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Parenting in a Digital World

A Qualitative study of the Role of Parents' Self-interest
in the Digital Media Use of Their Children

Romi de Bok

Utrecht University

Master Youth Studies

Student number: 5528666

Supervisor: Dr. I. M. Koning

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Abstract

Previous research shows that intensive digital media use has negative consequences for the health and well-being of children. Therefore it is important to find a balance between online and offline behaviour and parents have a crucial role in creating this balance for their children. In this study, the role of parental self-interest in the upbringing of children through the use of digital devices is investigated across different age groups. Transcriptions of semi-structured interviews with 31 parents with children between 3-16 years old have been analysed. Results of the interviews indicate four different situational patterns in which parents actively or passively stimulate the digital media use of their children. Parents initiate digital media use (1); do not intervene when children are already on a device (2); allow it when children ask for it (3) or arrange fixed moments in which children are granted using digital devices (4). Furthermore, parents with younger children are more actively using digital media to create time for themselves or to make sure the child is calm and behaves, while parents with older children use digital media time for children more passively by not intervening to avoid conflicts or because they are busy.

Keywords: digital media, parenting, self-interest, me-time.

Samenvatting

Uit eerder onderzoek blijkt dat intensief digitaal mediagebruik negatieve gevolgen heeft voor de gezondheid en het welzijn van kinderen. Het is belangrijk om een balans te vinden tussen online en offline gedrag en ouders hebben een belangrijke rol in het creëren van dit evenwicht voor hun kinderen. Deze studie onderzocht de rol van eigenbelang van ouders bij het stimuleren van digitaal mediagebruik van hun kinderen. Transcripten van semigestructureerde interviews met 31 ouders met kinderen van 3-16 jaar oud werden geanalyseerd. De resultaten van de interviews wijzen op vier verschillende situationele patronen waarin ouders actief of passief het digitale mediagebruik van hun kinderen stimuleren. Ouders initiëren soms het gebruik van digitale media (1), grijpen niet in wanneer kinderen al op een apparaat zitten (2), laten het gebruik toe wanneer kinderen erom vragen (3) of ze hebben vaste momenten waarop kinderen digitale apparaten mogen gebruiken (4). Ouders met jongere kinderen maken actief gebruik van digitale media om tijd voor zichzelf te creëren of om ervoor te zorgen dat het kind rustig is en zich gedraagt. Ouders met oudere kinderen stimuleren het digitaal mediagebruik van hun kinderen passief door niet in te grijpen om conflicten te vermijden of omdat ze zelf druk zijn.

Kernwoorden: digitale media, opvoeden, eigenbelang, me-time.

Electronic media pervade modern life. As a result, more and more children interact with electronic devices (e.g., television, computer, mobile phone, video game console) starting already at the age of 4 months (Chassaikos, Radesky, Christakis, Moreno, and Cross, 2016). Problems related to high levels of internet usage are ever more recognized as a risk for public health all over the developed world (King et al., 2018). For instance, increased screen time of children has been linked to several health problems such as less physical activity, child obesity and sleep deprivation (Dennison, Erb, & Jenkins, 2002; Strasburger, Jordan, & Donnerstein, 2010; Zimmerman, 2009). However, apps for children are often developed with the intention to educate them and thus they help children to learn something from it (Judge, Floyd, & Jeffs, 2015). Moreover, electronic devices may also contribute to a more relaxed atmosphere for both children and their parents, especially during peak hours at home, in times of illness or during holidays (Judge et al., 2015). Thus, though digital media usage involves multiple risks concerning health and social life, it is also tied to potential benefits such as relaxation.

In the early years of life, parents play a critical role in developing and shaping their children's physical activity and sedentary behaviours through role modelling and creating a healthy home environment that increases physical activity and reduces screen time (Xu, Wen, & Rissel, 2015). While there is some research available about the contribution of general and media-specific parenting practices to children's screen time, most of these findings are inconsistent (Alderan, Benham-Deal, & Jenkins, 2010; Hinkly, Crawford, & Salmon, 2008). For example, of the studies that examined television time rules, some found that television time rules resulted in less screen time (Barr-Anderson et al., 2011; Bleakley, Jordan, & Hennes, 2013; Vandewater, Huang, & Wartella, 2005), while others found no such association (Hinkley, Salmon, Okely, & Crawford, 2013; Vandewater, Rideout, Wartella, Lee, & Shim, 2007). Another study suggested a negative effect of television time rules on screen time (Gubbels et al., 2011). Furthermore, these studies neglect possible considerations of parents regarding screen related rules. Therefore, in this study, a concept of how parents may contribute to their children's screen time is further investigated: parents' self-interest in the digital behaviour of their children.

The concept of *me-time* – time spent relaxing on one's own as opposed to working or doing things for others - is often used as an opportunity to reduce stress or restore energy (Steltenpohl, Shuster, Peist, Pham, & Mikels, 2018). Parents can create me-time by supporting their children to do something for themselves (Davis, Eshelman, & McKay, 2008). This can also be applied to online activities for children. That is, parents can have a self-interest in their

children's digital media use in order to achieve some time for themselves, i.e. 'me-time'. In order to explore this concept and uncover insights into the thoughts, opinions and motivations of parents regarding their self-interest in children's screen behaviour, qualitative research is needed.

To further investigate the concept of self-interest, parental stress has to be explored as well. It is likely that parents who experience more stress, will make more effort to achieve me-time and therefore have a higher self-interest in having their children doing something on their own, e.g. playing a videogame. This is in line with the sociological perspective which entails that parents feel stress as a result of their challenges on multiple dimensions in their daily lives, such as the parent-child relationship, feelings of responsibilities and frustrations of children's behaviours (Pearlin, 1989). Nowadays, digital media provide parents with yet another tool in order to create me-time. So, out of self-interest, parents may encourage or allow their children's digital media use.

