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## **A Comparative Study to Assess Behavioral Problems of Adolescent Students among Employed and Unemployed Mothers at Selected Areas in Bangalore**

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### **Abstract**

The study aimed to assess and compare the behavioural problems associated with screen time viewing among children of employed and unemployed mothers in selected areas of Bangalore. A quantitative, comparative descriptive research design was adopted with 60 participants (30 employed and 30 unemployed mothers). Data were collected using a structured interview schedule that included demographic proforma, screen time checklist, and behavioural problem checklist. Results revealed that children of employed mothers had more moderate-to-high screen exposure (60%) but fewer behavioural issues than children of unemployed mothers (76.7% mild and 20% moderate-to-severe). A significant difference was observed between the two groups ( $t=4.10$ ,  $p<0.001$ ). Maternal education was significantly associated with behavioural outcomes ( $p=0.012$ ). The study concluded that the type and quality of screen exposure, parental monitoring, and home environment play a greater role than duration alone in influencing behavioural outcomes.

### **Introduction**

In the digital era, screen time has become an integral part of daily life, influencing behaviour and lifestyle [1-3]. The increasing use of digital devices among young children is a significant health concern. Mothers, whether employed or unemployed, play a crucial role in shaping children's habits and routines [4-7]. This study focuses on comparing behavioural problems

associated with screen time among children of employed and unemployed mothers [8-10].

### **Materials and Methods**

A quantitative, comparative descriptive research design was adopted. The study was conducted among 60 mothers (30 employed and 30 unemployed) with children aged 1–12 years in selected areas of Bangalore. Purposive sampling was used. Data were collected using structured questionnaires including

### **More Information**

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### **Keywords:**

Screen time,  
Behavioural problems,  
Employed mothers,  
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demographic variables, screen time checklist, and behavioural problem checklist.

Data were analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics such as frequency, percentage, chi-square test, and independent t-test with a significance level of  $p < 0.05$ .

**Ethical Considerations**

Ethical approval obtained from Institutional Ethics Committee.

Written informed consent taken from all participants. Confidentiality and anonymity ensured (codes used instead of names).

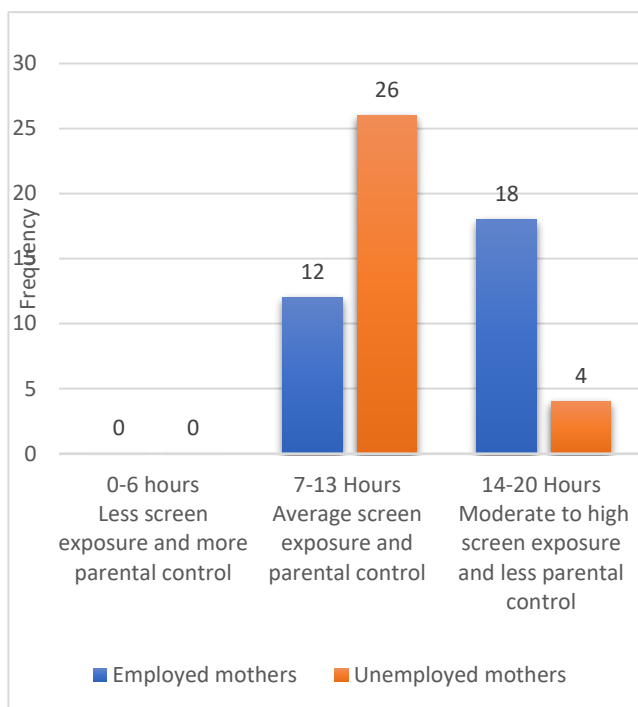
Participation was voluntary, with the option to withdraw anytime.

Children identified with moderate/severe behavioural issues were referred to counseling services.

