

## Summary

Ebbeck et al. (2016)'s *Singaporean Parents' Views of Their Young Children's Access and Use of Technological Devices* investigates parents'/caregivers' views of their children's, aged below 7 years old, access and time spent on technological devices. This is part of a larger project which seeks to explore the emerging roles and uses of technological devices by parents/caregivers and their children in Singapore, particularly infants and toddlers. With Singapore having one of the highest usage rates of smartphone and touchscreen devices in the world and with little research data on the topic of ICT and child development here, this research study hopes to raise parents'/caregivers' awareness of access to technological devices and increase the understanding of young children's development in the twenty-first century. A quantitative methodological approach was referenced on and utilised for this study.

A total of 1,058 adult-participants took part in this study consisting of both parents (98.5%) and caregivers (1.5%) of 1,559 children below 7 years old. These children attended 1 of 34 childcare centres in Singapore managed by NTUC First Campus Co-opt Ltd, a large non-government organisation. Data was collected through administering a questionnaire comprising open- and closed-ended questions focusing on gathering information on Singaporean parents'/caregivers' views on their children's access and time spent on eight selected technological devices (i.e. Desktop, laptop, tablet PC, personal digital assistant (PDA), iPod/MP3 player, smartphone, touchscreen tablet, and eReader). Additionally, more specific data on parents'/caregivers' perceived risks and benefits of the emerging touchscreen devices in Singapore was also collected.

Results showed that smartphone (n = 695), touch screen tablet (n = 522) and laptop computer (n = 277) were the three technological devices most frequently used by children aged under 7 years. Among those, smartphones (25.8%) and touch screen tablets (25.7%) were most frequently used by children aged 5 years old. It was reported that these young children usually spend less than one hour per day on technological devices. Except for children under one year old, children across all age groups were found to use and spend time on smartphones and touch



screen tablets daily. Concerning the emerging use of touchscreen devices, the majority of the parents/caregivers identified that touchscreen devices were most risky for children's intellectual (n = 816) and physical (n = 790) development. However, the majority (n = 759) of them also believed that touchscreen devices may also benefit their children's intellectual development in certain ways.

Overall, the findings from this study were not surprising as technological devices, such as smartphones and touchscreen tablets, are very accessible and regularly used by adults in Singapore. These devices are typically made available to children as a form of babysitting. Researchers highlighted the need for parents to teach their children moderation and self-regulation, to supervise them to achieve a balance in lives with activities beyond touchscreen, and to consciously limit the amount of time they spend on these devices. As the usage of technological devices is most likely to increase as children grow, it is extremely crucial for parents and educators to recognise the impacts of the use of touchscreen devices on children's development and ensure that they are not harmed by them in any way.

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