In the existing literature on parenting in a digital world, little attention has been given to the role of self-interest and obtaining me-time by using digital media. To our knowledge, only four studies – all quantitative – have paid attention to the convenient role online behaviour of children could have for parents. First, among a sample of school-aged children (10-12 years), He, Piché, Beynon and Harris (2010) demonstrated that over a third of the participating parents sometimes used screen devices to keep their children quiet. Second, Hawi and Rupert (2015) studied the impact of e-discipline on children's screen time. They found that children had significantly higher odds of exceeding general recommended screen time when parents let them use screen devices in order to create me-time for themselves. Third, He, Irwin, Bouck, Tucker and Pollet (2005) studied the perceptions of parents of pre-schoolers regarding the screen viewing of their children. They found that screens, especially TVs, assisted parents in managing their daily lives. The majority of the parents used TV as a babysitter or coping tool when they were busy doing household chores, were exhausted after work or were not feeling well. This kind of babysitting tool was especially useful for parents with multiple children. Last, a review of children's digital media use between 0-6 years old in the Netherlands since 2012 was conducted (Nikken, 2019). In his study, he found that parents have started to think more positively about the benefits of children's digital media use for themselves. Parents indicated that digital media was sometimes used to keep their children busy when they do not have the time or energy to do so themselves and to help children eat better or fall asleep more easily. Thus, though empirical evidence is scarce, studies do suggest that, out of self-interest, parents sometimes use electronic devices in order to obtain me-time.

Whether the age of children plays a role in the extent to which parents stimulate their digital media use remains unclear. However, all previously discussed studies regarding parents' self-interest in their children's digital media use investigated relatively young children (aged 0-12 years). This may suggest that there is a particularly beneficial aspect of stimulating their digital media use compared to older kids.

To date research shows that parents use screens as a distraction for their children in order to create me-time. However, these studies all applied a quantitative approach and have not considered parents' underlying motivations for their behaviour in relation to their children's digital media use. In this study, a qualitative approach will be used in order to investigate perceptions, thoughts and experiences of parents regarding the stimulation of digital behaviour of their children. Hereby, underlying motivations will be considered as well. In addition, the age range of children will be expanded in order to investigate if and in what depth parent's digital media stimulation is connected to the ages of their children. The following questions will be explored: *How does parental self-interest plays a role in their children's digital media use?* And: *In what way does the role of parental self-interest in the digital media use of their children differ across different age ranges?* These questions will be answered using data derived from interviews with parents of children aged 3-16 years.

Method

Sample

In this study, the focus is on the perceptions, thoughts and experiences of parents with young children regarding the active and/or passive stimulation of digital behaviour for their personal interest. 31 parents living in the Netherlands were interviewed about their parenting experiences and opinions regarding digital media. Both fathers (32%) and mothers (68%) were included in the sample. Participants differed among other things in educational level, marital status and working hours. A schematic overview of the respondents is displayed in Table 1.

Table 1

Socio-demographic characteristics of participants (N=31)

	<i>n (%)</i>	<i>M (SD)</i>	Min	Max
Gender				
Female	21 (68%)			
Age		41.52 (6,90)	22	51
Educational attainment				
High school	1 (3%)			
MBO	10 (32%)			
HBO	15 (48%)			
WO	5 (16%)			
Marital status				
Married	21 (68%)			
Living together	8 (26%)			
Single	2 (6%)			
Weekly working hours		26.75 (14,04)	0	50
Not working	3 (10%)			
Part-time	18 (58%)			
Fulltime	9 (29%)			
Children in household		2.50 (1,26)	1	6
One child (vs multiple children)	5 (16%)			
Gender of children				
Boy	29 (50%)			
Age children		10.54 (4,01)	3	16

Note. *n* = number, *M* = average, *SD* = standard deviation

Design

A qualitative research design was used because it offers the possibility to investigate underlying motivations of parental behaviour (Boeije, 2010). Existing theories and empirical studies provided a basis for creating the topics which provided a guideline when conducting the interviews (Appendix III). The implementation of the topics within the interviews was open for interpretation. 31 semi-structured interviews were conducted which were transcribed and analysed accordingly (Appendix 1).

Procedure

The participants were recruited using a convenience sample, i.e. through the personal network of interviewers. Before the interview, participants were asked to sign an informed consent form through which they agreed to participate under the terms that their anonymity was guaranteed and that they had the possibility to discontinue the interview at any time. The interviews were semi-structured in nature, lasted on average over 45 minutes and were held in

quiet public spaces or at home. Three interviews were conducted by phone, due to a large travelling distance. The interviews were recorded and subsequently transcribed.

Measures

Measuring instruments consisted of semi-structured interviews (Appendix I) and a topic list (Appendix III). Parents' opinions, attitudes and experiences regarding their personal digital media use and the digital media use of their children were asked. Also, interviews were divided in five categories based on the age of the children. The age groups were <6 years (8 interviews), 6-9 years (15 interviews), 10-11 years (10 interviews), 12-14 years (13 interviews) and 15-16 years (12 interviews).

Data analysis

The 31 transcripts were analysed by two researchers using the predetermined topic list as a guideline and followed the principles of thematic analysis (Guest, MacQueen, & Namey, 2011; Patton, 1990) using NVivo12. The transcripts were labelled using codes (Boeije, 2010). The aim of the qualitative analysis was to create structure and find behavioural patterns within the data. Axial coding led to the reorganization of the codes that were merged into a code chart (Appendix II). Reliability and internal validity were guaranteed through two reviews during the analysis-phase by the researchers (Golafshani, 2003). The reviews ensured that both researchers used the same codes for similar content. The analysing process led to distinguishing four different situational patterns in which parents express self-interest in the digital media use of their children.

Results

The results will be discussed per situational pattern, for each age group. In all interviews, some form of self-interest was mentioned by parents regarding the digital media use of their children (N=31). The results will be analysed using the different age categories of the children across different ways to gain self-interest in order to provide answers to both research questions.

Through the analysis four main situational patterns were found in which parents actively or passively stimulate the digital media use of their children. First, parents can initiate digital media use of their children by stimulating them to use a digital device (active). Second, they do not intervene when children are already on a device (passive). Third, they allow digital media use when children ask for it (passive). Fourth, they arrange fixed moments in which children are granted to use digital devices (active). Obtaining me-time, not having to entertain the child, being able to do something undisturbed and avoiding conflicts were key motivations for stimulating digital media use of children by parents. A complete and more detailed matrix of the results can be found in Appendix V.

