

HOW AND ON WHAT BASIS DO PARENTS DECIDE ON THEIR  
CHILDREN'S MEDIA CONTENT AND SCREEN TIME, AND WHAT STYLE  
OF PARENTAL MEDIATION DO THEY PREFER TO FOLLOW?

A Master's Thesis

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The Graduate School of Economics and Social Sciences

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By

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MASTER OF ARTS IN MEDIA AND VISUAL STUDIES

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COMMUNICATION AND DESIGN  
İHSAN DOĐRAMACI BİLKENT UNIVERSITY ANKARA

September 2021

I certify that I have read this thesis and have found that it is fully adequate, in scope and in quality, as a thesis for the degree of Master of Arts (in Media and Visual Studies)

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## ABSTRACT

### HOW AND ON WHAT BASIS DO PARENTS DECIDE ON THEIR CHILDREN'S MEDIA CONTENT AND SCREEN TIME, AND WHAT STYLE OF PARENTAL MEDIATION DO THEY PREFER TO FOLLOW?

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M.A., in Media and Visual Studies

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The age at which children meet technology and the digital world now begins much earlier than before, and the amount of media content and time they consume is usually determined by their parents. Especially when today's diversity in terms of digital media content is taken into account, it becomes necessary for parents to make better consideration. Therefore, one of the aims of this research is to find out the criteria for parents when choosing media content for their children and indicate to what extent parents are aware of the impacts of media consumption on their children. Based on the answers obtained after in-depth interviews with 20 parents living in Turkey and media diaries that they filled out in detail, this study reveals parental mediation styles used and children's relationship with various media. As parents of children are selected from different age groups between three and six years, findings provide a classification by. Based on the theory of parental mediation, this qualitative study compares parental mediation strategies preferred based on the children's age, further revealing their causes and consequences. As permissible mediation, active

mediation, and restrictive mediation are the most studied mediation styles by researchers and pedagogues, these three are also the foci of this thesis. It should also not be overlooked that regardless of the age of the child, the changing situations for many families are similar with the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic period and the necessity to stay at home due to extensive lockdowns.

**Keywords:** Children's Media Consumption, Positive and Negative Impact, Consciousness of Parents, Parental Mediation Styles

## ÖZET

# EBEVEYNLER ÇOCUKLARININ MEDYA İÇERİĞİNE VE EKLAN SÜRESİNE NASIL VE HANGİ TEMELDE KARAR VERİYORLAR VE HANGİ TARZDA EBEVEYN ARABULUCULUĞUNU İZLEMİYİ TERCİH EDİYORLAR?

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Yüksek Lisans, Medya ve Görsel Çalışmalar

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Çocukların teknoloji ve dijital dünyayla tanışma süreçleri artık eskisinden çok daha erken başlıyor ve medya içerikleri ve ekran süreleri genellikle ebeveynler tarafından belirleniyor. Özellikle bugün üretilen içerik çeşitliliği dikkate alınır, ebeveynlerin her zamankinden daha çok özen göstermelerinin gerekliliği anlaşılabilir. Bu nedenle, bu araştırma ebeveynlerin çocukları için medya içeriği seçerken kriterlerini anlayabilmeyi ve çocuklarının medya tüketiminin onlar üzerinde oluşabilecek etkileri hakkında ebeveynlerin ne kadar bilinçli olduklarını analiz etmeyi amaçlamaktadır. Ebeveynlerle gerçekleştirilen yarı yapılandırılmış röportajlar ve detaylı bir şekilde doldurdukları medya günlüklerinden elde edilen verilere göre, bu tez, ebeveynlerin hangi aracılık stratejisini benimsediklerini ve çocuklarının medya organları ile olan ilişkilerinde neden böyle bir metodu tercih ettiklerini anlamaya çalışmaktadır. Çalışmadaki röportajlar ve medya günlükleri, Türkiye'de yaşayan 20 farklı ebeveynin katılımıyla gerçekleştirilip, üç ila altı yaş grubundaki çocuklar ele alınmış ve bulgular yaş ve cinsiyete göre de sınıflandırılmıştır. Ebeveyn arabuluculuğu teorisine dayanan bu nitel çalışma, ebeveynlerin tercih ettiği arabulma stillerini, nedenleri ve

sonuları ile birlikte anlaşılabilir hale getirerek elde edilen sonularla karşılařtırmalar yapar. İzin veren arabuluculuk, aktif arabuluculuk ve kısıtlayıcı arabuluculuk, arařtırmacılar ve pedagoglar tarafından en ok odaklanılan stillerin başında gelmektedir. Bu nedenle, bu alıřmada bu üç stil esas olarak alınmıřtır. řunu da göz ardı etmemek lazım, ocuklar kaç yařında olursa olsunlar, COVID-19 pandemi sürecinin etkileri ve evde kalma kısıtlamaları ile birlikte hayatlarına giren deęiřiklikler birok ailede benzer sonular doğurmuřtur.

**Anahtar kelimeler:** ocukların Medya Kullanımı, Pozitif ve Negatif Etkiler, Ebeveynlerin Bilinleri, Ebeveyn Arabuluculuk Teorisi

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## CHAPTER I - INTRODUCTION AND RESEARCH RATIONALE

In this era, when the media effects are perhaps most visible, every generation is somehow affected by this process of digitalization. As time goes on, we continue to incorporate various media platforms into our lives. After that, there is almost no way we can avoid them because now the new generation is born into technology, or in other words, they surrender to the dominance of media as soon as they are born. The effects of the almost innate relationship of this latest generation with the media and the digital world and their separation from other generations in this sense are the main motivation in this study. In order to reveal this significant difference between their age and the children of today, Yair and Diwanji (2015) write that “(w)hen we were kids, if we wanted to learn more about gorillas or how to make friendship bracelets, our parents pointed us to an encyclopedia, or took us to the library. When we wanted to watch cartoons, we eagerly awaited Saturday morning” (para. 1). Now a single button is enough.

It seems that this new generation, which is known as the alpha generation as well, will be defined by its close ties with technology. The definition of alpha generation, a term that we are just starting to hear, is as follows, “(g)eneration Alpha began being born in 2010, the year the iPad was launched, Instagram was created, and App was the word of the year- and so from their earliest years, they have been screenagers” (McCrindle, 2020, para. 5). In summary, they are the generation that came into the world after many notable technological developments have existed in our lives. As a social analyst and best-selling author, McCrindle (2020) provides another definitive statement that expresses the situation this generation faces quite well and says, “(t)his newest generation are part of an unintentional global experiment where screens are placed in front of them from the youngest age as pacifiers, entertainers and educational aids” (Para. 5). He compares the screens to pacifiers reflects the current situation because the use of screens, sometimes to distract children and

sometimes to feed them, has become a habit in many households. Starting from infancy, after parents discover that phones, tablets, and television screens have a distracting effect, this becomes a method they use frequently. So, this new generation is accustomed to seeing a screen from the moment they open their eyes to the world. This could be the television in the house or the phones in parents' hands. That must be the most significant difference that sets alpha generation apart from the others, this natural acquaintance with media tools. Most excellent source of inspiration for choosing the subject of this thesis is this different dynamic of children and media use, which has now taken on an extra dimension. The fact that children are very familiar with media devices from an early age and can impact the media industries is a development that has gained momentum in recent years.

According to a statistic released by Turkey's Information Technology and Communication Agency (Bilgi Teknolojileri ve İletişim Kurumu), access to the Internet has now fallen to the age of three (Ihlas News Agency, 2017, para. 1). Free from any doubt, one of the biggest factors in the decline of this average age and the fact that children can adapt to digital environments so easily and quickly is that content producers, screenwriters, designers and many more people in the big business are now turning to and developing media industry and content for child consumers. Collins, a software company founder and technology investor, underscores in an interview that now the world has stopped ignoring children (Rowntree, 2016). He adds that for years Silicon Valley's standard approach has been to assume that no one under the age of 13 actually uses the Internet (Rowntree, 2016). Today, instead, politicians are taking the lead to enact data privacy laws about children and the Internet (Rowntree, 2016). So, the role of the media industry here should never be forgotten and underestimated because diversity is growing everyday thanks to developments in the media industry. As the child population in the world increases, the demand begins to increase, and as the

demand increases, the number of digital contents produced for children is increasing. In other words, these are interdependent situations, or this is also a supply and demand relationship.

According to the Turkish Statistical Institute's latest data, 27.5 percent of Turkey's population consists of children (2020), with 22 million children. This percentage cannot be underestimated, and those in the media sector are increasing the number of productions focused on children audiences in their investments more and more. Compared to past decades, children's alternatives in the digital field have increased significantly. According to a 2019 report on children and the media, "(k)ids are now one of the fastest-growing online audiences, and are spending more time online" (SuperAwesome, 2019). Technology-oriented online platforms such as YouTube, Netflix, Amazon Prime Video, and Apple have started to increase their investments in producing content for children and thus become increasingly popular. Two of YouTube's statements last year are as follow "(a)ll our programming will seek to support kids in uncovering their unique strengths and passions" and they add that "(s)pecifically, we want to develop content that inspires children to develop life skills and pursue their passions; establish healthy habits and care for themselves; increase their understanding of culture and diversity; and/or engage with and care for their community" (Perez, 2020, para. 3). Thus, it seems that many large video platform companies, such as YouTube, no longer neglect child consumers in their investment plans. Besides, one common feature of these platforms and the reason they are widespread is that they guarantee the safety of children, even if not at a hundred percent rate, and promise to provide some parental control strategies.

In addition, the number of Turkish-made content for children has also increased significantly in recent years, and their diversity has been growing day by day. As a result, many of the productions manage to attract the attention of children. The contribution of TRT Çocuk to this upward trend is relatively high. According to the information in the animation industry report in recent years, along

with the establishment of the TRT Çocuk channel in 2008, there has been a significant increase in the number of children-focused media production lines in Turkey (BEBKA, 2018). Who controls how much media content this alpha generation will consume, especially when children have been so involved in technology since their infancy, is one of the critical questions that need to be answered.

When we look at the viewing rates of animations produced by The Walt Disney Company, a pioneer in this sector, we can see that many productions are box officeholders in Turkey. As with all over the world, both films of Frozen have managed to attract the attention of children in Turkey. As Steinhoff (2017) notes, since its release on the big screen, Frozen has had more than 1.2 billion box office receipts worldwide, and this made Frozen one of the most-watched productions of all time (p. 159). Every outfit, every toy, and every item of the fictional character Elsa in Frozen is highly loved and preferred by girls. In brief, Elsa is almost a phenomenon in the eyes of children.

Furthermore, how much is the media industry in control as it lays the groundwork for children's media consumption with its investments and developments? Essentially, it is parents who are in control. To indicate how much the families have a say in this issue, Altun (2019) writes that "(t)herefore, parents have an important role in selecting appropriate content, providing guidance, and monitoring their children's digital activities" (p. 76). At the same time, Waters, Domoff and Tang (2016) are among the scholars who support this because in their article they underline that "(s)ince most of young children's electronic media use takes place within the home, it is also important to consider the role of the parenting and the contexts in which children are exposed to electronic media" (p. 111). This thesis is also based on this premise and aims to understand parents' control and discretion over their children's media consumption habits. Parents' role in the alpha generation's relations with the media outlets and the digital world is another motivation in this research to learn how their differences guide them and affect the relationship children's behaviors

and the communication between their parents and children. So, let technology companies, cartoon and animation producers, and people working in the game industry work hard on planning and producing content as much as they want. However, the last word belongs to mothers and fathers.

Parents might have quite different points of view while raising their children. Typically, one mother or father does not do what another parent does when raising their child. For example, as the most straightforward disagreement, parents introduce their children to media tools and content may vary. While some parents delay this introduction period as much as possible, others do not prefer to do so. After infancy, when childhood begins, watching cartoons or animations, playing games from a tablet or phone, watching videos posted on YouTube, and all other media activities have already become a part of many children's daily lives. It would not be wrong to say that younger age groups such as toddlers and preschoolers, who cannot fill most of their time with school and homework, have more time to be intimate with media tools. However, just like the average time to introduce their children to the media, the screen time can vary depending on their parents' initiative. So far, pedagogues and educators have written many articles and books about the appropriate screen time and content for different age groups at a young age, and it is likely to continue to be discussed for some time. As an academic in Digital Media and Learning Sciences at New York University, quite recently, Plass (2020) emphasizes that it is not right to limit children's screen time in any scheme, and the significance of being able to accompany the child from beginning to end of media consumption is quite high (Şirin, 2020). In some way, Plass (2020) underscores the necessity of co-viewing. Especially during the COVID-19 pandemic and lockdown, when many people spend most of their time in a home environment, the debate about screen time should be reignited. Radesky (2020), a pediatrician, emphasizes the importance of Three C's", child, content, and context. She suggests that children's media consumption habits could be much better approached in terms of the structure of characters in media they consume, what they watch or play, and how they interact with

these characters (Cheng and Wilkinson). Like many other experts, Radesky (2020) reminds parents that more attention should be paid to quality than quantity. Time to be closely introduced to the media and screen time are not the only ones that are on the initiative of parents. Also, which channels they watch, which animations, which video games, which YouTube channels, or what kinds of applications they prefer to permit their children are also primarily up to the parents.

The number of articles and comments made about the best content for children is gaining momentum as never before during the COVID-19 pandemic period. This issue continues to remain on the agenda of many parents. To illustrate, the online news titled “Age-by-age guide to the best educational apps for kids” recently published by Today’s Parents, a website that appeals to parents is just one of them. As can be seen, it is not children, but their parents, who are the targets as they decide the media consumption time, content, and many other things on behalf of their children. Although they were born when technological advances were gaining more speed than ever before, children are not the ones who control their connections to the digital world during infancy and childhood. It is their mothers and fathers who take responsibility for doing this on behalf of their children. How much their parents’ role is at the forefront of these close relationships with children’s media and technology, and how they control their children’s use of media is one of the essential questions to be asked.

Today, there are numerous resources, including books or online blog pages written by pedagogues focusing on the role of parents in children’s relations with the media tools and innumerable articles suggesting alternative methods and techniques to parents. Let's compare the diversity now even with 10 or 20 years ago. We will see that access to content produced for children is no longer restricted to television alone. Many online platforms allow them to watch cartoon series and animations from the platforms reserved for children by phones or tablets. According to the 2019

Kids digital media report, “TV reach and effectiveness is being eroded by the fragmentation of addressable audience time across YouTube, Subscription VOD (e.g. Netflix) and games (e.g. Fortnite)” (SuperAwesome, 2019). In other words, it is evident that children are also in new pursuits, and wherever digitalization is possible, they turn to it and spend more time with this medium and platforms.

The fact that platforms such as Netflix or Amazon are now accessible anytime, anywhere is also a very binding feature for children. So, easy accessibility is the most significant factor that makes it difficult for children to stay off the screen even outside the home environment, such as when they are on a trip or dinner with their parents. Today, the concepts of play and socialization are beginning to change. Compared to previous generations, these terms do not mean the same for children now. According to a study conducted by the CordCutting website based on Netflix, the average child’s time watching Netflix content is 14 to 26 times more than when they play games outside the home (Lovely, 2016). Most of the games that used to be played in the open air, the current generation does not know at all. Marsh (2016), whose field of study is children’s digital literacy practices, states that:

It is clear that contemporary playgrounds are shaped by children’s engagement in online practices outside of school in a variety of ways and that the boundary between the online and offline is becoming more diffuse as technological developments continue to accelerate and shape the play environment. (p. 127)

The boundary between online or digital playgrounds and offline environments is disappearing and mingling with each other day by day. Standards have also changed compared to previous years. Now, when a child can unlock their parent’s phone and find whatever they want on the phone, many comments highlight how intelligent and talented the child is. This ability has now become a

natural process. Many children know how to use YouTube and find and open a song, a cartoon, or children's channel they want to watch, even before they start primary school and before they can even read and write. After children watch these cartoons and animations, the continuity of their love and attention is also ensured through different game applications. Either way, if children love a character, it is challenging for them to break away from it. Therefore, what industries develop for children is not limited to animation, cartoons or YouTube videos because some of the children's time is spent playing video games. The issue of video games is also a situation that carries many parents' minds because they are probably concerned that they cannot predict what things their children may encounter during the game. A large-scale study conducted in the United States shows that 65 percent of parents play various video games with their children because they see it as an opportunity to socialize with their children (Entertainment Software Association, 2020, p. 13). This rate is quite high because more than half of the parents choose to play video games with their children in order to socialize with them, and perhaps this rate will increase with each passing year and this situation will not seem abnormal to us.

The situation may be similar for many families in Turkey. So, amid such diversity and the ubiquitous advancement in this industry, the question of what responsibilities are placed on parents is the first thing that comes to mind. One of the most substantial liabilities of mothers and fathers towards their children is how their children should use these media outlets, when and how long they will allow their children, and what content they could access, and which ones they should avoid. How can parents decide what content their children will consume while at the same time they need to be deciding what their children will eat for breakfast or carefully researching which daycare or school they will send their children to? Do parents know to what extent and at what time their children include television, game, or cartoon characters in their home environment? The fact that their children are at the age period when they have a very high capacity to develop physically,

emotionally, and mentally also increases the significance of this selection and decision-making process. No matter the medium, each produced content reflects different ideological points of view in terms of religion, gender roles, bravery, asperity, family, and friendly relations. So, when children get to know even one of these media channels and make them a part of their daily lives, they are exposed to a particular social and cultural structuring reflected there. Maybe that is why parents should take responsibility and be consistent. Especially if today's diversity is taken into account, the role of parents in guiding their children becomes even more significant. It may take more effort and time than expected.

Based on this context for enhanced parental responsibility, this study seeks to answer the extent to which parents are conscious of and involved in their children's media consumption habits. Thus, this qualitative study investigates the media consumption of preschool age children and family attitudes towards and control over media consumption. Children in preschool are preferred as the focus is that they are at the age period when they are developing in many ways, and their level of curiosity is also high. Children's health professionals Kaya and Efe (2016), mention that children start socializing between three and six, with the environment and received stimuli having a crucial role in their physical, mental, social, and cognitive development. This study focuses on three, four, five, and six-year-old media consumers based on this and the alpha generation's innate familiarity with media. One of the primary purposes of this thesis is to determine the criteria for parents while choosing media content and arranging screen time for their children or, in short, regulating their children's media habits in every sense. Similarly, another purpose is to reveal to what extent parents are aware of media consumption's impact on their children.

