelik Demografik Bilgi Formu (3 soru) ve Çocukların Medya Kullanımına İlişkin Form (8 soru). Daha sonra 5 alan uzmanından görüş alınmıştır. Gelen görüşler sonrasında bazı kelime hataları düzeltilmiş; Çocukların Medya Kullanımına İlişkin Form'dan 3 soru elenmiştir. Daha sonra, 10 ebeveyn ile pilot çalışma gerçekleştirilmiş ve anket hakkında görüşleri alınmıştır. İlgili düzeltmeler sonrasında, kelime ve anlam hataları düzeltilerek Çocukların Medya Kullanımına İlişkin Form 5 soru olarak güncellenmiş; diğer formlardaki soru sayısı sabit kalmıştır.

**Sonuçlar:** Bu araştırmanın amacı, okul öncesi dönem çocuklarının kitle iletişim araçlarına yönelik davranışlarını incelemek olarak belirlenmiştir. Bu doğrultuda, öncelikle çocukların hangi kitle iletişim araçlarını daha çok kullandığı tespit edilmiştir. Elde edilen bulgulara göre, çocukların çoğunluğu televizyona erişebilmektedir. Akıllı telefonlar ise en çok kullanılan ikinci kitle iletişim aracıdır. Tabletler ve bilgisayarlar bu araçları izlemektedir. 145 ebeveyn çocuklarının internete erişebildiğini

belirtmiştir.

İkinci olarak, çocukların kitle iletişim araçlarını ne kadar kullandığı saptanmıştır. Çocukların çoğunluğunun günde 1-2 saat kullandığı görülmüştür. Ancak günde 6 saatten fazla kullanan çocuklara da rastlanmıştır.

Ebeveynlerin çocukların kitle iletişim araçlarını kullanmalarını kontrol etme davranışlarına bakıldığında, ebeveynlerin çoğunluğunun arada bir ne yaptıklarını kontrol etmeyi tercih ettiği görülmüştür. Diğer kullanılan yöntemler çocuğun başında beklemek, güvenlik programlarını kullanmak, yalnızca izin verilen programları izlemek ve kullanmak ve çocuklarla birlikte izlemek olarak belirtilmiştir. Dört ebeveyn herhangi bir kontrol yöntemi kullanmadığını belirtmiştir.

Ebeveynlerin yarısına yakını çocukların EBA TV, video ve sesli aramalara erişimi olduğunu söylese de, geri kalanı çevrim içi eğitim araçlarına ulaşamadığını belirtmiştir. Ebeveynlerin çoğu çevrim içi eğitim araçlarının çocukların eğitimine olan etkisinin orta düzeyde olduğunu belirtmişken, bu etkinin çok yetersiz ve yetersiz olduğunu belirten ebeveyn sayısı da yüksektir.

Ebeveynlerin çoğu, çevrimiçi eğitim sırasında en çok eğitim aktivitelerini uygulamak için çevrim içi materyallere ihtiyaç duyduğunu belirtmiştir. Bir diğer ihtiyaç ise çevrim içi eğitimin daha zengin içerikler sunmasıdır. Eğitim aktivitelerini desteklemek için yazılı kaynaklar, eğitim aktivitelerine yönelik rehber hizmeti, çocuklarla birlikte eğitim aktivitelerini nasıl gerçekleştireceklerine yönelik öneriler, öğretmenleriyle daha fazla vakit geçirme, çevrim içi eğitime daha kolay erişim sağlama, çevrim içi eğitime daha ucuz bir yolla erişim sağlama ve öğretmen tarafından daha çok etkinlik gibi ihtiyaçlar da belirtilmiştir.

Bu bulgular ışığında, ebeveynlerin çocuklarının kitle iletişim araçlarını kullanımını nasıl kontrol edecekleri konusunda bilgilendirilmeleri önerilmektedir. Program Derecelendirme



Semboller ve aile koruma programları gibi kontrol yöntemleri tüm ebeveynler için tanımlanabilir, böylece çocuklarının kitle iletişim araçlarını kullanımında daha etkili kuralları koyabilir ve daha fazla kontrol sağlayabilirler. Buna ek olarak, ebeveynler evde çevrimiçi eğitimin nasıl yürütüleceği, çevrimiçi eğitim materyallerinin nasıl kullanılacağı hakkında daha fazla bilgiye sahip olmalı ve sınıf öğretmenlerinden daha fazla destek almalıdır. Bu önerilerin yerine getirilmesi için öğretmenler, okul yöneticileri veya politika belirleyiciler tarafından ebeveynlere yönelik bazı bilgilendirici faaliyetler tasarlanabilir. Aynı zamanda, eşitsizlikleri önlemek için politikacı belirleyiciler tarafından çocuklara daha erişilebilir çevrimiçi materyaller sağlanması önerilmektedir.

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Herhangi bir çıkar çatışması bulunmamaktadır. **None**

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