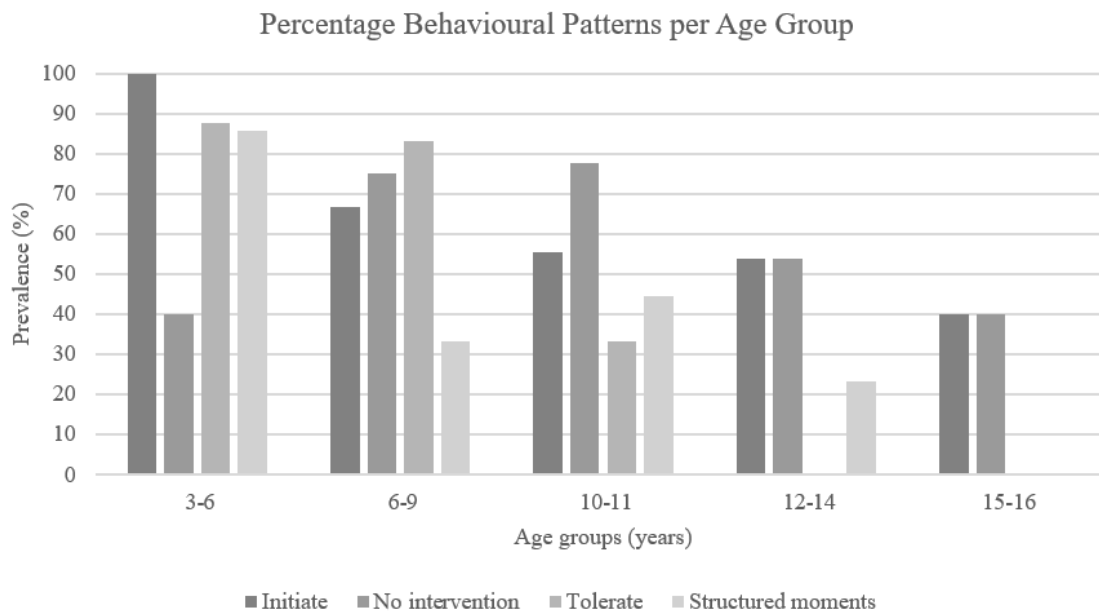


Figure 1. Main situational patterns

Initiate

In the interviews, parents indicate that they sometimes initiate digital media use of their children for their own good. This is mostly mentioned by parents with children in the youngest age group (100%). From the situational patterns that the parents described in these conversations, three underlying reasons to actively stimulate their children's digital media use are distinguished. First of all, they use it to be able to do something undisturbed, e.g. cooking.

But also, with cooking, yes then it is, I find cooking with the children very difficult and then it is almost necessary. Because they talk a lot, they are also quite curious and ask a lot of things, so when I'm cooking, which almost never happens because [man] mostly cooks, but that's why I find it all the more difficult because I so am not used to cooking. But then I think it's nice if the children can do something for themselves. – (Mother of a 4- and 6-year-old)

Second, they create me-time to sleep in or relax.

I: Yes, and for instance, when the children watch tv in the morning in the weekends, do you enjoy having some extra time for yourself?

P: Definitely, because than I can sleep in a little while longer, so of course. – (Father of a 5- and 7-year-old)

Third, they use digital media as a tool to entertain the child in situations where the child may get bored, such as while travelling, when having friends/family, when waiting for something (e.g. at a doctor's visit or in a restaurant).

In the car [laughs], yes then it is very convenient, because they usually argue a lot in the car when they are together in the back or they are supposedly bored. We used to look outside or turn on music. They can now simply set up a video and that also gives us the opportunity to play our own music. I really like that advantage. - (Mother of 10- and 12-year-old)

Initiation of children's digital media use by parents is mentioned in all age groups, but slightly descends in the interviews as children become older (Figure 1).

No intervention

All parents who were interviewed acknowledged to not intervene in some situations in which their children already were using a device. This was most customarily for parents with children in the age category 6-9 years (66,67%) and 10-11 years (77,78%). Different explanations were given by parents for not intervening in their children's digital media use. First, when the parent is doing something for him/herself which is not done yet, such as working or having a telephone conversation.

Yes, sometimes with conversations on the phone. And then... then they do not distract you and you think: "oh, I can call this friend a little while longer..." something like that, yes. - (Mother of a 10- and 13-year-old)

Second, when the child is out of sight parents declare that they tend to intervene less easily. For example, parents explained that when the child was upstairs and declared that he or she was making homework, they did not check even though they suspected their child might be playing video games or watching video blogs. Third, parents let their children use their digital device without intervention when they perceived a lack of alternative activity, for instance during bad weather circumstances.

That too, yes. Of course, but it also depends on the weather, see if the weather is very bad and they sit on the couch all day watching a series, then I think 'yes, let's leave them', but if it the weather is nice, I would say 'go outside', which in principle they always did.- (Father of a 13-year-old and 16-year-old twins.

Furthermore, parents admitted that they sometimes intervene less because they want to avoid conflicts with their children. The last-mentioned motive for not intervening was creating more me-time, such as relaxing on the couch.

Not intervening is thus also mentioned in all age groups, but peaks when children reach the age of 10-11 and descends afterwards (see Figure 1).

Tolerate

Only parents with children aged up to eleven years old sometimes mentioned to tolerate the digital media use of their children i.e. granting the child to spend time on a device

after the child asks for it. Especially in the youngest age group these situational patterns were mentioned occasionally (57,14%). In the age group 12-14 and 15-16 no forms of tolerating digital media use after asking by the child was mentioned (see Figure 1). Parents allow digital media use for practical reasons (in order to do something undisturbed themselves). They also sometimes try to create a moment to relax themselves.

Yes, whenever I do not have to work, she always comes lying with me in my bed and then she asks if she can watch a movie clip. (Mother of a 3-year-old)

A third explanation that was often mentioned is that they tolerated digital media use when they have friends or family over for a visit.

Yes and sometimes you are eating and then he asks "gosh, can I use my smartphone? well, okay then" - (Mother of a 12-year-old)

The last situation that parents described was one where they were already using digital media themselves or when they wished to use digital media themselves. In sum, the examples where parents tolerate the use of digital media, four different main underlying reasons are distinguished: First of all, they tolerate or initiate digital media use to be able to do something undisturbed such as household chores. Second, they do it to create me-time, for example staying in bed. Third, they want to avoid conflict e.g. when the child asks during dinner. Fourth, they try to encourage quiet behaviour of the child by tolerating their digital media use, for instance when they have guests.