To understand the authentic views of mothers and fathers, their attitudes, and rules, semi-structured interviews are preferred as a research methodology. These interviews are conducted with five

parents with children at the age of three, five parents with children at the age of four, five parents with children at the age of five, and five parents with children at six living in Akşehir district of Konya.. The aim of conducting interviews with the parents of children from these different age groups is because the study also aims to classify media use and control according to the children's age. All participants' children belong to the preschool-age period, but the media use of a three-year-old and their parents' attitude towards him or her will be different from that of six-year-old children. In addition to these interviews, parents are also asked to fill out a week-long media consumption diary as it provides critical information on the children's one-week media consumption.

According to the answers obtained after in-depth interviews with parents and media diaries that they fill out in detail, and after understanding the attitude of the parents together with their reasons, this research aims to understand which parental mediation strategy they tend to apply. So, the theoretical background of this study is parental mediation. As a communication scholar, Warren (2001), whose research is mostly about this theory, defines the theory of parental mediation as “(a)ny strategy parents use to control, supervise, or interpret content” (p. 212, as cited in Nikken and Schols, 2015, p. 3424). This theory, which is thought to have emerged almost forty years ago concerning children's television consumption habits, is still practical and applicable today. It would not be wrong to say that the theory of parental mediation is being applied even more widely by media scholars, pedagogues, and child development specialists and gains momentum with digitalization. Although it is perceived as focusing only on the adverse effects of media, the theory of parental mediation has a reasonably comprehensive perspective that also includes positive gains. Many scholars in the field of media studies are conducting new research to understand parental strategies to control and mediate their children's media consumption and try to understand what parents are looking for in technology. Professor Clark is one of those who highlight the importance of parental mediation strategies, and she writes that “(i)t also assumes that interpersonal interactions

about media that take place between parents and their children play a role in socializing children into society” (2011, p. 325). So, in other words, it is very likely that the attitudes of parents about media consumption will play a crucial role in the social lives of children in their later years.

Although the names of parental mediation strategies may vary, according to some media scholars and child psychologists, the three best-known parental mediation styles are permissive mediation, active mediation, and restrictive mediation. After explaining the characteristics of these three strategies, which are quite different from one another, participating parents’ mediation strategies and why parents prefer such strategies are revealed. The ways parents apply these mediation strategies are at least as necessary as the reasons behind choosing them. Besides, these strategies may vary as parents cannot always stick to a single process, they can use more than one, and their preferences can also change over time or according to context. Bayraktar, who studies psychology, also supports this and emphasizes that using a specific mediation strategy does not necessarily mean that a parent may not use another approach (2017).

In summary the literature states that the alpha generation, one of the youngest media consumers, needs the guidance and control of their parents for their media consumption during their developmental stages. The effects they will face due to their media consumption in the coming years are undeniable. For example, as writers, Brooks-Gunn and Donahue (2008) indicate that “(s)olid research demonstrates that advertising and product placement for cigarettes and alcohol, as well as exposure to movie characters’ smoking and drinking, increase underage drinking and initiation of smoking” (p. 6). Therefore, based on the fundamental value of preschool children’s relationships with media from an early age for their future social life, this study is conducted to determine the importance of the attitudes of parents who might play a role to guide and control this relationship. As a consequence, this study demonstrates if and how parents regulate their children’s

use of media outlets when they are in developmental age and how they will eventually move the relationship between their children and the digital world into the future. In particular, this research's coincidence with the coronavirus pandemic and lockdown is also an opportunity for this research because it becomes more significant to keep media consumption under control for children who have to spend more time at home than ever before due to extensive school closures. As parents' time with their children has increased to a large extent, it is now more likely that they can and do keep track of how long their children watch television or what video game they play during the day. It would be very understandable that mothers and fathers, who did not set limits on their children before or, on the contrary, enabled their children to use media in a planned way, may have chosen a well-established mediation strategy in this pandemic period. Or, at least many parents have had the opportunity to see which path works most successfully for their children, which path does not, and to witness closely the consequences.

Based on the purpose of this research and the literature reviewed, which is explained in the next chapter, the following research questions have been proposed:

*RQ 1.: As a general assessment, what are the media outlets that children use the most?*

*RQ 2.: How long is the duration of children's screen time for a typical week?*

*RQ 3.: How conscious are the parents of children aged three to six about their children's media consumption (cartoons and animations on TV, tablets and phones) and to what extent are they aware of its impacts?*

*RQ 3A.: Do parents determine and control their children's media content and consumption type?*

*RQ 4.: What strategies do parents use to reduce the negative effects of media consumption on their children and highlight their positive impact?*

The following chapter consists of a detailed literature review on media consumption of children and parental monitoring. At this stage, the media use of children and the consciousness of their families and the foundations of the parental mediation theory and many research examples that have been studied before are examined. Some research, books, news articles written by pedagogues and several comprehensive reports on children and the media are included in this review. Then, the methodologies applied in this thesis, sample selection strategies and why these techniques are used in this research are explained in the following chapter. The advantages and disadvantages of both the interview and diary method are further discussed in this chapter. Also, there is also a detailed explanation about interviews and the content of the media diary, such as how many people are interviewed, how many days the media diary covers, and how the age groups of children are distributed. As a final step in the methodology section, the sampling process and the receipt of a certificate of approval of the Ethics Committee from Bilkent University for human research are also briefly explained. In the fourth chapter, the findings are mentioned, and finally the fifth chapter is the conclusion, and limitations and future studies are included, as well.

## CHAPTER II - REVIEW OF LITERATURE

In this thesis, parental mediation is used as a theoretical background. The concepts I focus on are what the media usage habits of children are, how parents follow the path in this regard, and most importantly, why they prefer the strategies they use. There are books and articles written by many Turkish and foreign researchers on preschool-age children's relation with media outlets. Studies that examine the effects of cartoons or television and the perspectives of families from a pedagogical perspective are especially intense with the influence of television's popularity before digitalization. Moreover, there are many secondary sources that are related to the theory of parental mediation. What is more, three different reports that have been prepared on children and the media are also among the resources that reveal a lot of data and statistics. So, it is very substantial and exemplary for me to know the different methodologies researchers prefer, the ways they follow because I have created some interview and media diary questions inspired by these researches.

### 2.1 Television and Parenting Styles

Although *Children and television* was written 23 years ago, this comprehensive book is one of the most important references because it answers many fundamental questions about children and the culture of watching television. There is no doubt that there are differences between those years and today that cannot be ignored both in terms of technology and in terms of digital culture, but searching for answers to some basic questions, such as why and how children watch television, have not changed to a large extent. Gunter and McAleer (1997) explain that

Yes, the world today is technologically more complex than it was when this book was first written, but the core principles of understanding how children get involved with media

technologies such as television, then how they learn to understand and interpret the different types of content they receive through these technologies and acquire constructive media-related behaviours, with a healthy balance achieved between media consumption and other important aspects of life, have not changed very much since the 1980s. (p. 9)

The most significant part of the book in relation to this thesis' concepts may be "(h)ow can parents influence children's viewing" (Gunter and McAleer, 1997, p. 190) because researchers are interviewing parents and making inferences about how parents play a role in children's relationship with television. Besides, in the book, researchers talk about three different types of guidance that parents have, focusing on what concerns mothers or fathers have in their surveys with them and understand their level of awareness. This research shows that how conscious and sensitive parents are about how their children can be influenced by the cartoons and animations they watch in a day is one of the topics worthy of research, even before digitalization has begun and technology is not as advanced as it is today.

In the second book, the editors bring together various research conducted in the United States. This chapter discussed how children watch and learn from television. The authors focus on the impact of children's character traits on which programs they choose to watch. Huston, Bickham, Lee and Wright (2007) state that "(f)or children under age seven, most viewing of general audience programs occurs with an adult, usually a parent" (p. 46). At this very stage, I think parents have a great responsibility to be conscious and observe their children's behaviour and the words that come out of their mouths. This chapter of the book emphasizes that each child has different personalities and abilities, and this difference alters the level of influence that children watch on television. Whether parents consider their children's personalities and skills when choosing the cartoons and animations their children prefer to watch is one of the concepts questioned in this thesis, so this book is similar to the focus of this thesis in terms of its subject.

Designing to determine how family-based interferences will impact reducing screen time for preschool children, Jago, Sebire, Edwards, and Thompson (2013) prefer the cross-sectional survey methodology to assess parents' responses. The aim of these surveys conducted in Bristol, UK, with 252 parents of kindergarten children aged between three and five years old, is about how children's television viewing habits are linked to their parents' self-efficacies. According to the results the researchers obtained, it turns out that there is a very linear ratio between parents' television viewing times in a day and the screen time of the children. The researchers state that "(t)his finding suggests that family-based interventions focusing on building self-efficacy to manage children's TV viewing may be warranted" (Jago et al., p. 1543). Therefore, this study uncovers the impact of 'parental self-efficiency'. This term is one of the very important concepts in this thesis to understand how much television is present in their home environment. In my thesis, one of the questions referred to in the media diaries and asked participants to review is whether they are aware of the impact of screen viewing time on their children.

Another research that includes interviews with Sri Lankan families to understand how much the parents control their children's ties to television has interesting findings. Graphics and tables are created by asking parents about their age, education level, how many hours a day they allow their children to watch television, and the contents of these cartoons. The researcher's conclusion is as follows "(t)he findings of this study indicate that the attention and knowledge of parents about TV cartoons are grossly inadequate and need to be enhanced" (Herath, 2019, p. 63). Therefore, it is crucial to go over specific cartoons and animations based on the participants' answers and focus more on their content.

## 2.2. Children's Experience by Watching Cartoons and Playing Video Games

As another study conducted in Turkey, the most outstanding feature of this article is that it includes cartoons and animations made in Turkey and therefore shown in Turkey. Children from various schools are interviewed and asked about the cartoons they watch the most and then the characters they like and dislike, along with their reasons. According to the answers received from children, the data obtained by the researchers on the most watched cartoon channels is as follows “61% of the children watch TRT (a public broadcasting channel funded by the government), followed by the Disney Channel and Kids Planet (private channels)” (Akça and Çilekçiler, 2019, p. 427). The researchers consider the gender component throughout the study and collect the data for girls and boys separately. As for the quantitative part, the researchers examine possible reasons why children between four and six years old prefer certain characters in these cartoons. So, it is critical to consider how some popular cartoon and animated characters like Pepee or Elsa might have a role in reflecting the children's personalities.

As a Turkish-made cartoon, Pepee is one of the characters that parents often prefer in Turkey. What is the main reason behind their choice of TRT Çocuk, the channel on which it is broadcast, and what feedback the children receive from Pepee? The researcher examines a lot of episodes of Pepee closely and also inferences about the families. The two remarkable results that Kalaycı (2015) achieves are as follows: “(i)t was determined that messages which promote gender stereotypes, gender inequality, and sexism are present in the Pepee cartoon series and that these are not innocuous messages” and “(i)n Turkey, cooperation cartoon/the animation arts and academics is a requirement for realizing higher quality productions” (p. 263). So, are parents aware of these non-harmless messages? According to these underwhelming results, it may not be correct to generalize

about other cartoon films published in TRT Çocuk. Still, it seems that it is possible to encounter a similar picture in terms of gender inequality.

It is a pretty overlooked area research by interviewing parents to try to understand how familiar they are about the impact of Disney cartoons and products on boys because there are a lot of articles on Disney princesses and its effect on little girls, so it is very remarkable that Hubbard's (2017) research is about Disney's influence on male children. Parents are asked detailed questions about the Disney cartoons their children watch and some effects they observe on their children as a mother or father. Hubbard, who has limited the number of participants consisting only of 11, prefers to include the answers he receives in his paper. As for the results obtained at the end of the research, Hubbard (2017) states that "(p)arents find Disney to be a safe choice for their children, but the issue is that their sons are inclined to watch other companies' products, such as Cartoon Network" and adds "(p)arents seemed to be positive about the power Disney has, because participants think Disney uses their power for good" (p. 41). In brief, this article reveals the reasons and consequences of whether there is a difference between the choice of parents and the choice of children.

Bjorkqvist and Lagerspetz (1985) investigate how children get an experience by watching three different types of cartoons and then interviewing them. The researchers classify the cartoons as aggressive humorous (AH), aggressive drama (AD), and nonaggressive (NA) (p. 80). The results show that the differences emerging as a result of the evaluations made according to age and gender are quite high because Bjorkqvist and Lagerspetz (1985) find out that "(t)he younger children experienced the cartoons in a fragmentary manner and not as a continuous story, understood less of the cartoons, and tended to base their moral judgements of a character's behaviour on whether or not they identified with that character" (p. 77). Although many years have passed since this

research, the different interpretation of what children of other age groups see in the media is still valid. These differences should be taken into consideration.

When it comes to children, one of the first things that come to mind is their relationship with the games they play, and this article focuses on the relationship between the games children play online and offline. With digitalization, the game culture has also changed a lot, and the perspective of both children and parents towards creative games is now quite different from before. When children stop producing new and innovative games independently, they turn to media tools, and parents develop some tactics during this permitting stage. Marsh (2016) writes that “(i)n the project outlined in this book, we were interested in the way in which children’s play has changed in recent decades, especially with the influence of media and new technologies” (p. 109). This transformation in the game culture may have also led parents to seek new perspectives and have led them to develop different strategies to support their children in playing offline games and establishing a balance. Therefore, this balance they aim to establish is one factor that shows which parental mediation strategy they prefer.

### 2.3. Children’s Screen Time, The Content They Consume and the Role of Parents

In another study conducted with parents of preschool children, in addition to the use of media by children, Altun (2019) tries to determine how much time their parents spend time on the Internet. Thanks to this research, it has been revealed that parents who use technological applications with their children have positive effects on the content consumed by their children and screen time. Altun (2019) states that “(b)oth the quantity and the quality of technology use (e.g., family involvement and appropriate/high-quality digital activity selection) are important in children’s development and learning” (p. 88). Altun (2019) frequently uses the term ‘digital parenting role’ in

her article, which is a very appropriate phrase because now, along with digitalisation, the parents' responsibilities and roles are changing. According to the data obtained by Altun (2019), parents have more than one role such as, content control, time control, teaching how to use media devices and at the same time preventing their children from some of these devices. It is crucial to reveal what parents' main roles are in the relations of their children with media and technology today.

This research focuses on measuring and understanding how families are concerned about their children's screen time and the content of what they watch. He, Irwin, Bouck, Tucker and Pollett (2005) select focus groups and conduct semi-structured interviews with parents of children between two and a half and five. The researchers chose to create the article from different tables by dividing it into research questions, such as "(p)arents' perceived values about screen viewing" or "(p)arents' attitude toward screen viewing behaviors" (p. 121, 122). After all the answers have been examined, they conclude that "(t)his qualitative study among a group of Canadian parents of two-to five-year-old children suggests that concerns about the content of what is viewed are greater than concerns about the amount of screen time" (He et al, 2005, p. 124). This research shows that while the content that children consume and the time they consume seem to be related, they are concepts that do not have the same importance for parents.

This article is about how screen time should be, a highly discussed topic by pedagogues and scholars. Cheng and Wilkinson (2020) also include video conversations that children have with family members during the pandemic in screen time. From this point of view, this means that children's screen time has increased significantly in this coronavirus pandemic and lockdown process. The highlight in their interviews with Radesky, who is a pediatrician like Cheng and Wilkinson themselves, is that quality is more than quantity because Dr. Radesky refers that "(t)hree C's framework: child, content and context" (Cheng and Wilkinson, 2020). This article examines the

situation by addressing the pandemic process and indicates that the impact of staying in homes for long times should not be ignored when determining children's screen time.

#### 2. 4. Parenting Styles for Digital Technologies

Explaining what parental mediation theory is, Warren and Aloia's (2019) primary goal in this article is to reveal the importance of families in the mediation process. Warren and Aloia (2019) write that "(s)ome research has examined mediation in the context of parenting styles, but research suggests that parental stress can also influence mediation behaviors" (p. 483). The researchers prefer to apply the questionnaire as a research methodology and parents and children are surveyed by matching each other. This study shows that parental stress and parental mediation are separate terms and can affect each other. In conclusion, Warren and Aloia (2019) indicate that "(w)e posited that parenting style, namely authoritative, permissive, and authoritarian parenting, was related to restrictive, active, and co-use television mediation" (p. 493-494). In brief, it is important that these concepts in the theory of parental mediation, their connection with each other, their similarities and differences are explained in detail.

Another article by Nikken and Schols (2015), offers a comprehensive literature review on parental mediation theory, including many scholars and child development specialists' perspectives. This diversity contributes to apprehending the theory fully. Nikken and Schols (2015) mention that "(t)his study explored to what extent children's use of media devices at home and children's access to these screens in the bedroom are guided by parent's attitudes about media for children and by the child's skills to use electronic screens" (p. 3431-3432). Whether children have a television or other media devices in their room, and at the same time what their parents think about it may be one of the points to consider in interviews with the parent for this thesis.

Jiow, Lim, and Lin (2016) believe that parental mediation theory should be rediscovered according to this digital world we are in and the changing media dynamics. It is crucial to realize how this theory can be developed for a more descriptive and explanatory state. Jiow, Lim and Lin (2016) state that “(p)arental mediation theory is rooted in television studies and must be refined to accommodate the fast-changing media landscape that is populated by complex and intensively used media forms such as video games, social media, and mobile apps” (p. 309). In brief, now that we all live in a media-saturated society, diversity is quite a lot, and there is a constant change. Video games, for example, receive increased popularity, taking advantage of all the blessings of technology. Focusing more on children’s playing video games throughout the research, the researchers reveal the limits of the theory and make suggestions about it.

Uhls and Robb (2017) emphasize that “(o)ur focus is on newer interactive technologies such as the Internet, social media, and video games, as informed by the literature on television viewing and parenting practices, as this body of work often applies to newer media and family dynamics” (p. 326). They explain three different mediation strategies, restrictive, permissive and active that parents use most explicitly. What is more, some subcategories have also been included, which are not mentioned in other studies. They include how the approaches are according to different types of media such as video games and social media. Since each media product’s effects will be different from each other, the researchers underline the perspective that parental styles may also vary accordingly. As in this article, I look closely at these three parental mediation styles according to the data I have obtained from the interviews, and instead of going through a single media tool, I try to understand the criteria of the parents according to the types of media that are included in the daily lives of children.