Structured moments

Most parents also declared that they arrange fixed moments during which their children are allowed to spend time online. Especially parents with young children often indicate to have fixed moments in which their children are allowed to use digital media, for instance half an hour before dinner or in the morning during weekends.

From 17:00 in the afternoon, so just before we eat, they can watch television or play some games on the Iphone for example. - (Father of a 5- and 7-year-old)

Interestingly, parents of older children did not indicate to have these fixed moments. Instead, their rules contained moments when NOT to use digital media. For example, during meals, before school starts and when having guests. At early ages, it is less likely that children have their own digital device, which may explain why agreements to use is more prevalent since they have to ask for access to the device. At later ages, youth often have their own mobile devices and there rules regarding NOT use seems to be more relevant than access-control.

Additional findings

Remarkably, parental attitudes towards digital devices in general did not correspond to how they deal with the digital media use of their children. i.e. both parents with a negative

attitude towards digital media use of young people and parents with a more positive attitude generally used the devices sometimes as a tool to create more time for themselves or to avoid conflicts. Furthermore, multiple parents (16,13%) indicated that they encouraged their children to watch television together because they enjoy to spent time together with their children. This so-called 'active mediation' may also be used to have some time with the child combined with a relaxing moment for the parent.

...Like 'Boer Zoekt Vrouw' on Sundays and 'Expeditie Robinson' during the week. When these programmes are on tv I really call them like, expedition is on television!' I really like that, to be together and I am definitely making an effort to maintain this tradition... (Mother of a 16-year-old)

Discussion

To our knowledge, this is the first study that has qualitatively investigated how and why parents have a self-interest in their children's digital media use across different age groups. In-depth interviews were held with parents of children between 3 and 16 in which their attitudes, experiences and motives regarding the upbringing of their children with respect to digital media use were discussed. Findings showed that parents actively and/or passively stimulate the digital media use of their children in four ways: they initiate their children's digital media use, they do not intervene when children are already using a device, allow digital media use when the child asks for it or arrange fixed moments in which children are granted to use digital devices. Initiating digital media use by parents was particularly applied to the younger children, whereas not intervening when the child already was using a device was particularly applied to older children. Furthermore, agreements with younger children are mainly focused on moments when they are allowed to use digital media whereas with older children parents arrange moments when NOT to use digital media. Interestingly, the role of parents' self-interest is independent of their general attitudes towards digital media. In sum, these results imply that stimulating digital media use of children by parents for their personal self-interest is highly prevalent across different age groups, yet in somewhat different ways.

Different motivations were mentioned by parents for stimulating digital media use of their children. One of the key motivations was obtaining me-time. For instance, parents would stimulate their children's digital media use in order to make a private phone call, read a book or to sleep in. Obtaining me-time was particularly addressed by parents with younger children. The second motivation was not having to entertain the child. Likewise, this motivation was more common for parents with children between age 3 to 9. These findings are in line with previous research in which parents of children aged 2.5 to 5 years use television as a babysit tool in order to obtain me-time or distract their children (He et al.,

2005). Previous research also showed that parents of school-aged children (10-12 years old) used screen devices to keep their children quiet in 33,33% of the cases (He et al., 2010). However, in this study, keeping the child quiet – i.e. not having to entertain the child – was only mentioned in one case (5%). This can be explained by looking at the differing research strategies. He et al. (2010) studied both parents and their children by using a survey method, whereas in this study only parents were asked about their experience through in-depth interviews. Asking both parents and children might provide a more realistic view of the actual situation. Also, having face-to-face interviews might increase the chance of social desirable responses (Bradburn, 2004). Third, parents explained that being able to work for themselves was another motivation for stimulating their children's digital media use. This motivation was particularly mentioned by parents of children aged 3 to 14 years. Research of Hawi and Rupert (2015) showed that screen devices are used as a distraction tool by children aged 7-11 years old so parents could have a break or continue doing their own work – i.e. being able to work for themselves. Despite the differences in age range, these findings are in line with those of the current study. The last frequently mentioned motivation was avoiding conflicts with children, particularly among children aged 12-16 years. These age groups have not been examined before within research. This motivation could be explained by rules regarding digital media use becoming more flexible in the older age groups (Livingstone, Mascheroni, Dreier, Chaudron, & Lagae, 2015). Because there are fewer distinct agreements concerning digital media use of children, parents might not feel very accomplished in a discussion regarding the issue and therefore choose to avoid these conflicts beforehand. Also, from this age onwards kids are in a developmental phase where they become more autonomous (Mascheroni & Ólafsson, 2016) and parents tend to become more autonomy-granting (Coyne et al., 2017).

Though our findings mostly are consistent with previous research, the type of digital devices included in these studies differs. In previous research television was most often mentioned as a device to distract their children. In the current study, however, television was rarely mentioned by parents as a digital device that was used to obtain time for themselves compared to tablets, smartphones and laptops. This discrepancy might be explained by taking technological developments and structural changes of digital media use into account. Broadcasting media such as television and radio now have become 'traditional' and supplemented by new digital technologies that promote interactive and social engagement. These include applications, multiplayer video games, YouTube videos and video blogs (Chassaikos et al., 2016). Thus, traditional media sources like television possibly have become more 'normal' to parents and are less accounted for when making rules regarding

digital media. In the same instance, they are being replaced by more recent developed interactive technologies. The new digital media subsequently draws more attention from both parents and their children and is regarded to be harmful. As a result, new media are more controlled by parents, whereas traditional media are perceived as social activities.

The ways parents obtain me-time, i.e. use digital media for their personal self-interest seem to differ between the discussed age groups. First of all, initiation of children's digital media use by parents is mentioned in all age groups, but the use of it decreases when children become older. Also, parents in all age groups mentioned that they sometimes do not intervene when the child is already using a digital device. However, this situational pattern peaks when children reach the age of 10 and descends afterwards. Lastly, tolerating digital media use after the child asks for it is only mentioned by parents with children in the first three age groups (3- to 11-year-olds).