Emphasising that parental mediation is a dynamic process, Symons, Ponnet, Vanwesenbeeck, Walrave and van Ouytsel (2020) aim to understand how effective it is to accept the mother and father's authority by adolescents in the 13-and 18-year-old age range. This article provides in-depth information on “open communication style”, where Fujioka and Austin (2002) mention that “(m)ediation strategies tend to reflect general family processes: for example, parents who engage more in open communication, in general, are also more likely to engage in critical discussions of media content (as cited in Symons, Ponnet, Vanwesenbeeck, Walrave, and van Ouytsel, 2019)”. From this point of view and the mediation styles that parents have chosen, how they adapt this to their children using a way of open communication is also important and helps achieve positive results.

Another research, which offers useful data, is carried out with 536 participants, which looks closely at all three mediation techniques. Nikken and Jansz (2007) make two types of comparisons. The first one is the answers they receive from the children and the solutions they receive from their parents, and the second one is parental mediation of television and video games. So, it can be said that the outcomes of this research are quite diverse. For example, one of the results Nikken and Jansz (2007) achieve is as follows; “parents applied more restrictive and active mediation when they feared negative behavioral effects and more often co-played with their children when they expected positive social-emotional effects of gaming” (p. 181). The results of this research imply that there is a difference in the behavior of families and their preferred styles according to the type of media.

Clark (2011) offers some new perspectives and indicates that “I discuss the strengths and weaknesses of this theory as employed in the socio psychological rooted media effects literature as well as sociocultural ethnographic research on family media uses” (p. 323). Sociology of childhood and sociology of emotions are the perspectives Clark (2011) focuses on. I would like to add the

following sentence written as a summary of the whole article, “(n)ew strategies of exploration are needed that take into consideration the identity and developmental needs of children, the social and emotional decision-making processes of adults, and the affordances of digital and mobile media” (Clark, 2011, p. 336). In short, Clark (2011) is critical of the already existing styles of parental mediation. It aims to transfer the innovations and diversity that are taking place in media technologies to this theory.

Hoffmann’s (2019) thesis, which has similarities in many ways with the subject of my thesis and the research questions I focus on, is a source I review under the heading parenting style. Hoffmann (2019) analyzes which parental mediation strategies the parents use and what they are influenced by when making their decisions. The age group she examines is based on children two years and younger, but the methodology she prefers is interview and media diary, as in my dissertation. Hoffmann writes that “(b)y using these methods, I am aiming for qualitative rather than quantitative results to gain deeper insights into the mediation strategies that parents of very young children choose” (2019, p. 13). My reason for choosing these two methodologies is the same as for Hoffmann’s. Since we use the same research methods, I reference the questions she asked the participants. Benefiting from Hoffmann’s (2019) research thesis about screen time, I am inspired by the following questions she pose to families, “(h)ow often does your child use media devices?” and “(h)ow long does your child use the media device?” both in the interview and in the media diaries (p. 44).

Focusing on a specific style of parental mediation style and a particular media type, Petegem, Ferrerre, Soenens, Rooij, and Looy (2019) concentrate on digital gaming and restrictive mediation style. This research is based on parents’ efforts to turn the games that their children play in a digital environment into positive and effective use for young consumers. Petegem, et al (2019) write that “(i)n the current investigation, we focused specifically on restrictive mediation digital gaming

among parents of young children between three and nine years of age, thereby distinguishing between their degree and their (autonomy-supportive or) controlling style of mediating” (p. 1382). This is a study that offers very significant results because digital games are very prevalent among children, as well as the fact that restrictive mediation techniques such as attitudes towards limiting children’s time with media tools and a set of rules restricting children’s internet use are the most preferred method of parents from many cultures, including Turkey.

In a detailed research comparing the use of parental mediation strategies from an entirely different perspective, Bayraktar (2107) addresses a comparison between Turkey and Europe. He suggests that “(f)indings of this study show that parental mediation strategies may differ depending on the context” and adds that “(t)herefore, programs that aim to increase parents’ Internet literacy should focus on the context as well” (2017, p. 34). Comparing Turkey to many other European countries, Bayraktar (2017) gives an overview of how parents’ habits might change in different cultures. His article includes three different methods of parental mediation and what online risks can be. So, the inference from this article is that parents’ styles may differ from context to context, and parental mediation styles, which vary from culture to culture, will undoubtedly change from family to family at the implementation stage.

In another article by Bentley, Turner, and Jago (2016), the main question is very similar and has much in common with this thesis’s concepts. Researchers prefer to interview only the children’s mothers. They indicate that “(t)he aim of this study was to explore mothers’ views of their preschool children’s screen-viewing behavior (including mobile devices) and investigate how preschool children use different screen-viewing devices” (Bentley et al., 2016, p.1). It is very important that they include other mobile devices in children’s screen-viewing because many children who are three years old now have known to use tablets and phones and have no difficulty

finding something to watch for themselves. This article draws attention that children watch cartoons and animations from their parents' phones or tablets. In other words, they note that media devices are now becoming more portable. Besides, the researchers add the questions they ask the participants and even some of the answers they receive. As in this article, seeing well designed interview questions is inspiring because of the advantages that it has previously been directed at other participating parents.

In a study conducted in Bursa, parents were asked what their favourite cartoons are and the same question was asked to children. The researchers aim to understand whether parents could keep their children under control. The result is that parents cannot control what their children are watching. Başal, Kahraman, Akoğlu, Atlilar and Durgut (2017) write that “(i)t is seen that parents mostly indicate the ideal one; but children indicate the cartoons or series that they like to watch” (p. 495). So, it is an essential reference for my thesis to be current and to be research done in Turkey. In their study on parents' criteria and the points, they pay attention to when choosing the cartoons and animations that their kids are allowed to watch, the researcher does a close reading. This study does not include interviews with the children. Still, the researchers question whether families agree with their children's ideas and their ability to control them.

## 2.5. Child and Parent's Co-Viewing Experiences

One of the chapters of a comprehensive book on children's development is about children's media habits and parenting. Waters, Domoff, and Tang (2016) mainly look at whether there is a communication between the child and their mother or father during media consumption and the type of dialogue. Some of the dialogues that are requested to be recorded from the participants are also included in the article, thus it is seen what kind of interaction they are in. The researchers

classify these interactions between parent and children into some categories that reflect co-viewing exchange and communication with children in relation to media content. So, in this data, an answer is found to the question of whether they have a strategy such as active meditation or co-viewing. The term co-viewing is one of the most important concepts for my thesis because co-viewing creates a bond between parent and child, and if the mother or father is with him or her and watch the same thing while the child is consuming the contents, it will greatly affect both the child's level of influence and development.

In another research, which is very up-to-date and has shifted into psychology, the researchers examine the differences in attitudes that the mothers and grandmothers have in children's experiences of watching cartoons. Meng, Sheng, Zhao, Wang and Su (2020) interview 89 children's parents and grandparents in Beijing and obtain various answers by asking several questions about their children's and grandchildren's television viewing habits such as "(d)o you monitor the content of the cartoons that your child views?" or "(d)o you think viewing cartoons influences on children's physical and mental health?" (p. 5). The researchers reveal what the effects of co-viewing means. In this thesis, co-viewing is one of the essential concepts that is addressed, with its causes and consequences. For example, consuming media content with a mother or another parent may have a different effect on the child in terms of their perception of the events and cartoon characters they see on screen. A case study focusing on the effects that children may have on consuming media content and their mothers and grandmothers is applied as a reference in creating some media diary questions. Although this study specifically focuses on children's cartoon-watching habits, in the same way, questions are adapted in a manner that may be more appropriate to the research area of the dissertation. For one of the media diary question that is about the parents' thoughts for each media medium, the research of Meng et al. (2020) are taken as a reference because they ask their participants that "(d)o you monitor the content of the cartoons that your child views?" (p. 5). Meng

et al (2020) ask the participants the following question in their research “Do you limit your child’s cartoon-viewing time?” (p. 5). So, that is another question taken from them as a reference.

## 2.6. Recommendations for Raising Parents’ Awareness

Reflecting the facts about parents’ lack of control and authority over their children’s media usage, Pratiwi, Andajani and Putra (2019) emphasize that writing and printing have helped change the world, and the people in it. Nowadays, the mass media also do the same thing and have the same effect. So, by looking at a necessity, the researchers make some suggestions. The article, which consists of some different titles and is written in short sections, focuses on early childhood. Pratiwi, Andajani, and Putra (2019) summarise the recommendation of their study as follows, “(t)he advice of this study is to implement the design of media literacy promotion for parents who have early childhood” (p. 1424). An education that aims to raise parents’ awareness and warn mothers and fathers about the adverse effects that media can have on children can be instrumental.

Another article on raising awareness for parents aims to show what can be done to direct children's media use in a positive aspect in general. Brooks-Gunn and Donahue (2008) emphasize that “(g)overnment officials, community activists, child advocates, and families must put their energies into shaping content to make media technology a positive force in the lives of children and youth” (p. 9). Researchers make many suggestions to educators, families, and policymakers. As in their statements, they believe that content is of great importance and can have an impact if it is produced in a way that can positively affect the development of children. Brooks-Gunn and Donahue (2008) mention that parents should put pressure on the industry to develop more reliable and meaningful content for children, reduce inappropriate advertising and develop better industrial products such as toys to help display actual content. If the necessary improvements are made on the content

consumed by the children, perhaps the concerns of the parents may be alleviated to some extent, although their responsibilities continue.

## 2.7. Reports on Children and Media Consumption

A comprehensive report on children and media is “Children and Parents: Media use and attitudes report 2019” by Ofcom. The researchers write the purpose of the report using the following statements, “(t)his report provides evidence on media use, attitudes and understanding among children and young people aged 5-15, as well as about the media access and use of young children aged 3-4” and they add that “(i)t also includes findings on parents’ views about their children’s media use, and how they monitor and limit it” (Ofcom, 2020, p. 1). So, there are more than one finding which is of importance in this report. For instance, one of them is to demonstrate how children’s media habits and preferences evolve by conducting interviews with children and obtaining data. In the process, there are comments and graphs about how parents balance that line between giving children digital independence while keeping them in control. Another crucial part of the report is that they divide children from the age of three to the age of 15 into groups and present them with percentages.

“Kids digital media report 2019” by SuperAwesome, which is a digital kids platform that provides information about children’s media industries such as Amazon, Netflix, Google, etc. in terms of being more conscious. The report shows that such large digital platform companies can provide safe access to children and parents control systems. One of the most essential pieces of data obtained in the report is that “YouTube is the largest kids digital entertainment and advertising platform” (SuperAwesome, 2019, p. 14). It is critical to present similar information about the industry with

the help of charts to establish a cause-and-effect relationship because seeing the innovations made in the industrial field helps clarify why children may prefer these media.

The report titled “2020 Essential Facts about the Video Game Industry” is a large-scale study conducted in the United States. According to the results of the study, 65 percent of parents play various video games with their children because they see it as an opportunity to socialize with their children (Entertainment Software Association, 2020, p. 13). As can be seen from here, playing a video game or witnessing it at home has now become a natural part of children’s lives. So, considering the diversity of the content of video games and the alternatives offered for children of different age groups, it becomes a media outlet consumed by parents and children together. This is included in co-viewing, an area of focus in parental mediation theory, as well.

The academic sources examined under different headings contributed to the formation of the framework of the thesis because I decided the appropriate methodology and the interview and media diary questions by using the researches that were previously carried out. Instead of just focusing on children’s use of the media, this thesis aims to expose parents who have more say in this and guide their children and the ways they follow. Each source I reviewed allowed me to look at the subject from different perspectives. In this sense, parental mediation theory is applied. Like some of the studies mentioned above, this thesis tries to reach the views of mothers and fathers in as much detail as possible. However, it is aimed to classify the strategies and methods applied by parents considering their reasons and to analyze the different communication ways they use according to this theory, which distinguishes this thesis from other studies. In the next chapter, I will explain in detail what my preferred research methods are for this thesis, the advantages and disadvantages of these methodologies, as well as the process of piloting and sample selection.

## CHAPTER III - RESEARCH

### 3.1 Methodology

Since this qualitative research examines families' level of consciousness and control of their children's media habits, interviewing and media diaries are the most appropriate research methodologies to collect relevant data. This study aims not to obtain data that reflect the majority and come up with patterns or generalizations, but rather to examine families' attitudes and parental mediation strategies in depth and detail. I intend to find out the criteria parents use while deciding and controlling screen time and choosing television channels and media contents, some digital platforms or video games for their children, as well as the potential effects of this media content and consumption on their children. I believe interviews and media diaries can properly reflect the actual feelings and thoughts of the participants on this issue. As Kvale (1996) emphasizes, "(t)he research interview is an enriching experience for interviewees, who through dyadic interplay with the interviewer, obtain new insights into their life-world and the research theme" (p. 32-33, as cited in Qu and Dumay, 2011, p. 243). Parents are expected to respond most honestly and sincerely to questions asked about their children's use of media and the methods they follow. Similarly, the diary methodology will present data based on the actual perspective of the parents in a process and it will keep a detailed log of their experiences. As a senior user experience specialist, Salazar (2016) defines that "(a) diary study is a research method used to collect qualitative data about user behaviors, activities, and experiences over time" (para. 1). In brief, it is vital to get authentic answers from parents for this research, both to understand their point of view and to make an evaluation accordingly, and assess the parental mediation theory in play.

### 3.1.1 Diary Methodology

This study aims to understand the importance that parents give to their children's media consumption, the preferences they make and how they follow the path, and for this purpose, I ask these parents to keep a media diary that is a common methodology of choice for qualitative research. Salazar (2016) indicates that "(d)iary studies allow you to get a contextual understanding of users' behavior and experiences over time" (para. 20). In addition to the answers that parents give during the interviews, the reason I prefer the diary is to be able to study children's media habits and parents' attitudes and consequences over a more extended period of one week. What parents respond to and the main reasons behind their answers become better understood thanks to the diary they fill out because what content the children consume for how long, the attitude of the parents at that moment, and what happens when they continue these strategies for a few days is instantly recorded by the parents. Since this thesis focuses on children's media habits and the behaviour of families, a methodology that examines this process in detail is very important. So, families are asked to fill out a media diary for a week. In other words, for one week, parents closely observed their children and considered situations that they may not have paid attention to before during their media consumption. Milligan, Bingley, and Gatrell (2005) who have different books on the diary methodology, state that

Where the purpose of the diary is to provide access to a more in-depth understanding of people's interpretations of their worlds, semi- or unstructured diary recording techniques may be more appropriate as they can provide a useful tool for developing realistic pictures and sensitive descriptions of an individual's everyday life (as cited in Bartlett and Milligan, 2015, p. 15)

Thanks to the diaries, it is possible to understand both children and parents' behavior, reactions, and approaches. They can be thought of as a daily media report that reflects these facts. These media diaries filled in by the participants enable me to reach many qualitative and quantitative data such as which media outlets children consume and how often, how screen times vary, and what content is most preferred by children and parents, and which are not. In their article about electronic media diaries, Miller, Kinnally, Montano, and Robinson (2016) write that "(r)ather than asking participants to recall behaviors or emotions they may have experienced in the past week or month, as in survey research, participants in diary studies look back on their experiences every day, or even every few hours" (p. 172). As they state, it makes more sense for the participants to record something instantaneously, reflect on the facts, and get more information, rather than asking them to remember their habits or events that took place a few days ago. Bartlett and Milligan (2015) emphasize the following description about the feature of diaries that reflect the instant events in usual surroundings, "(m)oreover, diary method allows for the collection of naturalistic data – that is, information gathered 'in the moment' and in a 'real environment', like a home or the outdoors, rather than a research clinic or laboratory" (p. 15). In terms of my research field, this natural environment is where the media is used by children and any place where parents can observe their children.

### 3.1.2. Approaches to Diary Methodology

There are different approaches in the implementation stages of media diaries. As Bartlett and Milligan (2015) examine these approaches under the title solicited diary techniques (p. 13) and they indicate, according to the purpose and subject of the research and the data to be obtained, the structure of the diaries may vary and while designing a diary, researchers can prefer one of the structured, semi-structured and unstructured application methods or they can follow a mixed path

(p. 17). In other words, depending on the circumstances in which participants are asked to record, and the research question, which application method to prefer/use may vary? When defining a structured approach, Bartlett and Milligan (2015) write that “(s)tructured diary keeping adopts a checklist or other fixed-response format that is designed to record and gather numerical data on how often a diarist undertakes a specific action or activity” and they add that “(t)he diarist is generally required to regularly ‘log’ items against a list of predefined actions or validated measures over a predefined period of time” (p. 18). So, this daily technique, prepared in a specific format and predetermined what situations participants are asked to keep in the record, has a less flexible structure compared to other approaches. For this thesis, the structured diary approach is also preferred. There is no timeline in the media diary given to the participants. Still, parents are also asked to record time-specific data, such as focusing on what time of day and what periods the children consume the media fit the definition of the predefined time, which is the first reason for choosing the structured approach in this thesis. Another reason is to prevent parents from going out of the circumstances I ask them to keep on record, to prevent them from making unnecessary observations, and to ensure that they focus on the given diary themes as detailed as possible. Besides, since I ask the parents as little? Open-ended and non-one-sided questions as possible in the interviews, they are asked to make observations with clear boundaries and very specific inputs in these media diaries.

### 3.1.3. Advantages and Disadvantages of Diary Methodology

Diary methodology is preferred by many researchers in media and communication studies. As media and communication researchers Berg and Düvel (2012) write that “(t)he application of diaries in media and communication studies reaches from the standardized investigation of temporal characteristics of mass media usage to more ethnographically informed views on mediated

(interpersonal) communication” (p. 77). So, it is possible to say that media diaries have an ethnographic structure due to interpersonal communication disclosure. With the increasing use of media day by day and the emergence of digitalization in every field thanks to technological developments, the researchers’ processes to analyze, compare, and finally obtain a result have naturally ceased to be one-sided and require a more in-depth evaluation. Berg and Düvel (2012) also indicate that “(t)hey allow the integration of complex (digital) media repertoires, rather than only concentrating on single media, thereby extending the media ethnographic perspective: following around a person’s appropriation of media throughout the day, the researcher’s gaze is not limited to single locations” (p. 84). Considering that children do not consume a single media outlet for the same amount of time, there is no established criterion for how they are affected. At the same time, parents do not follow a uniform strategy for the same reasons. A media diary is a very useful methodology for applying the analysis and parental mediation theory.

Along with the benefits of digitalization, some innovative diary types have emerged. One of them is video diaries. Bartlett and Milligan (2015) especially emphasize that researching on children is one of the areas where new technologies are adopted, and researchers realize that today’s children have grown up with digital media outlets and electronic means of communication or they are accustomed to the concept of recording oneself or applying some electronic devices in their daily lives. The idea of recording your video will perhaps become a habit the upcoming generation will be familiar with at birth. From this point of view, it is very likely that this new video diary method may also be preferred by researchers who will conduct studies on children.

In addition to its advantages to researchers, media diaries also have some limitations. Within the context of this thesis research, the first limitation is the lack of motivation that can arise in mothers and fathers. Since parents can only give the answers to the information intended to be obtained in

the media diaries, the answers they have given and the observations they have made should have a more significant share of accuracy. Regarding this situation, Bartlett and Milligan (2015) summarise as follows, “(r)elies on the informant’s ability and motivation to complete diary” (p. 94). Another handicap that can occur is the possibility of situations such as getting bored and not wanting to respond fully towards the last days, as parents are given a diary that they are asked to observe for a week and fill out day by day. Bartlett and Milligan (2015) see the situation as a limitation of this methodology and express it as follows, “(w)here recording is required over a period of time, study fatigue may set in resulting in poorer quality recording towards end of study” (p. 94). Before being interviewed and given media diaries, participants are asked to show sensitivity to accuracy and not lose their motivation to not occur in either situation.

#### 3.1.4. Media Diary Question Selection

The first step in the media diary that families are asked to fill in is which media channel or channels their children used that day. It is very important to fully describe this question to make an analysis. Simultaneously, the data taken on this question allows me to understand the general situation in children’s media use, the specific medium they consume and assess subsequent analyses. Another part of the media diary is to understand the name of the cartoon or animation that children watch, the game they play or the videos they watch, and the content their children consume in these media channels. Figuring out the messages and genres given in all these media channels is very influential for adapting the theory of parental mediation. Most of the dialogue between parent and child goes through content. Regarding the importance of the content, Austin, Bolls, Fujioka and Engelbertson (1999) mention that “(t)he term “mediation” should properly refer only to discussions of content, which could be either positive or negative in tone” (as cited in Warren, 2003, p. 395). In the next step, parents are asked to write down information such as what they think about the media channel

their children use and the content they consume, and whether they approve the content or not. It can be an episode of a particular cartoon series, an application game, or all the other content children experience during that day. Parents' approaches to this concern of whether they approve or disapprove are a step towards understanding what parental mediation strategy they are adopting. After all, it is very likely that this explains the reason for the emergence of parental intervention in this process. The degree of this parental intervention also directly reflects the perspectives of the parents. Considering the effect of the parental intervention on mediation strategies, Warren, Gerke, and Kelly (2002) write that "(t)he items concerning restrictive and instructive mediation explicitly suggest parental intervention between child and content" (p. 106). Later on, parents are asked to make an observation about screen time. What is important here is to be able to know whether there is any time limitation or condition that parents allow their children, what this period is, and also how long their children actually use media. Just like content, children's media usage time and how parents achieve this limitation in a day are also great determining factors. Jiow, Lim and Lin (2016) state that "(p)arents may impose rules relating to the duration and strategic times of usage, seeking parental approval, identifying permissible games, or setting conditions to be filled before game play is permitted, for example, that the child has completed his/her school work or household chores" (p. 311). The requirements that parents set for their children about screen time may vary, but their attitudes somehow give clues about their strategies. After that regarding the interventions, parents are asked to explain how their children are in contact with them while they are engaged in media devices. For this, they are asked to be informed about whether they are with them while their children are busy with media tools and if they are accompanying them. In other words, the existence of a co-viewing situation is questioned here. Uhls and Robb (2017) make the clearest definition of co-viewing as follows, "(t)he act of watching television and video content with children" (p. 331). Co-viewing is an approach that has already been focused on in many articles written about parental mediation. Uhls and Robb (2017) add that "(c)o-viewing is not a monolithic act—there is substantial variation in when and how parents choose to co-view with their children,

ranging from very high to very low levels of involvement” (p. 331). So, because of the multifaceted nature of the co-viewing activity, in the media diary, parents write every moment they accompany their children and what kind of dialogue they are in. As the last step, at the end of each day, parents are asked to explain how all these media consumption of their children and the strategies they have adopted yield results that can be positive or negative. So, they describe the condition of whether there is an anxiety-provoking behavior they notice in their children or, on the contrary, behavior they like. The aim here is to understand the awareness of parents about the effects of the different parental mediation methods they have adopted. Collier et al (2016) whose research focuses on the effects of parental mediation of media on children, define that “(r)esearch into these processes suggests that each type of parental mediation works first to alter children’s perceptions of content presented in the media or the medium itself, whether on purpose or not” and then they add that “(t)hese altered perceptions then affect children’s attitudinal or behavioral outcomes” (p. 799). At this last stage of the media diary, parents answer the questions such as whether they have to change their children’s perspective, and if so, what are the outcomes of their attitudes.

Table 1. Media Diary Questions

Questions	Where the questions are adapted from (if any)	Goal
1) Which media channel or channels did your child use today?	-	To understand the general situation in children’s media use
2) What are their names and contents of their media consumption?	-	To understand the messages and genres given in all these media channels

3) What are your thoughts for each media medium? What are the ones you approve of and what are the ones you disapprove of?	Meng, Sheng, Zhao, Wang and Su (2020)	To understand parents' approaches to the concern of whether they approve or disapprove
4) How much time did you give your child for media consumption? How much did he or she consume?	Meng, Sheng, Zhao, Wang and Su (2020) / Hoffmann (2019)	To know whether there is any time limitation or condition that parents allow their children
5) Were you there during your child's media consumption? How was your communication?	-	To understand the existence of co-viewing act
6) As a result of media consumption, did your child have any behavior that you noticed that caused you anxiety or vice versa that you liked? What are they?	-	To understand the awareness of parents about the effects of the different parental mediation methods they have adopted

### 3.2. Interview Methodology

Another methodology used in this thesis is the in-depth interview, as I mentioned above. As for the type of interview, I prefer semi-structured in-depth interviews because I think it would be useful to allow participants to ask me questions or request clarifications when necessary. At the same time, semi-structured interviews offer the opportunity for participants to discover what they can think of about the subject spontaneously. About semi-structured interviews, Adams (2015) states that “(s)emi-structured interviews are superbly suited for a number of valuable tasks, particularly when more than a few of the open-ended questions require follow-up queries” (p. 493). In other words, it can be said that it is an interview method consisting of open-ended questions that are directed one after another. In addition to open-ended questions, interviews need flexibility, and they do not

require being strict. Denscombe (2010), who has written many books on research methods and rules, remarks that “(w)ith the semi-structured interview the interviewer is prepared to be flexible in terms of the order in which the topics are considered, and, perhaps more significantly, to let the interviewee develop ideas and speak more widely on the issues raised by the researcher” (p. 175). In line with the participants’ responses, I got the chance to encourage them to be even more open and honest, so their answers are able to accommodate more details. But, I also do not stray too far from the questions because the more they answer, the more the subject can be drawn in other directions, so I also do not neglect to keep it within the study purposes and limits.

### 3.2.1 Advantages and Disadvantages of Semi-Structured Interviews

Therefore, one of the advantages of semi-structured interviews is that the answers given by the participants allows the interviewer to learn the reasons behind them more easily through referrals and be flexible in some ways. In addition to its advantages, this research method has a disadvantage that can be called a weakness. According to the perception, the way the interviewer asks questions or how participants perceive the questions may distort their answers. This situation is called interviewer bias (Waterfield, 2018) or the interviewer effect (Newton, 2010). According to Waterfield’s (2018) description, “(i)nterviewer bias relates to aspects of the interviewers and how they ask questions and respond to answers—it is distinct from bias arising from the content or wording of questions” and she adds that “(i)nterviewer bias may be due to body language or facial expression or due to paralinguistic aspects of communication such as tone of voice or emphasis” (p. 2). Therefore, this situation is related to what kind of body language the interviewer uses, the tone of voice, or how the interviewer's reactions and facial expressions change according to the answers he or she receives. In my interviews with parents, I made an effort to be as neutral as possible in

every sense not to mislead them and actually get honest answers that reflect the truth about their children's use of the media outlets and the strategies they follow.

### 3.2.2. Interview Question Selection Process

The preparation phase of interview questions is a comprehensive study aimed at determining families' level of knowledge and awareness about the impact of their children's media consumption. The questions have been adapted to cover all media outlets, not just focusing on cartoons, without changing the approach's actual content. In the first two questions, I aim to measure parents' satisfaction with their children's media use and their level of awareness about it. It is very vital whether they answer these questions in a satisfactory way or, on the contrary, in a way that they suffer from their children's media usage habits. As a second step, the question is asked if they are aware of what their child is doing with media tools. The goal here is to learn more clearly the answer that parents will give, so do they know if they are conscious themselves? The third question is asked to learn whether co-viewing practice is applied in the media consumption process of children. The aim of the next question, which tries to remain entirely objective, is to understand which media tools their children use the most and to be able to make evaluations through it. Then turning to content, participants answer the question of what content their child generally watches or plays. Besides, they are asked what they think about these contents. With the next question, for the first time, such an explicit question is asked about a preference of parents' authority, what are their attitudes towards everything related to their child's media consumption? Do parents have control or authority over the time and content of their children's media consumption? Is there any conflict between parents and the child's opinions on this matter? Then, another question is asked to get their opinion on the suitability of the content with age. In order to find out whether behavioral changes are observed in children after media consumption, parents' consciousness and whether the strategy

they follow also plays a role in these changes are asked through following questions, considering the process they follow for their child’s media use, what do they think about the impact of what they watch or play on their child? What are their child’s behaviours that mothers or fathers observe after media consumption? For example, how do they think and what content is affected? Finally, the question posed to participants in terms of a general assessment, how would the parents describe their child’s media consumption in general and their attitude or strategy to this situation?

Table 2. Interview Questions

Questions	Reference of the questions (if any)	Concepts
1) What do you think of your child’s media consumption? How and how much does your child use the media? Do you think your child is as busy with the media as he or she needs, or is your child more involved than you allow?	-	Parents’ satisfaction with their children’s media use and their level of awareness
2) If you are aware of what your child is doing with media devices, for example, do you know what they are watching or playing?	-	To learn more clearly the answer that parents will give, so do they know if they are conscious themselves
3) How does your child consume media? For example, is he or she usually alone or has someone with him or her?	-	To learn whether co-viewing practice is applied in the media consumption process of children
4) What are the media tools your child uses most?	-	To understand which media tool children use the most and to be able to make evaluations through it

5) What content their child generally watches or plays? What do you think about these contents?	Yetim and Sariçam (2016)	Finding out parents' true opinions about the content their children consume
6) What is your attitude towards everything related to your child's media consumption? For example, do you have a control or a say about your child's media consumption time and contents? Is there any conflict between you and your child's opinions on this matter?	-	Understanding the existence of parents' authority over their children and their relationships with children
7) What do you think about the suitability of these contents and screen time for your child's age?	Yetim and Sariçam (2016)	Understanding what parents think about the suitability of media consumption and screen time for the age of their children
8) Considering the process you follow for your child's media use, what do you think about the impact of what they watch or play on your child? What are your child's behaviors that you observe after media consumption? For example, what do you think and what content is affected?	Yetim and Sariçam (2016)	To find out whether behavioural changes are observed in children after media consumption, to understand parents' consciousness and whether the strategy they follow also plays a role in these changes
9) How would you describe your child's media consumption in general and your attitude or strategy to this situation?	-	To make a general inference to parents

### 3.3. Sample Selection

Since both methodologies used in this thesis uses human participants, obtaining a certificate of approval for human subjects' research from the Ethics Committee of Bilkent University was necessary. For this purpose, I first filled out a form about the purpose of this project and what topic

I discussed with the participants. To guarantee the confidentiality of participants, it is stated in this form that their names and address information are not to be included in this thesis. So, both I as a researcher and project supervisor, Assistant Professor Dr. Emel Özdora Akşak signed this Bilkent student ethics form stating that ethical principles are complied with in this thesis. Later, as a result of negotiations with the Human Research Ethics Board, which is made up of academics studying in different departments, they approved this form. It has been noted that the conduct of this research does not pose any obstacles. The consent forms and ethics committee approvals can be found in Appendix 1 and 2.

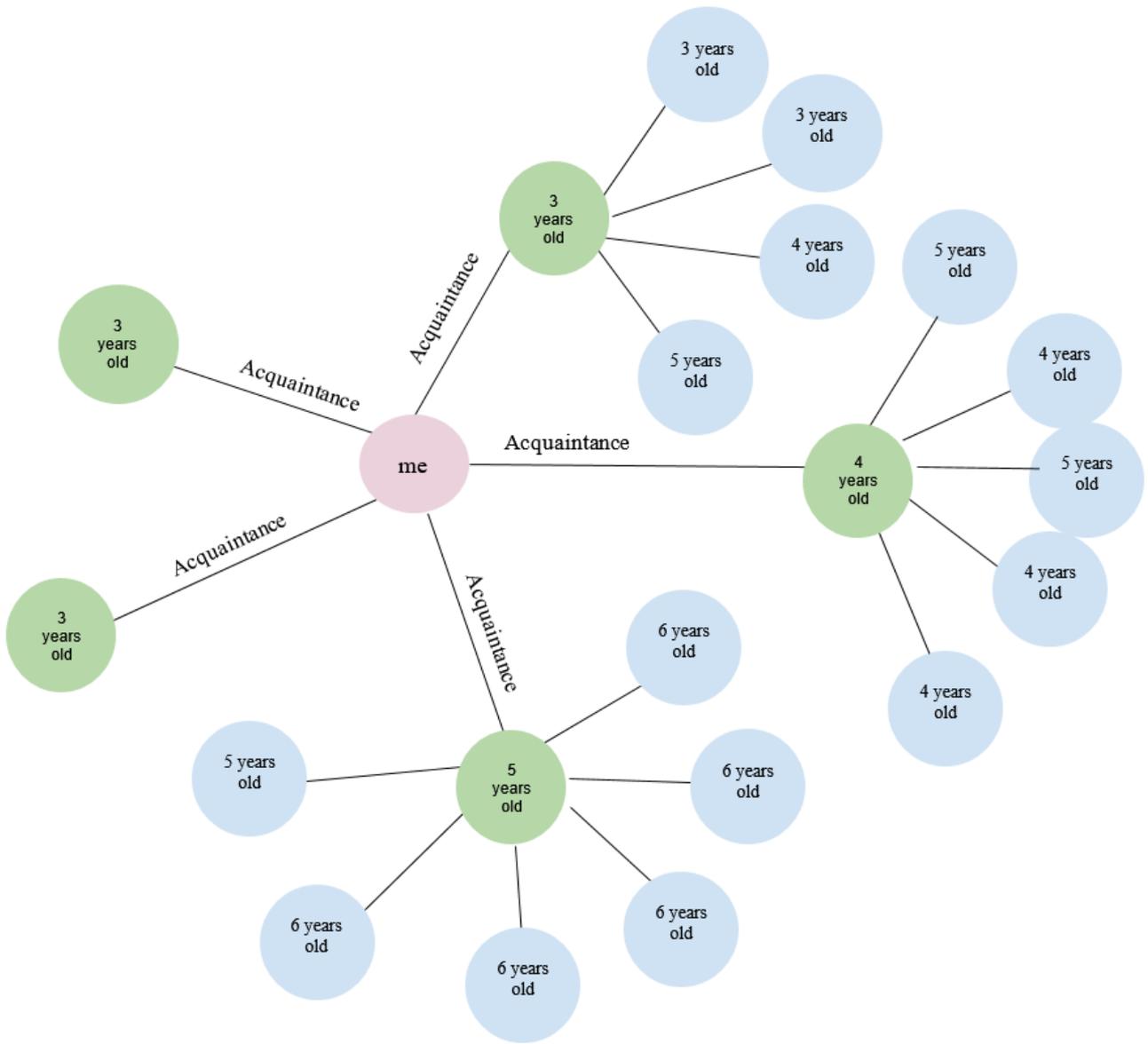
### 3.3.1 Convenience and Purposive Sampling

The first step of the research is media diaries based on 20 different families with children in the age groups of three, four, five and six living in Akşehir district of Konya. About these two nonprobability sampling techniques, Smith, Musa and Alkassim (2016) emphasize that convenience and purposive sampling can also be used when the researcher is not intended to produce results that will be used to generate generalizations about the entire population (p.1). So, these two methods are very suitable for my thesis since my aim is to make a detailed analysis based on cause-and-effect relationship rather than making a generalization or reaching a conclusion that concerns most of the population. Parker, Scott and Geddes (2019) also specify that “(a)s a form of convenience sampling, snowball sampling is often combined with purposive sampling, and to a lesser extent quota sampling, whereby participants are selected based upon their specific characteristics or membership of a group” (p. 2). So, it can be said that the common point of the participants is that they have children of the same age and as for belonging to the same group, it can be said that they are the parents of a kindergarten teacher.

I was able to reach the initial participants by making use of family acquaintances. The technique I preferred to reach the other participants is snowball sampling because it is quite likely that a parent with a child of the same age group knows another parent. At the same time, the fact that two of the participants work as teachers in kindergarten also allowed me to contact the parents of their students from different age groups. In short, both the friendship relationships of parents and the connection of preschool teachers with the student's guardian were benefited. Thanks to snowball sampling, it was not difficult to reach participants.

After reaching the initial three participants, I reached the following participant through the acquaintance of the parents and the student's guardians of the teacher, as mentioned above. The first is a mother with friends with children belonging to a similar age group. In this way, she and four different participants were reached. The second and third sampling was done by two different preschool teachers working in the same kindergarten. So, a total of eight parents, including themselves, were reached. It is also shown below as a diagram.

Figure 1. Sampling Model



In particular, when filling out media diaries, I asked each participant to observe their children together as parents. The fact that they are doing the stages of observing their children together has given them the opportunity to look at the events from the eyes of both the mother and the father, and this increases the accuracy rate in making such an assessment in this study.

The purpose of giving the media diary to the participants in the first place was that since the parents filled in the questions in the diary within a week, they had the opportunity to observe their children in a longer term and closely, and in this case, it allowed them to give more accurate answers to the questions asked during the interview. After observing their children, each participant was asked to take notes on parts that are not very open to interpretation and require clear answers, such as screen time and content, and to fill out the diary at the end of the day with questions that they should include their own thoughts.

It took exactly a week for the participants to fill out the media diary, while the interviews averaged around twenty minutes. The media diaries were given to the participants at the beginning of May 2021, and the interviews continued throughout May and until mid-June 2021. The media diaries were hand-delivered to five parents and sent online to remaining fifteen parents, and the participants filled and forwarded them in the same way. As for the interviews, four families were interviewed face to face, 10 families were interviewed via Zoom, which is a video conferencing application that makes it possible to make video calls, and the remaining six families were interviewed by phone. Although all interviews are not recorded, the answers given by the participants and the parts that I consider necessary were only noted during the interviews.