The differences in active and/or passive stimulation of children's digital media use by parents might be explained by the underlying values and contextual agreements regarding digital media use of each of the situational patterns in which parents obtain time for themselves. For instance, parents with younger children indicated that they arrange fixed moments in which children are allowed to spend time behind a screen. Parents with children in the older age groups mostly reported that the only existing rules include the few settings in which children are not allowed to use a digital device such as during dinner. This accounts for the missing reports of tolerating in the older age group as children aged 12-14 simply do not ask their parents anymore, because in the Netherlands 94% of the twelve year olds already owns a mobile phone (KPN, 2017). The fact that initiation is most frequently mentioned in the youngest age groups can be explained by the underlying value of the action. Parents explain they initiate digital media use of their children to get their hands free to do something else. Young children need more attention compared to older ones. For them digital media use can be used as a babysitting tool, which is not particularly necessary for older children who are more independent. The most fitting explanation for the peak of not intervening at age 10 is also found in a broader context. Younger children might follow the rules set by their parents more strictly whereas older children are left alone more easily. Children who are in between those phases might try to bend the rules but are still under the moderation of their parents (Kucirkova, Littleton, & Kyparissiadis, 2018).

Consistent with previous studies (Hawi & Rupert, 2015; He et al., 2005; He et al., 2010), results of the current study suggest that parents of children aged 7-12 years use digital devices to stimulate their children's digital media use. However, in previous research no comparison was made between younger and older age groups. In this study, we found

evidence that suggests that parents' self-interest in their children's digital media use does not disappear when children become older and more autonomous but takes a different shape as parental stimulation becomes more passive and different motivations are given to explain the behaviour.

Strengths and limitations

The present study is the first to explore when and how parents use digital media for their own interest to obtain me-time using a qualitative method. A large number of interviews were held, and analysis triangulation was used as a strategy to further increase the methodological quality of this research. Furthermore, sophisticated analyses were performed using NVivo12. Despite these strengths, there are several limitations that should be mentioned. First, the insights of the everyday live around digital media use in the house are solely gained by interviews with one of the parents. To get an even more realistic view, both parents and children should be questioned separately in order to minimize subjective and desirable answers. Second, interviews were held by five different interviewees, which on the one hand diminishes researchers bias but on the other hand could be a disadvantage as each interview style might come with differently directed questions. Third, parents were targeted using a convenience sample which might have caused the participants to represent a specific group instead of the entire population.

Conclusions and implications

In the current study we gained more insight into the role of parental self-interest regarding the upbringing with respect to the digital media use of their children, and how this is carried out differently across multiple age groups. The results showed that self-interest is an important motive for parents to stimulate digital media use of their children. This seemingly happens in all age categories i.e. children from 3 up to 16 years old. The nature of the stimulation, however, is age-dependent since active stimulation is more frequently reported in younger age groups and passive stimulation occurs generally in older age groups.

Future research should incorporate a set of interviews in which children as well as their parents are represented. Furthermore, a longitudinal study should be conducted, following parents and their children from a young age up until the age of 16, in order to measure developments within families and to be able to find causal relationships that might explain the upbringing of children regarding their digital media use. Finally, in this study we emphasize the importance of understanding underlying motivations for parents to stimulate their children's digital media use, arguing that further research regarding these fundamental aspects within children's digital media use should be examined.

In conclusion, the results of this study imply that parents actively or passively stimulate their children's digital media use out of self-interest, despite the value they ascribe to creating a healthy digital balance for their children. This parental behaviour is evident in all age categories, but takes on different forms. Creating me-time, being able to do something undisturbed, not having to entertain the child and avoiding conflicts were some of the key motivations for parents to stimulate their children's digital media usage. However, the causes for their behaviour still remain unclear. A possible explanation can be found in the higher levels of stress parents perceive nowadays (Nomaguchi & Milkie, 2017). These findings should create more awareness for both researchers and parents about the underlying nature of parental behaviour, learn about potential risks that digital media use evoke and understand how children can be supported in creating a health balance in their online and offline behaviour.

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Appendix I

Transcripts of 31 in-depth interviews with parents

The 386 pages regarding the transcripts of 31 in-depth interviews were not included in this file due to possible problems when submitting them online.

Appendix II

Results table

	<i>Initiëren</i>	<i>Niet ingrijpen</i>	<i>Toelaten na vragen</i>	<i>Vaste momenten</i>
<6 jaar	NB. In 7/7 interviews aangegeven.	NB. In 3/7 interviews aangegeven.	NB. In 4/7 interviews aangegeven.	NB. In 6/7 interviews aangegeven.
	Tijdens het huishouden (schoonmaken/koken) 5x – ongestoord kunnen doen.	Half uur langer film laten kijken 2x - moet haar de rest van de middag nog vermaken.	Tijdens het koken 2x - dan is ze vaak moe/dan verveelt kind zich.	Tijdens het koken 3x - praktisch, zorgen dat het eten op tafel komt
	Op familiebezoek/visite 2x - kinderen druk en vervelend, met mensen kunnen praten	Nog gauw even de was doen 1x - stil in huis, makkelijk, vooral als je al twee uur voor politieagent hebt gespeeld.	's Ochtends als ouder kan uitslapen 2x – zodat ouder rustig kan wakker worden.	In de ochtend een half uur 1x .
	In een restaurant 3x - om kinderen te vermaken, aan tafel blijven zitten (niet door restaurant rennen) en je zelf rustig kunt eten.	Als ik net een boek aan het lezen ben 1x - kan ik ook langer blijven zitten.	Als opa/oma erbij zijn 1x – omdat de regels dan minder streng zijn.	In een café/restaurant - omdat het kind dan niks anders te doen heeft. 1x
	Als je iets moet doen		Tijdens verhuizing – te druk voor aandacht aan kind. 1x	's ochtends als ouder kan uitslapen (weekend) 4x - langer in bed kunnen blijven liggen.
	Als je ander kind in bad moet doen 1x	Situaties: Wanneer je zelf ergens mee bezig bent, zowel ontspanning (boek lezen) ouders als praktisch (was doen) – zodat ouder eigen ding kan doen.	Wanneer de ouder zelf tv aan het kijken is. 1x	Woensdagmiddag om 17.00 1x - Duidelijk wanneer het mag, hoeven ze het niet meer te vragen.
	Als kinderen ruzie krijgen en je bent nog bezig met iets 1x	Langer filmpjes laten kijken – wanneer ouders (te) moe zijn/hoeft ouder kind niet te vermaken.	Bij vraag kind – om confrontatie te vermijden. 1x	Als broer met vriendjes speelt 1x - Afleiding zodat hij broer niet gaat pesten.
	's ochtends als ouder kan uitslapen (weekend 3x - kun je langer blijven liggen.			In de vakanties meer 1x
	Tijdens behandeling bij fysiotherapeut ouder 1x - hoeven we niet naar kind om te kijken.			
	Tijdens inpakken voor een nachtje weg 1x - irritant als je kind om je heen hobbelt.			
	Als je zelf even niks te doen hebt en dan samen een filmpje gaat kijken 1x			Achterliggende reden: Ter ontspanning van het kind.
	Verveling van het kind – zodat ouder kind zelf niet hoeft te vermaken. 2x			