Since this study took place in Turkey and with Turkish participants, both media diaries and interviews, including the piloting process, took place in Turkish. Since the answers I have obtained were non-English, the expressions of the participants were translated into English in the most accurate manner and without loss of meaning. I chose to translate the answers given by the participants into English simultaneously during the interview or right after while taking notes. In this way, the answers were prevented from timeouts and turning into a false understanding. At the same time, I had the chance to ask immediately and understand the truth whenever I had a problem

while translating. In the media diaries, the answers were quite easy to translate compared to the interviews. Since many of the questions contained more quantitative answers and were more interconnected, the interpretation process required less effort, so there was almost no loss of meaning. These interviews and media diary methodology are conducted with five parents with children at the age of three, five parents with children at the age of four, five parents with children at the age of five, and lastly, five parents with children at the age of six.

Table 3. Distribution of the Ages of Children Included in the Study

<b>Ages of Children</b>	<b>Number of Parents/Children included in the study</b>
3 Years Old	5
4 Years Old	5
5 Years Old	5
6 Years Old	5
<b><i>Total</i></b>	<b><i>20</i></b>

### 3.4. Piloting

The piloting process took place before interviews began and media diaries were distributed. As a preliminary step, the piloting process is not carried out with potential participants. Consequently, two parents with children of different age groups were interviewed, and as a result, some changes and adjustments were made in both the interview questions and the media diary. To emphasize the importance of the piloting process, Malmqvist, Hellberg, Möllås, Rose, and Shevlin (2019) say that “(a) carefully organized and managed pilot study has the potential to increase the quality of the research as results from such studies can inform subsequent parts of the research process” (p. 1).

Thanks to the pilot studies, I have seen which questions parents are confused about while answering, or which questions they want to respond effectively and give more information. I clearly observed that a little more explanation was needed for the four different interview questions, and by saying “for example” I brought the participants closer to the answers to the questions I had asked.

The interview questions I have made such additions in second, third, sixth and finally eighth. My goal is not to ask an additional question, but to clarify these questions as much as possible.

Previously, the third question was, “(h)ow does your child consume media?”, but I realized that there was a problem of clarity here and I added “(f)or example, is she usually alone or has someone with him or her?”. So, other additions were made similar to this question. Secondly, I removed some repetitive questions and expressions as I observed that the participants with whom I carried out this piloting process frequently used expressions “as I mentioned in the first question” or “as I just said”. As for the piloting process of the media diaries, fewer changes were required compared to the interviews. Only one addition was made. During the piloting process, parents were asked to indicate the content of the media that their children consumed, but they were also asked to give their exact names such as the name of the cartoon, animation, YouTube channel or video game. Because in this way, the accuracy of the answers that parents give about the content can also be evaluated. In other words, observations such as what parents say about the content and whether that media product actually matches with each other can be made. So, based on this piloting process, I have made all the necessary arrangements. The piloting took place in December 2021 and it lasted for two weeks, so about five months before I completed all the actual interviews and the media diaries I received from the participants.

## CHAPTER IV - FINDINGS

### 4.1. The First Research Question - The Media Channels Children Use Most and the Content They Consume

The first research question required parents to provide a general assessment of their children's media use, specifically focusing on the media outlets their children use the most. The media diary included two questions that investigated media channels used and the contents children or parents preferred. Such a research question aims to make an evaluation in general and see which content is preferred and which is not according to age groups. This kind of assessment would be very useful before continuing with the other three research questions and analyzing parental mediation strategies. Another goal in asking the participants this question is to understand which media outlets parents approve of more along with their reasons.

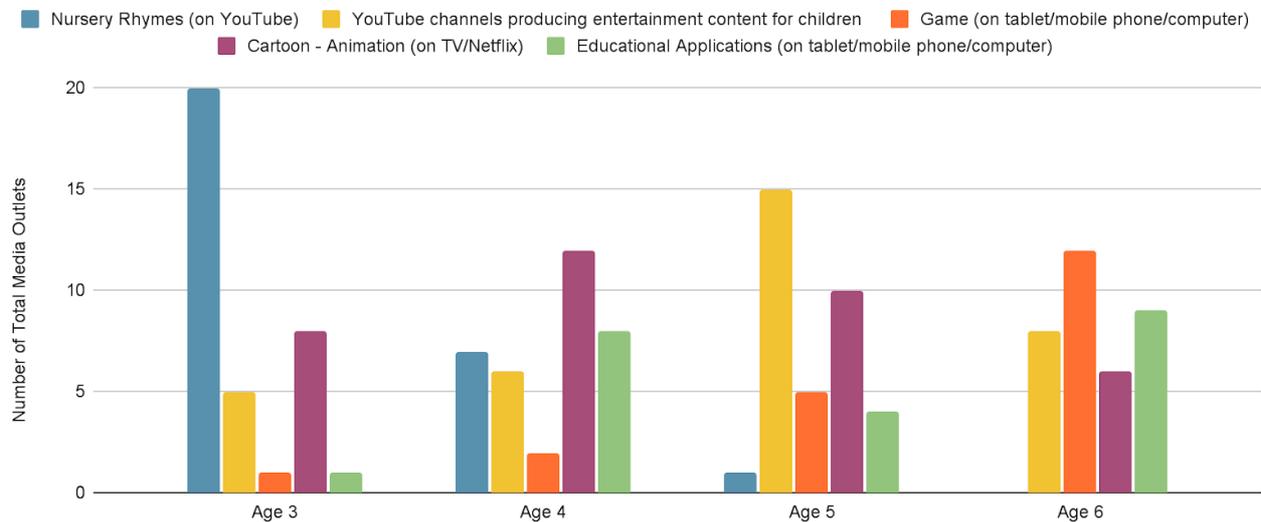
The parents were asked, which media channel or channels did your child use today. There were five different answers given by them. The first one was cartoons and animations via Netflix or various television channels (Cartoon Network, Minika Go, TRT Çocuk and Disney Channel). The second one was various YouTube channels producing entertainment content for children. The video content of these channels, which produce quite similar subjects to each other, but belong to different YouTubers, is usually the sharing of a child's day or moment of playing with their toys together with their mother, father, siblings and sometimes friends. In short, the children are playing games in the videos, the person who shoots the video - usually their parents - speaks in an excited tone

throughout the video, and the viewer's witness these moments. The viewing rates of Turkish YouTube channels, which produce such entertainment content for children, have reached quite high figures. These channels have a large audience that they address and follow. The third answer was diversified video games on a tablet, a mobile phone belonging to a mother or father or a computer. Another answer given by parents is nursery rhymes or children's songs under another name. All parents who gave this answer stated that they reached these songs via YouTube. Finally, educational applications are one of the preferred media tools. Children can access these applications on tablets and their parents' phones just like in video games.

The data in the chart below was collected based on each day. For each child, each day was taken as separate data because their parents filled out seven days of information, and the media channels that a child used were also not the same and consecutive every day. Before the research, during the piloting process, after a brief conversation with families, they said that their children mostly consume media at a certain time of the day. Based on this, I built such a data collection system.

Figure 2. Graphic Showing All Media Outlets Used By Children for a Week

### Media Channels That Children Use Most By Age Groups



This graphic shows all media outlets used by children during a week, as well as the range by age groups. As can be seen, the data of each age group is quite different from each other. At the age of three, nursery rhymes are largely preferred, followed by cartoon-animation and YouTube channels. It is included in the media channels consumed by three-year-old children in games and educational applications, albeit to a small extent. In four-year-old child media consumers, there is a noticeable decrease in the rate of listening to nursery rhymes. However, there is an increase in the remaining four media channels. In this age group, the highest increase was in the use of educational applications. When it comes to the age of five, it is noteworthy that there is a significant increase in the rate of watching YouTube channels. Although not as much as YouTube channels, games are also on the increase. Lastly, at the age of six, it seems that nursery rhymes completely disappeared from the list and were not preferred by children from any age group. Besides, another remarkable decline is in YouTube videos. The highest increase is in games, this time, followed by educational applications.

In addition, in these media outlets, the names of all these content that children consume were asked as another media diary question. According to the data obtained from the answers and also what I observed during the interviews, most of the parents do not know the names of cartoons, animations, YouTube channels, video games or educational applications and nursery rhymes. So, not just in particular to a certain type of media, but in general parents are quite unsuccessful in knowing or remembering names. Even those who have mastered its content seem unable to write it down when asked about the names. Except for the seven parents, all the remaining participants were not good at knowing the names, but all were able to identify and interpret the content. Among these answers, as cartoon were *Maşa ile Koca Ayı*, *Barbie*, *Pijamaskeliler*, *Pepee*, *Su Elçileri*, *Booba*, *İtfaiyeci Sam*, *Ejderhalar Kurtarıcı Ekibi*, *Elif ve Arkadaşları*, *Z Takımı*, *Justin Time Go*, *Simon*, *Giganotosaurus*, *Paw Patrol*, *Dezzy ve Bo*. As a YouTube channels, *Prenses Lina Tv*, *Eylül'ün Dünyası* and *Prenses Elif* were among the answers. *Cocomelon* was an answer that came in the category of nursery rhymes. *ABC Kids*, *Cute and Tiny World*, *WWF Together* and *1500 Kelime* are the educational apps children play. In terms of knowing the names of the games, mothers and fathers were very weak because there was no parent who could tell exactly which video game their child is playing.

The answer given by one of the parents, with a five-year-old daughter, regarding the content is as follows: “(s)he watches videos of children her age, videos taken with their parents, the last time she watched Lina is swimming.” Another response of a family with a three-year-old son is that “(h)e likes to watch and listen to songs, some aimed at learning colours and numbers in the English language and many more simple English words.”

This research question was further investigated via the interviews as well. Question number four in the interviews asked parents what are the media tools their child uses the most. This question helped to understand whether the parents gave consistent answers with the data they wrote after completing

the media diary. The result can be said to be quite consistent because parents who carefully observe their children for a week - maybe a little more than usual - know what their children consume in which media.

The fifth interview question is a continuation and consists of two parts. It asked parents what content their child generally watches or plays and secondly, what do they think about these contents? Along with this question, the process of gradually getting information about what parents' views are begins. The answers given by parents to this question usually involve a cause-and-effect relationship. If they think that their children are positively affected, that is, in a way that their parents might want, these contents are approved by them. A parent whose son is four years old does not approve of their child watching YouTube videos and answered this question "I do not approve of such YouTube contents taken with families and children at all, because we may not have the opportunities of families in these videos. For example, in one video, his father buys her child a fairly expensive toy, and in another video, they take her to a concert. I am talking about this kind of thing, I think it is just aimed at encouraging and making children consumers, unfortunately."

Another parent whose son is three years old stated that "(t)here are a lot of productions that try to impose on children that they have constant ambition and success, I certainly do not prefer him to watch them, and we stay away from cartoons with such content as much as I can."

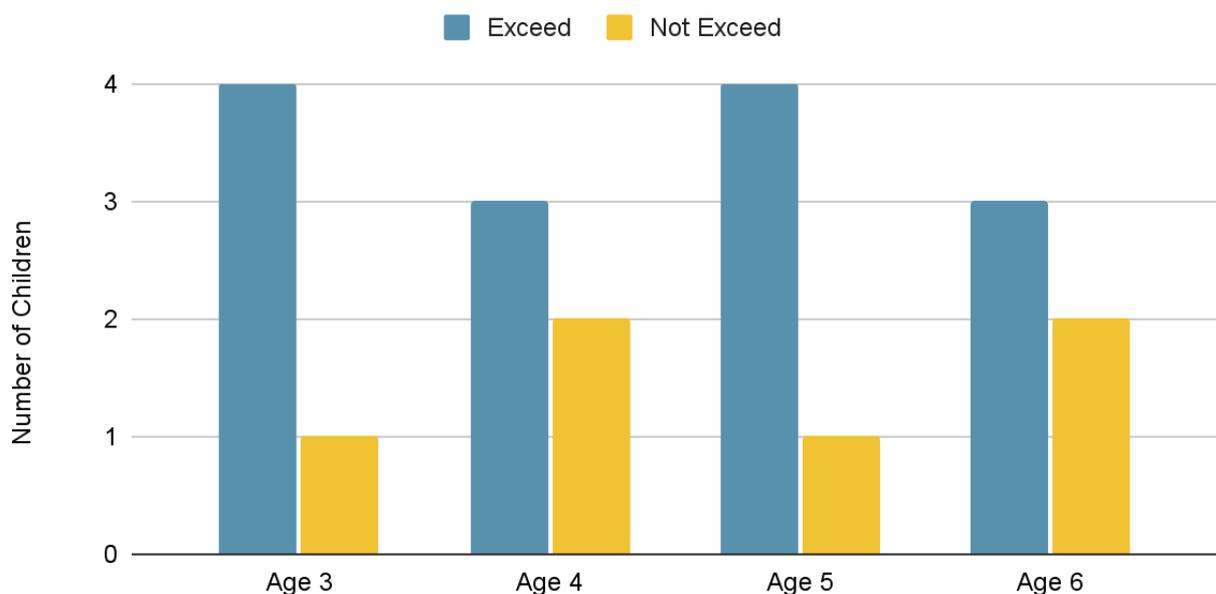
In brief, parents' views on media content are highly subjective and vary from family to family. Each parent has a different perspective. For some parents, it is important what their child has learned from the content they have consumed, while for some parents, it is more crucial that they stay away from the content they think their child should stay away from.

## 4.2. The Second Research Question - The Duration of Children's Screen Time

The second research question this thesis investigated was how long is the duration of children's screen time for a typical week, which was especially concerned with the time of media consumption and screen time. From their answers, it is clear that each parent necessarily has an opinion about managing their children's media usage time and keeping it under control. The media diary included a two-part question about this. First, how much time did you give your child? What I want to measure with this question is what screen time parents consider appropriate for their children. In the second part, participants are asked how long their child has used the media devices. The goal here is to understand what children's screen time actually is and see whether their parents are in harmony with the time they approve.

Figure 3. Graph Showing Screen Time Excess

### According to Age Groups, Whether Children Exceed the Screen Time Determined by Their Parents



To begin with the first part of the question, the graphic above shows whether children, by age group, exceed the screen time their parents have set for them.

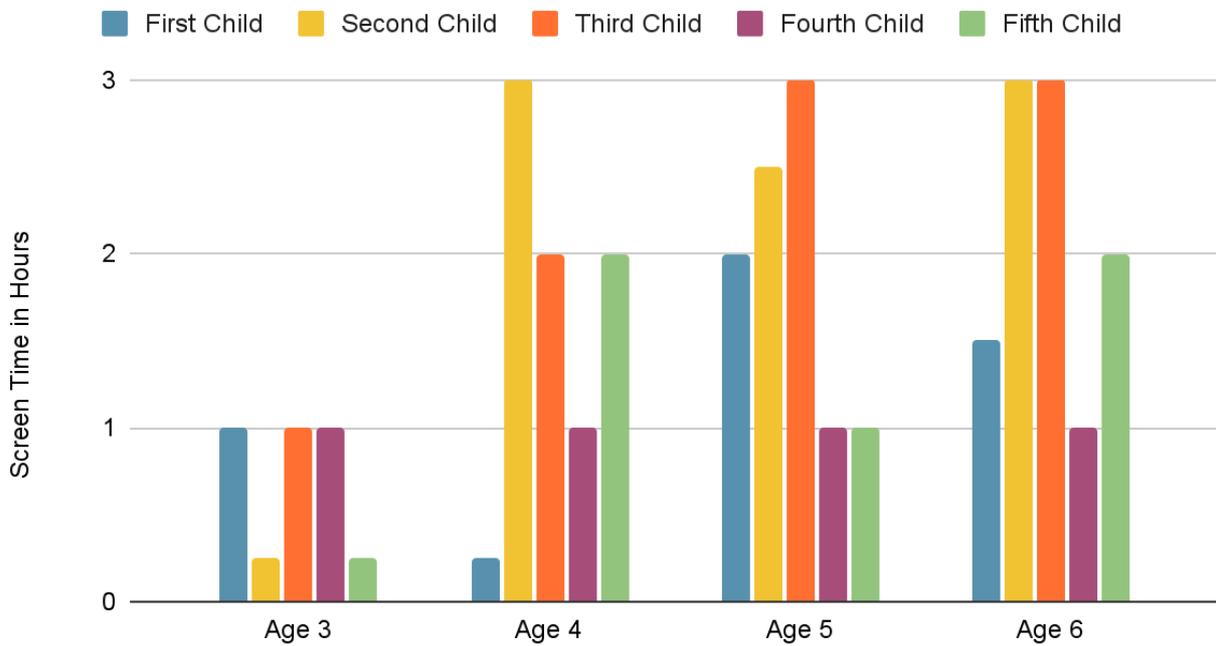
According to the data, the vast majority of children exceed the screen time set by their parents. In the graphic created in line with the responses from parents, the rates given in the age group of three and five years and the age group of four and six years can be said to be similar to each other.

Therefore, these data show that the age criterion is not a determining factor in children exceeding or not exceeding the screen time determined by their parents because there are children from all age groups who both exceed and do not exceed the screen time.

As for the other part of the media diary question, the graphic below shows the screen time of five different children of each age group, according to their parents' answers. Media usage times of all 20 children in total are reflected in this graphic in hours.

Figure 4. Children's Media Consumption Time

### Media Consumption Time of Each Child By Age Group



The screen time of each child was obtained by calculating the average of a week. According to the parents' answers, there was a minimum of 15 minutes and a maximum of three hours of media consumption, regardless of age.

Looking at the graph above, just as in the previous case, that is, about the excess of the screen time set by the parents, it cannot be said that there is an increase or a decrease in screen time according to age. Based on these data, it is possible to interpret that screen time is a more individual criterion that varies from child to child rather than a situation that changes according to age. However, it seems obvious that three-year-olds have less screen time than other age groups. As for the question posed to parents in the first part of the media diary, which focuses on how much time they allow for their children, the graph below shows whether there is an excess of time parents give permission for their children to use media by age groups.

The interviews also included a question, question number one, which asked parents: What do you think of your child's media consumption? How and how much does your child use the media? Do you think your child is as busy with the media as he or she needs, or is your child more involved than you allow? When asking this question to the participants, especially for the part about what you think about your child's media consumption, all of them answered without hesitation and without thinking too much. It can be said that the answers for the first part are divided into two, because on the one hand, there is a group of parents who are satisfied with their child's media consumption in terms of time, and on the other hand, there is a group of parents who complain about their child's media usage time.