	<p><u>Achterliggende reden:</u> Vermoeidheid van ouders, niet weten wat ze met hun kind kunnen doen, handig / tijd voor eigen dingen en huishouden. Voor eigen rust of om zelf iets (praktisch) te kunnen doen (bijv. koken, schoonmaken). Om het kind geen overlast van de omgeving te maken (bijv. rustig houden in restaurant).</p>			
6-9 jaar	<p>NB. In 8/12 interviews aangegeven dat dit voorkomt.</p> <p>Op familiebezoek 1x - kinderen druk en vervelend, met mensen kunnen praten</p> <p>Als er visite is 1x - makkelijk.</p> <p>Als je ergens bent en ze vervelen zich 2x - makkelijk.</p> <p>Tijdens het koken 1x</p> <p>Wachten bij het gemeentehuis 1x - duurt lang.</p> <p>In de auto naar vakantiebestemming 1x - om kind te vermaken.</p> <p>In een restaurant 1x - wachten.</p> <p>Als kind niks te doen heeft en zich verveeld 2x.</p> <p>Als ze vragen hebben waar ik geen antwoord op weet 1x.</p> <p>Gezellig om samen met kind een bepaald programma te kijken. (active mediation) –</p>	<p>NB. In 8/12 interviews aangegeven.</p> <p>Wanneer ze een vriendje hebben die komt spelen en ze samen digitale media gebruiken. 1x</p> <p>Als je zelf met iets bezig bent 5x - je vergeet het/hebt tijd niet in de gaten.</p> <p>Wanneer het stiekem gebeurt – niet altijd zin hebben om alles te controleren (geen 'politieagent' willen spelen) / gemakzucht. 1x</p> <p>Als je er wat van zegt, maar ze blijven vervolgens doorgaan 1x.</p> <p><u>Achterliggende reden:</u> Makkelijk als ze zichzelf kunnen vermaken. Gemakzucht.</p>	<p>NB. In 1/12 interviews aangegeven.</p> <p>Tijdens het eten. 1x</p>	<p>Tijdens het koken 2x - praktisch, zorgen dat er eten op tafel komt.</p> <p>'s ochtends als ouder kan uitslapen (weekend) 2x - langer in bed blijven liggen.</p> <p>Een uurtje in de ochtend en een 1x uurtje in de avond.</p> <p>'s Ochtends een uur voordat kind naar school gaat en 's middags twee uur 1x.</p> <p>Op woensdagmiddag om 17:00 1x - dan is het duidelijk wanneer het mag en hoeven ze het niet meer te vragen.</p> <p>In de avond om 18:15 en om 19:00 weer 1x - omdat er dan bepaalde programma's op zijn die kind graag wilt zien.</p> <p>Van 17.30 tot 20.30 op de Playstation 1x - nadat huiswerk is gemaakt.</p>

	zodat ouder iets leuks met het kind kan doen. 1x			
10-11 jaar	<p>NB. In 5/9 interviews aangegeven.</p> <p>Sporadisch (1.4, 3.3) 2x</p> <p>tijd om zelf dingen te doen (1.4) 1x</p> <p>Vroeger tv, nu device (3.5) samen iets doen 1x</p> <p>VROEGER: Vroeger tijdens koken (2.2) want dan kon ik mijn eigen ding doen /relaxen /de was doen/gewoon zitten(2.2) 1x</p> <p>Vroeger uiteten (2.2) want dan hadden man en ik meer tijd voor elkaar 1x</p> <p>Tijdens het autorijden/op reis (2.2) 1x</p> <p>Als kinderen lastig zijn (2.4) het kan een geestelijk rust moment zijn 1x</p> <p>Als kinderen onderling ruzie maken (2.4) dan ben je even van het gezeik af en kan je zelf huishoudelijke taken doen 1x</p>	<p>NB. In 7/9 interviews aangegeven.</p> <p>Tijdens een telefoongesprek 1x - dan leiden ze je niet af.</p> <p>Als ik iets moet doen 1x - dan kan ik m'n werkje even doen.</p> <p>Als ouder zelf afgeleid is door dingen 1x - Makkelijk als ze zichzelf kunnen vermaken/gemakzucht.</p> <p>Als we niet opletten (1.4, 2.5) 2x</p> <p>In de vakantie mochten ze er langer op, daarna werd het ingrijpen minder (2.2) 1x</p> <p>Ik houd de tijd sowieso niet zo bij (3.3) 1x</p> <p>Als kinderen het stiekem doen (3.5) 1x</p> <p>Als ik weg ben (3.5) 1x</p> <p>Als kind op kamer is (3.5) 1x</p>	<p>NB. In 3/9 interviews aangegeven.</p> <p>Ze willen hem altijd meenemen en soms wordt dat toegelaten (2.2) 1x</p> <p>Als er visite is (2.5) anders ben je er de hele tijd mee bezig 1x</p> <p>Als kinderen zich vervelen (3.3) Als ze dan vervelend werden 1x</p> <p>Tijdens het eten (3.5) 1x</p>	<p>Als je zelf druk bezig bent met het huishouden (1.4) dat is handig, dan krijg je geen vragen 1x</p> <p>'s avonds na het eten (1.4, 2.4) 2x</p> <p>'s ochtends bij het opstaan mogen de berichten gecheckt worden (2.4) 1x</p> <p>Tussen 5 en 6 (2.4) 1x</p> <p>Op vrijdagavond langer (2.4) 1x</p> <p>Tijdens het koken 30-45 min (2.5) 1x</p> <p>Na school als het huiswerk klaar is (3.3) 1x</p>
12-14 jaar	<p>NB. In 7/13 interviews aangegeven.</p> <p>Als ze vragen hebben/iets niet weten 3x - aanmoedigen als kennisbron te gebruiken.</p> <p>VROEGER: Tijdens het koken 2x - waren ze meestal op hun vervelendst en kon je hun gejeengel niet gebruiken.</p>	<p>NB. In 7/13 interviews aangegeven.</p> <p>Als je aan de telefoon bent 1x - dan leiden ze je niet af.</p> <p>Als je iets moet doen 1x - dan kun je even je werkje doen.</p> <p>Als je druk bent 1x - je hebt het niet in de gaten, je hoort ze niet.</p> <p>Bij telefoongebruik aan tafel: geen afspraken over dat telefoon aan</p>	<p>NB. In 0/13 interviews aangegeven.</p>	xxx

	Vroeger tv, nu device samen iets doen. 1x	tafel niet gebruikt mag worden 1x - hoeft ouder zich daar zelf ook niet aan te houden.		
	Tijdens het autorijden/op reis 1x			
	Wanneer kinderen lastig zijn zorgt het voor een geestelijk rustmoment 1x	Als ze op de apparatuur door blijven gaan denken we soms van laat maar 1x .		
	Wanneer kinderen onderling ruzie maken, dan ben je even van het gezeik af en kan je zelf bijvoorbeeld huishoudelijke taken doen. 1x	Om confrontatie te vermijden 1x . In de vakantie mochten ze er langer op, daarna werd het ingrijpen minder. 1x Houd de tijd sowieso niet bij. 1x Wanneer kinderen het stiekem doen. 1x Als kind op kamer is. 1x Als ik weg ben. 1x		
15-16 jaar	NB. In 3/10 interviews aangegeven dat dit voorkomt. Om samen iets te kijken – zodat ouder gezellig tijd met kind door kan brengen. Als ze vragen hebben/iets niet weten 2x . VROEGER: Ouders met kinderen in deze leeftijdscategorie geven aan het vroeger wel te doen, maar nu niet meer. (Destijds tijdens het koken 3x - makkelijk/dan waren ze op hun vervelendst en kon je hun gejengel niet gebruiken/dan had je het onder controle).	NB. In 3/10 interviews aangegeven. Als kind hele dag series kijkt – wanneer het bijv. slecht weer is en er geen alternatief is. Als het kind boven al iets op zijn telefoon aan het doen is. Als je druk bent 1x - je hebt het niet in de gaten, je hoort ze niet. Bij telefoongebruik aan tafel: geen afspraken over dat telefoon aan tafel niet gebruikt mag worden 1x - hoeft ouder zich daar zelf ook niet aan te houden. VROEGER: Ouders met kinderen in deze leeftijdscategorie geven aan het vroeger wel te doen, maar nu niet meer – omdat ouders zelf ergens mee bezig waren (bijv. op vrije middag een boek lezen).	NB. In 0/12 interviews aangegeven.	Xxx

Appendix III

Topic list interviews

Onderstaande topiclijst dient als handvat voor het afnemen van de interviews. De gespreksonderwerpen die hierin zijn opgenomen moeten aan de orde komen tijdens het interview. Van de volgorde van de vragen kan eventueel worden afgeweken. Op (relevante) onderwerpen die de geïnterviewde zelf aan de orde stelt, kan uiteraard ook worden ingegaan. Daarnaast kan naar eigen inzicht van de interviewer dieper op een bepaald onderwerp worden ingegaan.

Introductie:

- Jezelf even voorstellen.
- Doel interview:
Inzicht krijgen in de ervaringen, opvattingen en motieven van ouders met betrekking tot de opvoeding ten aanzien van het digitaal mediagebruik van hun kinderen.
- Definitie geven van digitale media:
Onder digitaal mediagebruik verstaan we het gebruik van computers, tv's, laptops, tablets, smartphones, spelcomputers etc.
- Aanpak/opbouw interview kort bespreken:
 - Interview wordt opgenomen.
 - Tijdsduur: ongeveer 1 uur.
- Anonimiteit:
Het interview zal anoniem worden opgeslagen met behulp van een respondentnummer.

Allereerste vraag:

- Zou u even hardop willen zeggen welk respondentnummer u heeft? Op deze manier kan het interview worden gekoppeld aan dit nummer.

1. Algemene informatie

- Leeftijd
- Woonplaats
- Opleidingsniveau
- Ongehuwd/Gehuwd/Samenwonend
- Werk (vragen naar het aantal uur)
- Aantal + leeftijd kinderen (indien de ouder meerdere kinderen heeft, probeer dan helder te krijgen of er per kind verschillen zijn m.b.t. onderstaande onderwerpen).

2. Beschikbaarheid elektronische apparaten (TV, smartphone, computer, laptop, tablet, spelcomputer etc.).

- Welke devices zijn aanwezig in huis?
- Hoeveel?

- Welke devices bezit uw kind zelf (heeft uw kind een eigen smartphone)?
 - Op welke leeftijd heeft uw kind die devices gekregen?
 - Welke devices zijn aanwezig in de slaapkamer van uw kind?

3. Digitaal mediagebruik ouders

- Welke devices gebruikt u?
- Hoe vaak per dag en hoe lang?
- Wanneer? In welke situaties?
 - Is uw digitaal mediagebruik anders als uw kinderen wel of niet in de buurt zijn?
 - Zo ja, hoe anders?

4. Digitaal mediagebruik kind

- Welke devices gebruikt uw kind?
- Hoe vaak per dag en hoe lang?
- Wanneer?
- Voor welk gebruik?
 - Heeft u het idee dat u op de hoogte bent van wat uw kind allemaal doet online?
- Wat is uw mening over het digitaal mediagebruik van jongeren in Nederland?
- Wat vindt u van het digitaal mediagebruik van uw kind (tijd/type activiteit, acceptabel/problematisch)?
 - Waarom vindt u dit?
 - Welke factoren spelen volgens u een rol in het digitaal mediagebruik van uw kind?
 - In hoeverre denkt u dat u een rol speelt in het digitaal mediagebruik van uw kind?
- Grijpt u weleens in in het digitaal mediagebruik van uw kind?
 - Kunt u voorbeelden geven van situaties waarin u dit wel en niet doet?
 - Waarom?