I would like to state some of the answers to this interview question. One of the participants, with a four year old daughter, said that "I try to keep my child away from the media as much as I can, but, unfortunately, today's children are exposed to the media as much as we do not want them to be and besides, at the moment of most of their lives." As can be seen from this answer, this family has a lot of negative thoughts about their child's relationship with the media, so they even counts media tools as a threat, and so no matter how much their child uses the media in one day, this idea does not change. Another participant whose son is four years old had a similar mindset and said that "I regret to say that my child's media consumption is more than it should be, I know 10 minutes for all ages. Especially during the pandemic period, when we had to spend time at home, this consumption increased even more. But all I can do is restrict what he watches and the diversity of the media, so I try to make sure my child gets through it with less harm." Similarly, this was the response of a parent who had an unfavourable aspect of her child's media consumption. She states that she always has a limiting and selective attitude because she thinks that her child consumes more media than it should.

On the other hand, a group of participants are very happy with their child's media consumption habits and screen time, and the answer of a mother whose son is six years old is as follows “(m)edia channels are now indispensable in our lives and the necessity of our age, it is possible to say this especially for social media. Therefore, I do not make an effort to keep my child away because eventually, the media will be a fundamental part of his life, but since he is young, we can keep it under control, but not by restricting and banning it, but by talking to him.” Another participant, with same age group children, said in response to this interview question “(f)rankly, I do not think my child has too much media consumption or an addiction because he uses it as much as I and his father allow, he does not go beyond that, so in general, his involvement with media tools does not cause a problem because he does not exceed the screen time.” So, these responses reflect two different parents who are satisfied with their child's media use. To summarize briefly, the media diary asked parents to report how much time they allow their child for media consumption. And compare this with how much media they actually consumed. The point of this question was to understand how much actual control parents had over their children’s media consumption times and duration.

After this research question about children's media usage time was directed to the participants, the result was that each child's screen time varied and was not an age-related condition. Also, based on the answers given to the interview question, while some families are generally not satisfied with their children's media use, some families are very happy with their children's relationship with the media.

#### 4.3. The Third Research Question - Parents' Consciousness Levels

The third research question aimed to assess the level of parents' consciousness about their children's media consumption. Evaluating how conscious parents are and how aware they are of each stage of their children's media consumption takes up a large part of this research. Therefore, this question contains a sub-question, as well. Do parents determine and control their children's media content and consumption type? I asked one media diary and two interview questions to get accurate and detailed answers from parents to these research questions.

In the media diary, parents were asked their thoughts about each media tool their children used, and also added to this question, which ones they approved of and which ones they disapproved of. All parents chose to give a general answer to this question and did not neglect to specify reasons for approval and disapproval. Some of these answers are as follows: “(w)e approve of him watching television because every time he watches it, I and his father pick it up and turn it on. However, we do not allow YouTube videos and content to be watched, because some content and images may appear on the Internet beyond my control. Unfortunately, we experienced this. As for television commercials, we use Netflix, so we have no such worries.” According to this answer of a mother whose son is three years old, we see parents who are more content conscious in their children's media consumption, based on their previous experience.

Now I will continue with two different answers that the same parent whose son is four years old, gave on different days of the media diary. He said that “(h)e has a lot of interest in dinosaurs, so he likes to watch *Giganotosaurus*. Although I was uncomfortable with some scenes of this animation, I let him watch it because he really liked it” for one of the days. The other day, a similar response came and he indicated that “(s)ince it was the weekend, I let him watch a little longer. When I said

‘come on dear, enough for today’, we closed it. *Z Takımı* is actually a cartoon beyond his age. I did not want him to watch it, but I did not worry too much because he would be more curious and interested unless I let him.” The parent is aware of the content, including the name of the cartoon and animation, and acts as consciously as possible about his child's media consumption. Eventually, as I mentioned earlier, even if the name of cartoons or YouTube channels is not exactly known, the responses are usually like this. Parents are aware in their own way of how their children should consume the media.

Second of the interview questions assess whether parents are aware of what their child is doing with media, for example, do they know what he or she is watching or playing. The answer given by all of the participants to this question was “yes, I know.” In other words, even one of them did not respond like, “no, I do not know what my child is doing.” In fact, the purpose of directing this interview question to the participants is not to understand how conscious the parents are. Rather, to understand whether mothers and fathers see themselves as conscious parents about their children's media consumption. So, according to the answers, the decision is quite clear. Parents think that they are conscious of it.

The interviews also included further follow up questions about media consumption time and parental control. Question number six asked parents what their attitude is to everything related to their child's media consumption. For example, do they have control over their child's media consumption time and content? Furthermore, they were asked if there is any conflict between you and your child's opinions on this matter. Although the question of whether parents have control over their children's media consumption seems like a yes or no question, I actually think it is not. The reason for this is that the criteria for being in control can vary. The aim here is to address the answers given by the participants individually and to make interpretations taking into account the

age groups of the children. The answers given by parents to this interview question are shown in the tables below. Each table is arranged according to age groups and the answers given by the parents are shown exactly.

Table 4. The Answers of the Participants to the 6th Interview Question

First parent with a 3-year-old child	I would say we are in control in general, at the time we have determined, which is usually when we are eating, he is on the phone with YouTube videos. Yes, mostly, there is a conflict between us, and he does not want to leave the phone.
Second parent with a 3-year-old child	Our media consumption is always within a limit. We have rules and a certain time restriction. Yes, we are having conflicts about screen time, but I would say we are getting over it fast.
Third parent with a 3-year-old child	I am in favour of as little media exposure as possible, without too many restrictions. I believe that everything should be under family control. Of course, we set a time limit. Sometimes when he wants to extend the time even if he has crying crises, I try not to open it and tell him the harm, I draw his attention to something else.
Fourth parent with a 3-year-old child	As parents, everything is under our control. We also know about the contents, of course. As long as we allow him to consume media for a limited time, we do not have a problem.
Fifth parent with a 3-year-old child	I think that the use of media should be limited in absolutely every sense. That is my and my wife's attitude. I am having conflicts with my child, yes, we are trying to find a middle ground.
First parent with a 4-year-old child	We have not had so many conflicts so far. The content that we allow is already obvious, so as parents, we have control over it.

Second parent with a 4-year-old child	We are trying to keep it under control as much as we can. But since we are always at home and cannot spend time outside due to the pandemic, her relationship with the media has increased compared to the past. Sometimes she exceeds the time we allow, and unfortunately, we have discussions.
Third parent with a 4-year-old child	I try to have as much control as I can over media consumption time. I follow the content. Small-time extensions can be made, I do not overreact, but I try to prevent this. Sometimes, we solve it calmly.
Fourth parent with 4-year-old child	Our child does not pick up the phone or tablet without our permission, we gave him this habit. So, our stance is pretty firm. I know all the contents, at least I try to research as much as I can. Our same rules for screen time continue and our child does what we say.
Fifth parent with a 4-year-old child	We try to set rules at home as much as possible. With this pandemic period, we have become unable to apply our rules, and with the effect of not being able to go to school, it is very difficult for him to spend any other time at home. Yes, we live in conflicts.

First parent with a 5-year-old child	We usually talk to our child, and we constantly talk to her about how watching too many cartoons can be harmful, that we can do other activities together when we are at home, I can say that we do not have strict rules. We still have conflicts, but we usually leave the decision up to her.
Second parent with a 5-year-old child	We think that our child is playing games and using YouTube more than necessary. I think it had a great impact on her not being able to go to school and socialize with her friends during the pandemic period. Unfortunately, every time she gets bored, she takes the tablet.
Third parent with a 5-year-old child	Frankly, my attitude was different before the pandemic period. He was commuting to school, he was tired and he slept early. Now the situation is different. We are always at home and this changed our attitude. We started to interfere less, otherwise, discussions begin at

	home, unfortunately. For example, we downloaded a few educational applications from my phone, so I do not interfere with the time, he plays as much as he wants.
Fourth parent with a 5-year-old child	Since infancy, we have raised our child so that he can make his own decisions, so if it were up to me, of course, some days there is no need for media tools, but this is a requirement of the era, and our attitude is not very prescriptive, because we know that he does not run away from exaggeration.
Fifth parent with a 5-year-old child	I have control. There are not many conflicts because we see the media as a reward. If she does her homework, for example, I let her watch TV.

First parent with a 6-year-old child	I know about the contents. However, I do not know if I can keep the time under control. He likes to go on YouTube and watch videos more than anything.
Second parent with a 6-year-old child	I want our child to have self-control. Anyway, he gets tired after a while holding the phone in his hand for too long or looking at the computer screen. We have never had a conflict. But, this is because of us, if we were the parents who intervened, there would definitely be disagreements between us and our child.
Third parent with a 6-year-old child	When we are at home, we are definitely not in control. And when we go out, we have to, or he makes us and himself very upset. My attitude is that it should not be like that because he spends most of his time on the mobile phone but it seems too late now, unfortunately.
Fourth parent with a 6-year-old child	I can say that we do not have a certain attitude. Varies from day to day. We find it very difficult to have a say in the use of media in this pandemic period, as we impose rules, we start to get worse with our child, and she is bored at home because she cannot go to school. We allow her to play games on the laptop in order not to disturb her psychology even more.
Fifth parent with a 6-year-old child	I know about the content, but once she starts watching cartoons, she never wants to close it,

	we always have problems with it. I think if she was going to school, like last year, this would not be the case.
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To make an assessment based on these answers, as children get older, parents' level of control over their children's media consumption decreases. In other words, the answers and expressions given by mothers and fathers of three and four-year-old children and the answers of parents of five and six-year-old children are quite different. Either in this question or other interview questions, each participant definitely mentioned the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic period on their children's media consumption habits. Regardless of the age of the child, the effects of the pandemic period and staying at home show similarities in many families. However, there are still parents who hold control and make decisions about their children's media consumption themselves, and mostly parents in the age group of three and four years. If the answers to this interview question are carefully examined, it can be understood that the level of parental control is inversely proportional to the age of the children.

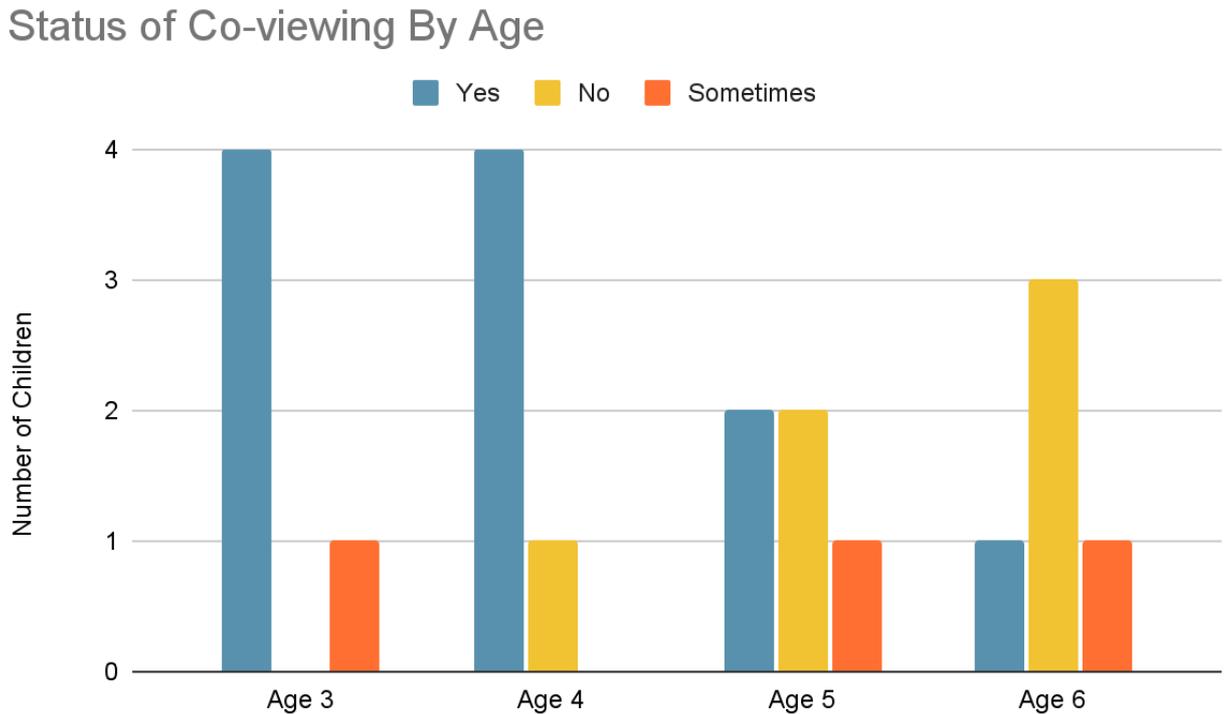
Going back to the beginning of the research question, that is, to the question of how conscious parents are, as I mentioned above, parents consider themselves conscious mothers and fathers. Considering the answers to the sixth interview question, it may not be right to comment that parents who do not control their child's media consumption themselves are conscious or vice versa are unconscious. However, I think the answers they gave when I asked the participants both the media diary question and the interview questions show that they are not unconscious. Because most of them know in detail the content their children have consumed, and they have details other than just an observation they made when filling out a week's media diary. But it is clearly understood that the level of consciousness of every parent is not the same. Whether parents are conscious of their

children's media consumption is not proportional to the criteria and is highly personal. In other words, the question about parents' consciousness is not like understanding parents' level of control.

#### 4.4. The Fourth Research Question - Parental Mediation Strategies for Media Consumption Control

Research question four explored various strategies parents applied to reduce the negative effects of media consumption of their children and highlight their positive impact as much as possible. At the same time, this research question focuses on whether parents are aware of how their children are affected by media consumption. The media diaries tackled this issue as it asked parents, were you there during your child's media consumption? And how was your communication with your child? The purpose of this media diary question is to understand both the parental mediation strategy that parents may have adopted and to comment on the co-viewing, which can also affect the strategy. The interviews also address these concerns of the parents through two different questions. Question number three which asked how does your child consume media? For example, is he or she usually alone or has someone with him or her? These two questions are similar to each other. First, a graph was created to reveal in detail the answers given by the participants to the relevant interview question.

Figure 5. Co-viewing Rates



The graphic is based on three different situations based on the parents' answers. These are yes, no and sometimes. There is an inverse proportion in age and co-viewing. At the age of three and four, the vast majority of parents accompany their child during their media consumption. In the five and six age group, it can be seen that the rate of co-viewing gradually decreases.

In the media diary, when parents were asked what they were doing during their children's media consumption, the answers were quite close to each other. These answers are already given by parents who do not accompany or sometimes accompany their children during media consumption. Some of the answers from three-year-old child's parents are "I would say it is good for me because my son wants to watch cartoons in the morning after breakfast, while I am collecting the table and I can take care of household chores, as well" and another answer is "(s)ince I am a teacher, I have

online lessons and at that time I give her my mobile phone because she always wants to come to me during my lessons if I do not give it.” So, as can be seen, in both cases, parents are unable to accompany their children to take care of their day-to-day affairs. In the rest of the answers, the situation is not very different. It would be useful to add some of the answers given by the parents who answered this question as ‘I was with my child’ to the question of what was your attitude towards your child and your child’s towards you. One of the participants whose son is four-year-old, said that “(w)e listen to children's songs together. Sometimes hugging, sometimes dancing. He looks at me and says the names of the animals he sees or the sounds they make. And sometimes I tell him what we saw in these songs” and another answer of a mother whose daughter is six years old is “(w)e played with various educational applications on my mobile phone together, I can see that it is even more enjoyable when we are together.” All in all, co-viewing is existing in each age group, regardless of which media devices it is. However, with the increase in children's age, parents are starting to consume less media with their children.

I think that even if each parent is not present at the time of their child's media consumption, they can be aware of how their children are affected by all the content they consume, the cartoons and YouTube videos they watch, the children's songs they listen to and the games they play. In order to find the answer to this question, participants were asked one media diary question and then one interview question. The media diaries asked parents to describe if their child had any post-media consumption behaviour that you noticed that caused you anxiety or vice versa that you liked? And what are they? The answers written by the parents do not show much difference in a week. There are only variations depending on what content the children consumed that day in which media. In other words, the views of the parents about the cartoon watched by their children on the 1st day are the same as the opinions of the parents about the cartoons they watched on the 7th day. However, their judgment on the YouTube video their children watched another day are different from these.

I will continue by examining a few of the answers to this media question. To explain how her child was influenced by the cartoon she watched, one of the participants whose daughter is five-year-old, wrote that “(s)he imitates the speech of children in the videos she has watched. We do not like this situation” and to describe the effect of educational application, the same participant wrote that “(a)fter using educational apps, she asks me questions about what she has learned, and I think these apps contribute to her education, so in this case it makes us happy.” Another parent with a six-year-old son made a statement regarding the impact of the video games their child played and wrote that “(s)ome of the games he plays is reflected in my child's actions due to the elements of violence and war it contains. And when they meet their friends, they build plays like these video games, and the kids get aggressive and ill-tempered”. Lastly, the answer of a mother whose son is five years old, is as follows “(w)e did not experience any adverse events. Global warming was mentioned in the cartoon called *Su Elçileri*. My son met this word for the first time and learned its meaning. A few hours later, when he went to wash his hands, I noticed that he was using very low water. That is, he immediately started to apply the knowledge he learned in the cartoon. I was very happy of course.” Therefore, what other participants have written consists of answers similar to these, indicating that the children are both positively and negatively affected. The common point of all the answers is the ability of preschool age children to absorb what they see or hear in the media very quickly and put them into practice.

The interview question number eight is also directed to parents as considering the process they pursue after their child’s media use. The interview question is what do you think about the impact of what they watch or play on your child, considering the ways you follow for your child's media consumption? What are your child's behaviors that you observe after media consumption? In the first place, this interview question seems to be the same as the one asked in the media diary. But indeed, the first part of this question is to understand what parents think about all these effects of

the media devices. The answers given by the participants are shown in the tables below, divided into age groups.