5. Voor- en nadelen van digitaal mediagebruik in het algemeen

- Wat zijn volgens u de voordelen van digitaal mediagebruik voor kinderen/jongeren? (Welke mogelijkheden biedt digitaal mediagebruik voor kinderen/jongeren?)
- Wat zijn volgens u de voordelen van digitaal mediagebruik voor ouders?
- Wat zijn volgens u de nadelen van digitaal mediagebruik voor kinderen/jongeren? (Wat zijn de mogelijke risico's?)
- Wat zijn volgens u de nadelen van digitaal mediagebruik voor ouders?

6. Houding van ouders t.o.v. het digitaal mediagebruik van het kind

- Positieve aspecten van het digitaal mediagebruik van het kind

- In hoeverre ervaart u positieve aspecten aan het mediagebruik van uw kind *voor uzelf*?
 - Kunt u voorbeelden noemen van situaties waarin u deze positieve aspecten ervaart (bijv. tijdens het koken, visite, drukte)?
 - Kunt u beschrijven hoe dat dan gaat?
- In hoeverre zitten er positieve aspecten aan het mediagebruik van uw kind *voor uw kind*?
 - Kunt u voorbeelden noemen van situaties?
- Negatieve aspecten van het digitaal mediagebruik van het kind
 - In hoeverre ervaart u negatieve aspecten aan het mediagebruik van uw kind *voor uzelf*?
 - Kunt u voorbeelden noemen van situaties waarin u deze negatieve aspecten ervaart?
 - In hoeverre zitten er negatieve aspecten aan het mediagebruik van uw kind *voor uw kind*?
 - Kunt u voorbeelden noemen van situaties?
- Komt het weleens voor dat u het initieert of aanmoedigt bij uw kind om digitale media te gebruiken?
 - Zo ja, in wat voor situaties is dat? Kunt u hiervan voorbeelden geven?
- Komt het weleens voor dat uw kind ernaar vraagt om digitale media te mogen gebruiken?
 - Zo ja, in welke situaties? Kunt u hiervan voorbeelden geven?
 - Hoe gaat u daar mee om?
- Kunt u het zich voorstellen dat ouders het mediagebruik van hun kind stimuleren of niet ingrijpen, omdat het voor hen (de ouders) ook wel lekker is?
 - Zo ja, kunt u daar dan een voorbeeld van noemen waarin u denkt dat ouders dat weleens doen.
- Komt het weleens voor dat u uw kind toch langer digitale media laat gebruiken dan afgesproken/gewenst?
 - Kunt u voorbeelden van situaties geven?
 - Waarom?

7. Regels m.b.t. tot het digitaal mediagebruik

- Heeft u bepaalde regels of afspraken m.b.t. het online gedrag van uw kind (m.b.t. duur, inhoud, welke devices uw kind zelf in bezit/op de slaapkamer mag hebben etc.)?
 - Waarom stelt u deze regels/maakt u deze afspraken met uw kind?
 - Hoe gaat uw kind om met deze regels?
 - Hoe is het voor u om deze regels te stellen?
 - Kunt u situaties noemen waarin het moeilijk is om dat te doen?
 - In welke situaties gaat dat beter?
 - In hoeverre verschilt dat per kind?

8. Verschillen in opvoeding m.b.t. digitaal mediagebruik tussen kinderen

- Jongens vs. meisjes

- Jongere vs. oudere kinderen
(Voor ouders met slechts één kind/kinderen van dezelfde leeftijd: Deed u het vroeger anders toen uw kinderen jonger waren/denkt u dat uw opvoeding m.b.t. digitaal mediagebruik zal veranderen naarmate uw kinderen ouder worden?)
- ➔ Dit kan eventueel ook gedurende het interview aan de kaart worden gesteld door bij ouders met meerdere kinderen bij ieder onderwerp na te gaan of het per kind anders is of niet.

Afronding:

- Dit waren de vragen. Heeft u zelf nog vragen of opmerkingen?
- Mogen wij in de toekomst nog een keer contact met u opnemen, mocht dat in het kader van dit onderzoek wenselijk/nodig zijn?

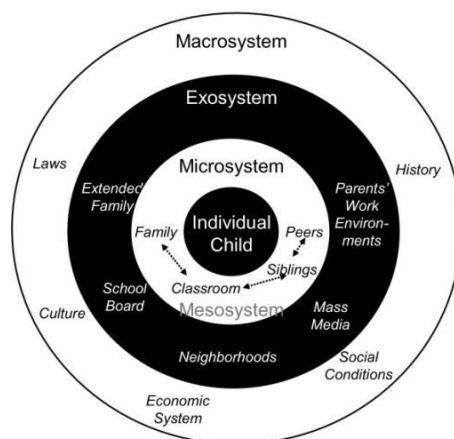
Appendix IV

Reflection on interdisciplinarity

When reflecting on the interdisciplinarity of this study, it should be taken into account that in this paper, parenting behaviour is explained by proximal reasons such as self-interest and the importance of me-time. However, when explaining behaviour a more interdisciplinary approach is desirable.

For instance, in their bioecological theory of nature and nurture effects, Bronfenbrenner and Ceci (1994) argue that long-term interaction between an individual and his or her environment are a necessary condition for the expression of any trait. They differentiate between the proximal environment, which is directly experienced by the individual (e.g., the family environment), and more distal cultural and social value systems that have an indirect effect on the individual, and are often mediated by the more proximal context. Proximal processes constitute the basic mechanisms that produce effective developmental functioning. They reflect the immediate day-to-day experiences that most directly shape adaptation in the face of adversity. The form, power, content, and direction of the proximal processes that affect development vary systematically as a joint function of the person, the environment (both immediate and more remote) in which the processes are taking place, and the nature of the developmental outcome under consideration (Schoon et al., 2002).

Ecological explanations of the association between self-interest and stimulating online behaviour of children (actively or passively) by parents or caretakers should thus be focused on each level Bronfenbrenner and Ceci set out in their model. Therefore, not only personal perceptions of parents will be accessed, but also the individual traits of their children will be taken into account. Furthermore, the information will be explained and understood using the bigger context of the living environment of the family and the possible effects of cultural influences as well.



Visualisation of the Ecological model (Bronfenbrenner, 1979)