Table 5. The Answers of the Participants to the 8th Interview Question

First parent with a 3-year-old child	Listening to children's songs makes him very excited and I look at its effects more positively for now, but when I think about it in the long term, it seems like it can turn into a habit and an addiction. I will be cautious about this as well.
Second parent with a 3-year-old child	I think that the videos he watched and the songs he listened to greatly improved my child's communication skills. For example, he has learned a lot of new facial expressions that I have noticed since we started watching a YouTube channel called <i>Cocomelon</i> .
Third parent with a 3-year-old child	I do not think the media has much of a positive effect. Only educational content can be useful for certain periods of time. Even though the content in which colors, numbers and planets are taught and explained helps to learn, I believe that many elements in animations push children to violence, ambition and constant success.
Fourth parent with a 3-year-old child	We think that he is affected positively by the songs he listens to, but negatively by the cartoons he watches on television channels. If he watched heroic animations with superpowers, I see him displaying aggressive attitudes after that.
Fifth parent with a 3-year-old child	Although we try to restrict it, my child wants to take our phone at every meal, as it has become a habit. We open children's songs on YouTube, and although I do not notice, she has learned a lot from these songs, and we understand it later. When she sees vegetables and fruits in the kitchen, she immediately thinks of these songs and tries to show them to me. I think that's a positive effect of the media for now.

First parent with a 4-year-old child	He is always singing songs he has learned. I think it is a great progress because he is younger, so I think it is a big thing for him to learn and memorize something. In this sense, this is a positive effect of the media for now.
Second parent with a 4-year-old child	I think that the content he watches and the games she plays are useful for learning English. She can acquire bad habits by being influenced by some videos, but she realizes it when we warn her and tell her that this behavior is wrong.
Third parent with a 4-year-old child	I can clearly see that when we use educational applications, it contributes to his English, number-counting skills and preschool math development. Apart from that, I can see that he has improved on some issues of life science. If we see an app or cartoon that adds negative behavior, we make sure he does not watch it again in the long term. For example, in the past, when watching Minika Çocuk and Minika Go on television, he was exposed to a lot of advertising, and there was an excessive desire for consumption. Some cartoons also began to negatively affect my son. We removed those channels from our television.
Fourth parent with a 4-year-old child	They are definitely impressed by what they are watching. Scenes that do not mean anything to us that we will not be impressed with can sometimes be impressive on children. He gets very upset sometimes. Sometimes he gets excited. It has good effects, and it has been a lot of what they have learned from the instructive ones. But no matter what, they can be angrier, when they are exposed. They can hardly fall asleep. To give an example, my son cried when Peter pushed Clara's wheelchair down a cliff while watching a cartoon called <i>Heidi</i> . Sometimes they can be more sensitive than we expected. And if he is unwittingly exposed to something aggressive, he is affected by it. So we need to be very careful.
Fifth parent with a 4-year-old child	He has a lot of behavior that I observe. I notice that educational practices in particular improve hand skills and attention ability. These are positive effects of the media and do not need to arouse concern. But, as for YouTube videos and cartoons, of course, their negative impact

	comes to light, because when our child watches foreign-made animations, he learns different ways of behavior that are not in our culture, and he thinks they are correct.
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First parent with a 5-year-old child	She imitates what she watches. She portrays what happens to the characters she has seen in the cartoons she has watched in his daily life, in the circle of friends and even while playing games by himself in his room. I do not think this is a negativity, but we believe that we should keep the level of her commitment to this character under control, we want him to care about real life, not fantasy.
Second parent with a 5-year-old child	Some videos are so absurd that it is impossible for my child to have a good effect on her. Watching what other children do, like making slime blindfolded, is so pointless in my opinion.
Third parent with a 5-year-old child	I have not observed that cartoons have a negative effect. He usually watches the same ones. My son's speech was delayed and she had trouble expressing herself. I would say that some cartoons have a positive effect on us getting through this situation.
Fourth parent with a 5-year-old child	After media consumption, I think my child is affected both in a good way and in a bad way. I have not seen the effects of her being badly affected yet, but I think all her watching is settling into his subconscious. In a good way, if he is affected, he starts asking me questions all the time after there is a media consumption. I like that my child is curious.
Fifth parent with a 5-year-old child	I think media tools have a lot of influence, both good and bad. These effects can sometimes be observed very clearly and sometimes not. The videos on YouTube make her very ambitious because we have a lot of dialogue like 'mom I saw it in a video, can you please buy me this too'. However, for example, educational applications also contribute to learning English, learning basic things by hearing and repeating.

First parent with a 6-year-old child	Unfortunately, I think the effects are not good. Video games and videos about fighting and war are reflected in my son's actions. After such content, he starts to become more aggressive. I warn him every time.
Second parent with a 6-year-old child	There is a situation that I usually notice, which is a general effect of media consumption. Once he gets out of a virtual world, all the other activities we do not seem very fun to him. Video games and educational apps that she always plays are my daughter's first choice. This makes me a little sad because he has to learn to enjoy other things.
Third parent with a 6-year-old child	My child may be a little distracted, tired and rarely nervous after media use. When there is tension, I think about what he watched that day and what he might have been affected by. I tell him not to watch some of them again.
Fourth parent with a 6-year-old child	What catches my attention every time is that she cannot focus on anything else while playing games. Completely disconnected from the world, never hears us when we call. If we turn off the games or the television completely, she contacts us and then has no problem returning to daily activities. This is the biggest negative impact of the media.
Fifth parent with a 6-year-old child	It is a situation that varies depending on the content she watches or plays. Sometimes he gets angry, sometimes she gets emotional.

According to these answers, all the parents who participated in the interview think that the children are influenced by the media they consume. In other words, regardless of what age group their child belongs to, there is not a single parent who thinks their child is not affected by these media tools. All parents are aware of how and in what way their child is affected, whether or not they are with their children during media consumption, that is, whether they are co-viewing or not. One of the most common responses was that children were negatively affected by YouTube videos they watched. Parents attribute this to the fact that their children always encourage them to consume

more, comparing themselves to other children and families they have seen in those videos. A few parents who believe that their children are negatively affected think that this is due to cartoons and animations that contain violent elements of war and fighting. Another popular answer given by parents is that their children are positively affected by the educational and instructive applications. Considering all the answers, what can be said is that parents are very conscious of what their children are affected by, because they gave very clear and concise answers to the interview question, without giving it much thought.

The next interview question is very important for the theoretical part of this research. So, with regard to this research question, the parents involved in the study were asked as the tenth interview question how would you describe your child’s media consumption in general and your attitude or strategy to this situation. Again, the answers given by the parents were arranged as tables in the below.

Table 6. The Answers of the Participants to the 10th Interview Question

First parent with a 3-year-old child	Controlled
Second parent with a 3-year-old child	Prescriptive, able to stretch when necessary. A parent who cares about content and chooses the ones that fit my child's age
Third parent with a 3-year-old child	Controlled and inspector
Fourth parent with a 3-year-old child	A parent who is controlled and allows limited time
Fifth parent with a 3-year-old child	A parent who limits the media as much as possible

First parent with a 4-year-old child	Everything is under our control. Besides my child is not addicted to media
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Second parent with a 4-year-old child	Controlled
Third parent with a 4-year-old child	I am aware that my child consumes a lot of media in general. However, I think he will use much less as the opportunities improve and the pandemic period gets over. I think we are more controlled than many families in this regard.
Fourth parent with a 4-year-old child	We are always the supervising parents.
Fifth parent with a 4-year-old child	We define ourselves as parents who try to choose what best suits our child's age and development.

First parent with a 5-year-old child	I think we started consuming media at an early age. Our preschool education was delayed. During the pandemic, we were able to go to school for about 1 month, and this process benefited us very negatively, especially with regard to media consumption. Unfortunately, we are not successful in setting and applying rules to our child.
Second parent with a 5-year-old child	Like any family, I do not really want him to use the media, but that is not possible. And our strategy is not prescriptive right now, because we do not want to bore him anymore because he cannot go to school.
Third parent with a 5-year-old child	We do not intervene as much as we used to with the effect of the pandemic process.
Fourth parent with a 5-year-old child	I would say we are freer parents because we support him to make his own decisions. Of course, we warn him as a mother and father and tell him what can happen as a result of this behavior, we leave the decision to him.
Fifth parent with a 5-year-old child	We have rules, we treat the media as rewards and punishments.

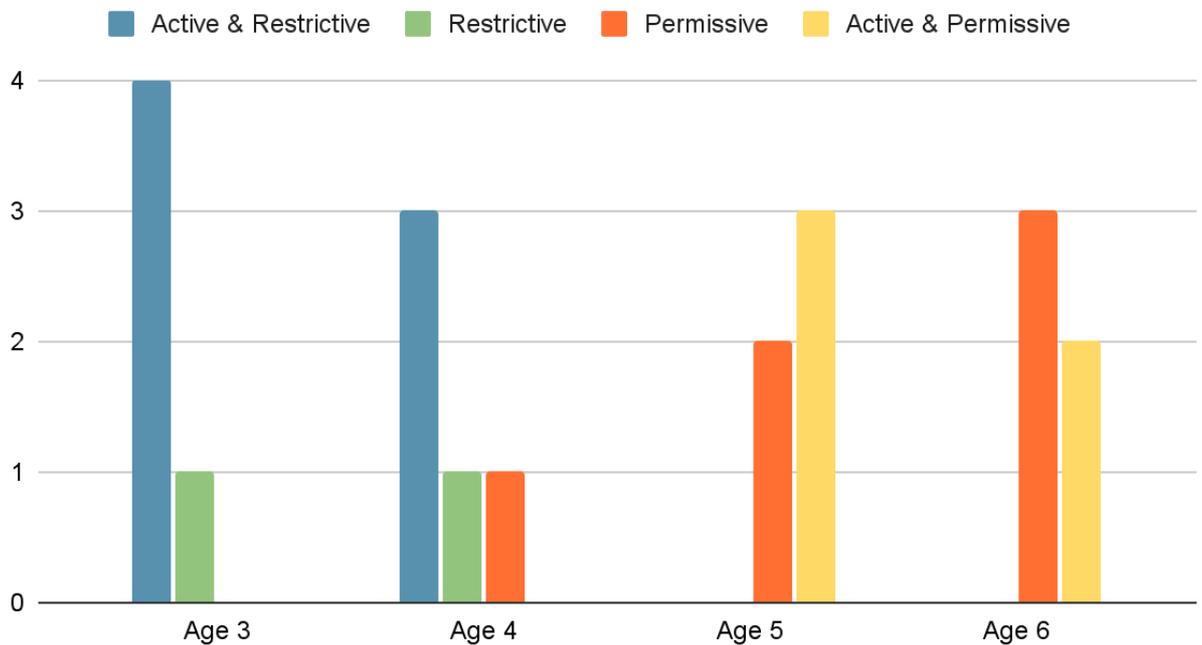
First parent with a 6-year-old child	We are parents who cannot control their children about screen time, we do not have a specific strategy.
Second parent with a 6-year-old child	We usually leave the decision to our child. Now that he is at school age, we support him to make his own decisions.

Third parent with a 6-year-old child	Unfortunately, we are a little late to set rules for our child and have a say.
Fourth parent with a 6-year-old child	Because of the pandemic, our attitudes have also changed, and now we are releasing more. She does not want to play the games her friends play and be disconnected from them.
Fifth parent with a 6-year-old child	Since she cannot go to school, he is always at home and I am like that. Therefore, we cannot make rules.

These were the answers given by the parents. According to these answers, it is not very difficult to understand what parental mediation strategy mothers and fathers have adopted because they use some specific keywords in their answers, which are quite decisive. Uhls and Robb's (2017) definition of parental mediation strategies is as follows: restrictive mediation is aimed at setting, enforcing rules and preventing children from accessing the media as much as possible, active mediation notes that there are dialogues and conversations between the child and his or her parents, and finally, permissive mediation is the name that the child is more involved with the media than he or she should be, and that parents do not do much to control their child decisively. The names that have already been given to strategies also give clues as to how they are. So, according to these definitions, the graphic is also prepared based on the answers given by the parents and shows which of the three different strategies parents are more inclined to. According to the above table, it can be understood whether it is restrictive or permissive, but whether it is active mediation is also a criterion that depends on co-viewing. Namely, this graphic was prepared by taking into account the data obtained with co-viewing before.

Figure 6. Parental Mediation Strategies

### Parental Mediation Strategies By Age Groups



As can be seen from the graph, while there is more restrictive parental mediation in the three and four age groups, the preference of parents with children aged 5 and 6 is permissive mediation.

Active restrictive and active permissive, that is, the combination of two strategies, can be said to be quite common among the participants.

In brief, the purpose of the media diary and interview questions directed to the participants was to understand the awareness of parents about how their children are affected by their media consumption and to find their preferred parental mediation strategies. If we make a general evaluation, we can say that parents are conscious about this issue because the answers they give prove that they observe their children after their media consumption and that they are familiar with their children's pattern of behaviour for a long time. As for co-viewing and parental mediation strategies, there is a change according to age because the frequency of co-viewing decreases as the age of children increases, and at the same time, as the age of children increases, a more restrictive attitude is shifted from a permissive one.

## CHAPTER V - CONCLUSION

### 5.1. Conclusion

In this study, which focused on four different research questions, parents were first asked which media their children used the most, both through the media diary and the interview questions. This was for a general assessment. Secondly some questions were asked about children's screen time because this research question looked at the screen time allowed by the parents as well as whether the children exceeded this amount of time. Then thirdly, the parental awareness of their children's media consumption and their control over it was assessed. Furthermore, the awareness of families of their children's media consumption and their authority to have a say in deciding and controlling their children's media consumption were questioned. Finally, it was aimed to understand whether parents know how their children are affected by their media consumption and which parental mediation strategy they adopt.

According to the results obtained from the first research question, each age group prefers different media channels. There is an increase in some of the media channels preferred by age, and a decrease in some. At the age of three, children's songs like nursery rhymes are mostly preferred, while by the age of six, they completely leave the list. While the viewing and listening rates of children's songs in four-year-olds decreased, the consumption rates of other media outlets increased, while YouTube videos were on the rise in the five-year-old group, and 6-year-olds mostly consumed video games and educational apps. Cartoon and animation viewing rates are perhaps the most stable among the different age groups. During this period, which is becoming more and more digitized and children's media consumption habits are now changing, children's television viewing habits have also begun to diverge. As a prime example of this, we can start with parents giving Netflix as most popular medium as a popular answer. Not all of the participating parents watch

cartoons and animations on Netflix all the time, but almost one in two parents noted that their child is also a Netflix user. In an article, Harwell (2016) stated that Netflix is decidedly popular among children because it offers an abundantly colorful field and view, it offers the chance to be watched anywhere at any time. So, it is not surprising that parents included Netflix in their answers.

According to a report prepared in the US in 2019, “TV still reaches a substantial portion of the U13 audience's media time, albeit with questions around its ongoing effectiveness” (SuperAwesome, 2019, p. 3). This inference from the report also matches the answers given by the participants because the presence of television maintains its existence for each age group.

Another finding obtained for the first question is the viewing rates of YouTube channels that produce different content for children. There is always an increase up to six years of age. The rate of watching different YouTube channels of children, children influencers phenomena and their families is increasing. Considering the popularity of YouTube videos and influencers today, it is perfectly normal for children to be attracted to it. About this topic, Abidin (2021) emphasised that “(s)ome of the most watched pre-schoolers today are young children of viral video fame, family influencer units, and micro-microcelebrities” (p. 226). Maybe 10 years ago, child YouTubers were not so common, but now there are a lot of YouTube channels with millions of children's viewers. If we go through YouTube, the viewing rates of nursery rhymes also have a large share, especially among children in the age group of three years. According to data from participants' responses, consumption rates of nursery rhymes have an inverse proportion to age. The reason children's song consumption is quite high in three-year-olds and not at all in six-year-olds may be due to its effect on children's development. Schreiber, Kovačević and Malada (2020) mentioned in their article that “(i)t is important to emphasize that children like to sing nursery rhymes, as their pronounced rhythm offers children the possibility of self-realization through a series of musical games, and the rhyme influences the development of speech and rhythm” (p. 4450). For three-year-olds, being able

to create sentences and chat is now a step in their development, so nursery rhymes are much more suitable for them compared to older age groups. Therefore, it shows that the research results provided by the literature and the data from this thesis match.

Another data obtained according to parents' answers is that as children age, the rates of playing video games also increase. It was found that there was an accurate proportion between age and video game playing. When it comes to six-year-old children, it seems that they prefer playing games more than other media devices. According to a report prepared in 2019, while three-and four-year-old children's time to play games for a week is 39% and their online game play time is 17%, when it comes to children between the ages of 5 and 7, this time increases to 62% for playing games and 35% for playing online games (Ofcom, 2020, p. 5). So, in the same way, it can be said that the data presented by the report is compatible with the statistics obtained from the answers of the participants.

For the first research question, the last data I will evaluate is about how educational applications manifest themselves in each age group. Just like cartoons and animations, there is no case of the use of educational apps moving in parallel with age groups or vice versa in the opposite proportion. The important thing is that it is included in the statistics for every age group from three to six. Callaghan (2018) as cited in Papadakis and Kalogiannakis (2019) indicate that "(t)he playful nature of these apps is often appealing to children" (p. 2). The number of applications produced for children is increasing day by day, and instead of sticking to a single application, children are introduced to different content. Papadakis and Kalogiannakis (2019) also mentioned that "(i)n fact, the app targeted parents of younger kids (ages 3-6) dominate the mobile app market" As they said, parents with preschool age children are the biggest target for application producers and this industry. Shuler, Levine & Ree (2012) as cited in Papadakis and Kalogiannakis (2019) added that "(c)omparing 2009 to 2011, apps for toddlers and preschoolers' apps in the Apple store saw the

greatest growth, an increase of 23%” (p. 2). Since play and learning are very much intertwined for preschoolers, this is reflected in the digital environment and different companies that produce applications for children also develop themselves and attract the attention of parents. All in all, the data of the first research question and the findings of the literature, as well as the data of the reports prepared as a result of other research, can be said to be quite equivalent.

Based on the second research question about children's screen time, according to the answers obtained from parents, there is a case of exceeding the amount of time their parents consider appropriate for all three, four, five and six age groups. So, it can be said that children's screen time is more than their parents deem appropriate is not an age-related criterion. According to data obtained by a group of researchers using the data of the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study-Birth Cohort (ECLS-B) and conducting a fairly comprehensive study, “(f)or the overall sample, 66% of children exceeded the recommended 2 hours of screen time” (Tandon, Zhou, Lozano, Christakis, 2011, p. 298). So, in the same way, data from this study, based on the screen time of preschool children, shows that more than half of children have exceeded the screen time that is considered appropriate for them by their parents. My interviews with parents showed that some of them had no problems with their children's screen time and were satisfied, but some families were quite complaining and dissatisfied with their children’s screen time. Another study aimed at understanding how families think about their preschool children's screen time and He, et al (2005) highlighted that while most participants were not too concerned about their children screen-viewing behaviors, many were ambitious about offering insight to other parents to encourage appropriate screen-viewing attitudes (p. 123). Therefore, it can be said that the interviews conducted by these researchers with Canadian parents and the answers they received have some common points with the answers I obtained from the interviews from Turkey.

In brief, screen time can vary from family to family and from child to child, regardless of age criteria. At the same time, a lot of different pedagogues and experts express similar opinions about the fact that screen time is not a criterion that determines the level of influence of children from the media. For example, Plass (2020) believes that there is no benefit in limiting children's screen time in any scheme (Şirin, 2020) and just like Plass, Dr. Radesky has a similar thought because he says that the current screen time recommendations do not exactly explain how our kids use media (Cheng and Wilkinson, 2020). Lee, a parenting writer, defends the opposite view and wrote in her article that set clear rules and limits for screen time, whether it's an hour of TV after homework is done, or texting with friends for more than 30 minutes total (Lee, 2020). As can be seen, there are contrasting opinions and some differences of perception among both parents and experts. For this research question, it is also necessary to consider the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic situation on the duration of children's media consumption. As pointed out by almost all the participants, children's screen time has also changed because they had to spend a lot more time at home, and there is a distinction between before and after the pandemic period.

The third research question aimed to understand how conscious parents are about their children's media consumption and whether they can control the media content and screen time their children consume. In response, it was understood that the level of consciousness and control of each parent is different, but as the age of the children increases, control status of the parents over them decreases. Parents are conscious because many of them know in detail the media content their children consume, and many of them have control over many details apart from being able to observe for a week while filling out their media diary. I did not connect these two questions to a cause and effect relationship. I consider that it may not be correct to comment that parents who cannot control their children's media consumption are conscious or unconscious. In a study conducted with parents of preschool children, Altun (2019) inferred that “(t)he majority of parents

indicated that they control the content of the programs or applications that their children use” and added that “(p)arents articulated that when choosing programs or applications for their children, they strive to select appropriate content” (p. 85). So, it can be said that this result and the results that I have obtained from the answers of the participants show a great deal of similarity. So much so that, it would be wrong to say that the control of parents in the five and six age groups also ends completely, compared to the parents of only three and four-year-olds, they have a looser level of control. Parents' responses to the interview and media diary questions always included their thoughts about the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and the measures taken on their children's media consumption. Werling, Walitza, Grünblatt and Drechsler (2021) obtained the following result: according to the surveys, parents reported a significant increase in their children's media consumption time during lockdown, as well as a significant decrease after the measures were eased (p. 8). As can be seen, it is impossible that the influence of the pandemic on children's media consumption habits are out of the question. Whatever the consistency that both parents and children are accustomed to, the psychology that comes with staying at home due to the lockdowns has affected many things including parental control over children.

As for the latest research question about the theoretical part of the research, I tried to find out to what extent parents are aware of how their children are affected by all the media content they consume, and most importantly, what parental mediation strategy they have adopted. All the parents who participated in the interview believe that their children are influenced by the media they consume. Regardless of the age of three, four, five or six, every mother or father knows that their child is affected by these media in some way. Besides, to understand the parental mediation strategy adopted by the parents, some questions were also asked about whether they accompany their children during media consumption which is referred to as co-viewing in the literature.

Parents were asked what they were doing while their children were consuming media, and some of the answers were that the parents were busy with their daily household chores or their professional chores. He et al. (2005) obtained a similar result in their research and said that screens help parents with preschool age children to manage their daily lives (p. 122). So, this seems to be the case in most families today. According to the results I have obtained, while co-viewing is quite high at the younger ages, namely at the age of three and four, there is a visible decrease in co-viewing as age of the child increases. About co-viewing, Murray and Murray (2008) stated that there are current videos that encourage parental involvement in the viewing experience, especially creating co-viewing for toddlers and their parents or babysitter (p. 315). This is also related to developing technology, and it can be said that this type of content also increases with each passing year. Among the answers given by the parents, there are statements such as when they consume media with their children, there is an interaction between them that contributes to the development of the child and their relationship. Meng et al. (2020) also reached a similar conclusion and wrote that “(i)n the case of coviewing cartoons with their mothers, children are more likely to use their accumulated knowledge and experience to think and answer questions” (p. 8). I think that this is not surprising, as this is likely the case in most families where co-viewing is involved.

On the subject of parents' awareness of the effects of the media, it would be most accurate to say that they all have different opinions based on the content that their children consume. However, one common response is that parents believe children are negatively affected by the YouTube videos they watch. If we look at the result of a study of parents' thoughts on how children are influenced by YouTube vlogs or YouTubers, Yaşaroğlu and Boylu (2020) emphasized that “(s)imilarly, parents do not believe that YouTubers contribute to children's values such as respect, moral values, responsibility, righteousness, integrity, compassion, tolerance, self-control, charity, empathy, patriotism, friendship, and benevolence” (p. 11). In short, this is the general view shared by parents.

Finally, about the strategies of parental mediation, it was obtained as a result of this thesis that there is more restrictive parental mediation in the three and four age groups, and parents of 5 and 6 year old children prefer permissive mediation. The combination of two strategies, active restrictive and active permissive, are also common among mothers and fathers. In other words, as the age of the children increases, it can be said that the authority of the parents to set rules regarding their media consumption in many ways decreases. A comprehensive study of parental mediation strategies, Uhls and Robb (2017) concluded that

Nearly every study that looks at age as a moderator finds that parental mediation varies by age. As a child develops socially, emotionally, and cognitively, it is natural that parental mediation will also develop. Specifically, parents of younger children tend to co-view and use restrictive mediation while parents of older teens either stop mediating all together (i.e., laissez-faire) or continue to use instructive mediation if that was a part of their strategy when their children were younger. (p. 331)

Therefore, the answers I have obtained based on the interviews and media diary questions and what has been obtained in the above cited study are quite similar or even the same. Parental mediation is a theory that changes with age.

## 5.2. Limitations and Future Research

Since this thesis was conducted with the parents of children media consumers, there were two interrelated limitations. First of all, the fact that each stage of this thesis coincided with the COVID-19 pandemic and therefore the existence of some curfews and lockdowns while I was conducting the media diary and interviews was a research limitation that could not be underestimated.

Accordingly, many interviews took place online. Secondly, the fact that many families could not

send their children to school during this period and the amount of time they spend at home with their parents directly affects the results I have obtained. So, the results obtained should be evaluated taking into account the effects of the pandemic process and lockdowns.

For future studies, if the pandemic period ends, the same research or similar can be carried out again. I think that future research could also include children themselves. Different classifications can be made about children and parents and research questions can be diversified according to these. For example, in addition to the criteria for age, a categorization can be made according to the gender of the children. Or, it is quite possible to go through the parents and add a different point of view according to their education level or their age and make evaluations accordingly.

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APPENDIX

A- Ethics Committee Approval Form

(Form Student\_EN\*)

**Ethics form for graduate and undergraduate students - human participants**

Note - group projects fill in one copy with all your names on it. Consult your project supervisor for advice before filling in the form.

Your name(s): Şevval Kantarcı

Project Supervisor: Emel Özdora Akşak

- A. Write your name(s) and that of your supervisor above.
- B. Read section 2 that your supervisor will have to sign. Make sure that you cover all these issues in section 1. Discuss what you are going to put on the form with your project supervisor.
- C. Sign the form and get your project supervisor to complete section 2 and sign the form.

**1. Project Outline (to be completed by student(s))**

**(i) Full Title of Project:**

Parents' Consciousness of Their Children's Media Consumption Habits

**(ii) Aims of project:**

This project examines the level of consciousness and control of families of children between the ages of 3 to 6 and living in Ankara, Turkey on the habits of watching cartoons and animations on television, tablets and phones. The study further analyses the extent to which parents are aware of how their children are affected by their media consumption.

**(iii) What will the participants have to do? (brief outline of procedure; please draw attention to any manipulation that could possibly be judged as deception; for survey work, a copy of the survey should be attached to this form):**

The participants will be informed about the study. Interviewing the parents of twelve different children and learning the criteria for choosing the television channels, some online platforms or animations they prefer to have their children watch, as well as the effects of this media content and consumption on their children. In brief, I will ask participants to answer the questions I have asked them about their children's cartoon and animation viewing habits. In order to get more accurate answers, I will ask parents to create a one-week media diary including their children's screen time, what they are watching, behaviour and reactions.

**(iv) What sort of people will the participants be and how will they be recruited? In the case of children state age range. (Any participant who has not lived through his/her 18th birthday is considered to be a child!)**

I will talk to 3 parents with a 3-year-old child, 3 parents with a 4-year-old child, 3 parents with a 5-year-old child, and finally, 3 parents with a 6-year-old child. They will be mothers or fathers.

*If you are testing children or other vulnerable individuals, state whether all applicants have CRB\*\* clearance*

**(v) What sort stimuli or materials will your participants be exposed to? Tick the appropriate boxes and then explain the form that they take in the space below, please draw attention to any content that could conceivably upset your participants).**

Questionnaires[  ]; Pictures[  ]; Sounds[  ]; Words[  ]; Caffeine[  ]; Alcohol[  ]; Other[  ].

I will ask the participants to fill out a media diary about their children. Do your children watch cartoons or animations? Which channels do they watch from? How long do you let them watch in a day? Is there any conflict between you on this issue? Which cartoon channels do you prefer and why? Which ones does your child prefer? It will consist of these kind of questions.

\* Adapted from [www.york.ac.uk/depts/psych/www/research/ethics/HumanProjForm.doc](http://www.york.ac.uk/depts/psych/www/research/ethics/HumanProjForm.doc)

\* Criminal Records Bureau – Please attach relevant clearance documentation.

- (vi) **Consent** Informed consent must be obtained for all participants before they take part in your project. The form should clearly state what they will be doing, drawing attention to anything they could conceivably object to subsequently. It should be in language that the person signing it will understand. It should also state that they can withdraw from the study at any time and the measures you are taking to ensure the confidentiality of data. If children are recruited from schools you will require the permission of the head teacher, and of parents. Children over 14 years should also sign an individual consent form themselves. When testing children you will also need Criminal Records Bureau clearance. Testing to be carried out in any institution (prison, hospital, etc.) will require permission from the appropriate authority. (Please include documentation for such permission.)

**Who will you seek permission from?**

Only adults will be included in the study and no permission from authorities is needed.

**Please attach the consent form you will use. Write the "brief description of study" in the words that you will use to inform the participants here.**

In this study, I aim to learn your attitudes and preferences about your child's cartoon and animation watching habits. I will ask you a few questions about your child's media content and consumption. And I will ask you to observe your child for a week and fill out this media diary as accurately as possible.

- (vii) **Debriefing** - how and when will participants be informed about the experiment, and what information you intend to provide? If there is any chance that a participant will be 'upset' by taking part in the experiment what measures will you take to mitigate this?

Participants will be briefed in detail before the interview. It is not a situation that will upset the participants.

- (viii) **What procedures will you follow in order to guarantee the confidentiality of participants' data?** Personal data (name, addresses etc.) should only be stored if absolutely necessary and then only in such a way that they cannot be associated with the participant's experimental data.

Participants' personal data and identities will not be recorded and will not be included in the research. Their statements will be included in the research, anonymously. Name, surname or contact information will not be recorded or reported.

- (vii) **Give brief details of other special issues the ethics committee should be aware of.**

- (viii) **Tick any of the following that apply to your project**

- it uses Bilkent facilities;
- it uses stimuli designed to be emotive or aversive;
- it requires participants to ingest substances (e.g., alcohol);
- it require participants to give information of a personal nature;
- it involves children or other vulnerable individuals;
- it could put you or someone else at risk of injury.

Student's signature: *[Signature]* date: 16.10.2020  
(all students must sign if this is a group project, please initial all other pages)

The signatures here signify that researchers will conform to the accepted ethical principles endorsed by relevant professional bodies, in particular to

Declaration of Helsinki (WMA):  
<http://www.wma.net/en/30publications/10policies/h3/index.html>

Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct (APA):  
<http://www.apa.org/ethics/code2002.html>

Ethical Standards for Research with Children (SRCRD):  
<http://www.srcrd.org/about-us/ethical-standards-research>

**2. Supervisor's assessment (supervisor to complete - circle yes or no)**

Yes/No - I confirm that I have secured the resources required by this project, including any workshop time, equipment, or space that are additional to those already allocated to me.

Yes/No - The design of this study ensures that the dignity, welfare and safety of the participants will be ensured and that if children or other vulnerable individuals are involved they will be afforded the necessary protection.

Yes/No - All statutory, legislative and other formal requirements of the research have been addressed (e.g., permissions, police checks)

Yes/No - I am confident that the participants will be provided with all necessary information before the study, in the consent form, and after the study in debriefing.

Yes/No - I am confident the participant's confidentiality will be preserved.

Yes/No - I confirm that students involved have sufficient professional competency for this project.

Yes/No - I consider that the risks involved to the student, the participants and any third party are insignificant and carry no special supervisory considerations. If you circle "no" please attach an explanatory note.

No/Yes - I would like the ethics committee to give this proposal particular attention. (Please state why below)

Supervisor's signature: *[Signature]* date: 14.10.2020

**Please e-mail an electronic version of this word processed form (without signatures) along with other application material to the committee to start the evaluation process. Paper copies of all application material, (properly signed where indicated, and initialed on all other pages) should be sent after possible modifications suggested by the committee are finalized.**

Bilkent University does not allow the use of students of research investigators as participants. Students who have the potential of being graded by the investigators during or following the semester(s) in which the study is being carried out should not participate in the study. Students may not receive any credit for any university course, with the exception of the GE250/GE251 courses, for their participation. The GE250 and GE251 (Collegiate Activities I and II) courses include an optional activity which encompasses volunteering as a participant in a research project.

## B- Consent Form

### **Informed Consent Form and Information on Briefing and Debriefing**

**Study name:** Parents' Consciousness of Their Children's Media Consumption Habits

#### **Supervisor:**

Asst. Prof. Dr. Emel Özdora Akşak

Email: emel.ozdora@bilkent.edu.tr

Phone : 0312 290 1061

#### **Researcher:**

Name: Şevval Kantarcı

Email: sevval.kantarci@bilkent.edu.tr

Phone: 0530 913 03 96

#### **Purpose of the research:**

This project examines the level of consciousness and control of families of children between the ages of 3 to 6 and living in Ankara, Turkey on the media-related habits of children. The study further analyses the extent to which parents are aware of how their children are affected by their media consumption

#### **What you will be asked to do in the research:**

A semi-structured interview will be done with you and will be asked a few questions about your child's media content and consumption. Besides, you will be asked to create a one-week media diary including your child's screen time, what he/she is watching, playing etc. and his/her behaviour and reactions.

#### **Risks and discomforts:**

Participating in this study does not involve any risks and is not expected to cause discomfort to participants.

#### **Benefits of the research and benefits to you:**

There are no major benefits for participating in this study. You might have support a master thesis. If this research is published, the participants' names or identities will not be reported. Besides, a children's book will be given families for participating in this study.

#### **Voluntary participation and Withdrawal from the study:**

Your participation in the research is completely voluntary and if you decide to do so, you can stop participating or withdraw from the study at any time. Your decision not to participate in the study or to withdraw will not affect your relationship with the researcher or with the university. If you withdraw from the study, your data will not be used for analysis.

#### **Confidentiality:**

Confidentiality of study participants is important for the researcher. The identity of the participants will not be revealed or used at any time, in fact interviews will not be recorded or transcribed. You will not be asked to provide personal information such as your name, last name or any other contact information that may help identify your personality. Names, identities and organisational affiliations of participants will not be reported.

In order to participate in the study, please provide a signature next to the statement below.

\_\_\_\_\_ I agree to participate in the study.

**Person carrying out the work**

**Şevval Kantarcı.....**

**Briefing and Informed Consent Form:**

Dear participant,

You are invited to participate in a research study on Parents' Consciousness of Their Children's Media Consumption Habits

This research study is conducted by Şevval Kantarcı, who is a master student at Bilkent University Department of Communication and Design. You can contact the study administrator any time if you have any questions or concerns about your participation in the study.

Email: [sevval.kantarci@bilkent.edu.tr](mailto:sevval.kantarci@bilkent.edu.tr)

Phone: 0530 913 03 96

You must be over the age of 18 to participate in this research study. Your participation is completely voluntary and you can withdraw from the study at time you want by exiting the survey.

The data you provide will only be used for a scientific purpose and your identity will NOT be revealed. The researcher respects the confidentiality of your data and will keep it anonymous throughout the data collection and analysis process. Demographic information such as your name, age group, gender and organisational affiliation will be not collected or published.

In order to participate in the study, please provide a signature next to the statement below.

\_\_\_\_\_ I agree to participate in the study.

**Person carrying out the work**

**Şevval Kantarcı.....**

**Information on Debriefing:**

At the beginning and end of the interviews, the participants will be informed further about the purpose of the study.

C- Media Diary

	Which media channel or channels did your child use today?	For what time did he or she use it?	What are their names and contents?	What are your thoughts for each media medium? What are the ones you approve of and what are the ones you disapprove of?	How much time did you give your child for media consumption? How much did he or she consume?	Were you there during your child's media consumption? How was your communication?	As a result of media consumption, did your child have any behavior that you noticed that caused you anxiety or vice versa that you liked? What are they?
Day 1							
Day 2							
Day 3							
Day 4							
Day 5							
Day 6							
Day 7							

#### D- Interview Questions

- 1) What do you think of your child's media consumption? How and how much does your child use the media? Do you think your child is as busy with the media as he or she needs, or is your child more involved than you allow?
- 2) If you are aware of what your child is doing with media devices, for example, do you know what they are watching or playing?
- 3) How does your child consume media? For example, is he or she usually alone or has someone with him or her?
- 4) What are the media tools your child uses most?
- 5) What content their child generally watches or plays? What do you think about these contents?
- 6) What is your attitude towards everything related to your child's media consumption? For example, do you have a control or a say about your child's media consumption time and contents? Is there any conflict between you and your child's opinions on this matter?
- 7) What do you think about the suitability of this content and screen time for your child's age?
- 8) Considering the process you follow for your child's media use, what do you think about the impact of what they watch or play on your child? What are your child's behaviours that you observe after media consumption? For example, what do you think and what content is affected?
- 9) How would you describe your child's media consumption in general and your attitude or strategy to this situation?