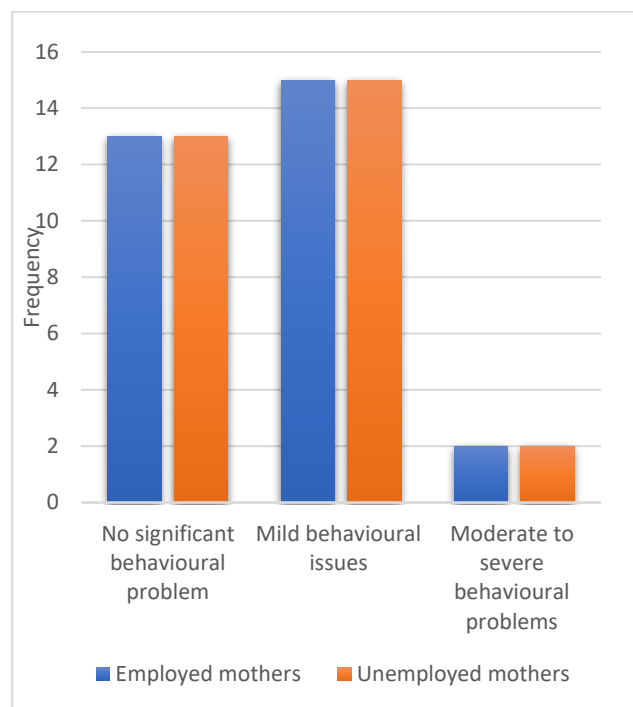
**Statistical Analysis**

**Table 1: Description Respondents Based on Frequency and Percentage**

Sl.No	Demographic variables		Employed mothers		Unemployed mothers	
			Frequency	Percentage (%)	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1	Age group	Below 25 years	3	10.0	10	33.3
		26–30 years	12	40.0	8	26.7
		31–35 years	10	33.3	11	36.7
		Above 35 years	5	16.7	1	3.3
2	Educational qualification	No formal education	1	3.3	5	16.7
		Primary	00	00	9	30.0
		Secondary	1	3.3	10	33.3
		Higher Secondary	16	53.3	6	20.0
		Graduate and above	12	40.0	0	00
3	Occupational status	Employed	30	100	00	00
		Unemployed	00	00	30	100
4	Monthly family income	Below 10,000	1	3.3	7	23.3
		10,001–20,000	8	26.7	23	76.7
		20,001–30,000	17	56.7	00	
		Above 30,000	4	13.3	00	
5	Type of family	Nuclear	19	63.3	20	66.7
		Joint	11	36.7	8	26.7
		Extended	00	00	2	6.7
6	Number of children	1	15	50.0	13	43.3
		2	15	50.0	15	50.0
		3 or more	00	00	2	6.7
7	Age of the child being studied	1–3 years	10	33.3	3	10.0
		4–6 years	8	26.7	16	53.3
		7–9 years	10	33.3	8	26.7
		10–12 years	2	6.7	3	10.0
8	Gender of the child	Male	16	53.3	15	50.0
		Female	14	46.7	15	50.0
9	Types of gadgets used by the child	Tablet	2	6.7	2	6.7
		Television	3	10.0	13	43.3
		Laptop/Desktop	2	6.7	2	6.7
		Phone	23	76.7	13	43.3
10	Average daily screen time of your child	Less than 1 hour	6	20.0	5	16.7
		1–2 hours	8	26.7	8	26.7
		2–3 hours	10	33.3	10	33.3
		More than 3 hours	6	20.0	7	23.3
11	The Purpose of screen usage by the child	Education	4	13.3	4	13.3
		Entertainment	16	53.3	15	50.0
		Games	10	33.3	6	20.0
		Mixed usage	00	00	5	16.7



**Figure 1: Frequency Wise Distribution of Children of Employed and Unemployed Mothers Regarding Duration and Pattern of Screen Time Exposure**



**Figure 2: Frequency Wise Distribution of Children of Employed and Unemployed Mothers Regarding Behavioural Problems**

**Table 2: Association between Behavioural Problems Associated with Screen Time among Children of Employed Mothers**

Sl.No.	Behavioural problems	Pattern of screen time exposure			Chi square	p-value
		Average screen exposure	Moderate to high screen exposure	Total		
		Frequency	frequency			
1.	No significant behavioral problem	4	9	13	8.462 df=2	0.015 S
	Mild behavioral issues	12	3	15		
	Moderate to severe behavioral problems	2	0	2		
	Total	18	12	30		

**Note:** S: Significant at  $p < 0.05$

The above table demonstrates the association between behavioural problems associated with screen time among children of employed mothers. There is a

significant association between behavioural problems and screen time among children of employed mothers. Hence research hypothesis H1a is partially accepted.

**Table 3: Comparison of the Behavioural Problems Related to Screen Time Between Children of Employed and Unemployed Mothers**

Group	N	Max. Score	Behavioural Problems Score	Mean	SE Error of Mean	Mean %	Mean Diff.	SE of Mean Diff.	Independent t-test	df	p-value
Employed mothers	30	20		7.66	0.860	38.30	4.00	0.455	4.10	44.1	< 0.001 *
Unemployed mothers	30	20		11.66	0.455	58.30					

**Note:** S: Significant at  $p < 0.05$

The results in Table 3 indicate a significant difference in behavioural problems related to screen time between children of employed and unemployed mothers.

Children of employed mothers had a mean behavioural-problem score of  $7.66 \pm 0.86$  (38.3%), whereas those of unemployed mothers had a higher mean score of  $11.66 \pm 0.46$  (58.3%).

The mean difference (4.00) with a standard error of 0.46 and a computed  $t = 4.10$  ( $df = 44.1, p < 0.001$  \*) shows a statistically significant difference, revealing that children of unemployed mothers exhibited more behavioural problems associated with screen time than children of employed mothers.

**Table 4: Association between Selected Demographic Variables (age of child, gender, mother’s education, family income, etc.) and Behavioural Problems in Children of Employed Mothers**

Sl.No.	Variables	Knowledge level				Chi square	p-value
		No significant behavioural problem	Mild behavioural issues	Moderate to severe behavioural problems	Total		
		Frequency	frequency	frequency			
1	Age					11.979 df=6	0.062 NS
	Below 25 years	1	2	0	3		
	26–30 years	7	5	0	12		
	31–35 years	4	6	0	10		
	Above 35 years	1	2	2	5		
	Total	13	15	2	30		
2	Educational status					16.268 df=6	0.012 S
	No formal education	0	1	0	1		
	Secondary	0	0	1	1		
	Higher Secondary	8	7	1	16		
	Graduate and above	5	7	0	12		
	Total	13	15	2	30		
4	Monthly family income					6.273 df=6	0.336 NS
	Below 10,000	1	0	0	1		
	10,001–20,000	4	4	0	8		
	20,001–30,000	8	8	1	17		
	Above 30,000	0	3	1	4		
	Total	13	15	2	30		
5	Type of family					0.420 df=2	0.811 NS
	Nuclear	9	9	1	19		
	Joint	4	6	1	11		
	Total	13	15	2	30		
6	Number of children					0.144 df=2	0.931 NS
	1	7	7	1	15		
	2	6	8	1	15		
	Total	13	15	2	30		
7	Age of the child being studied					8.477 df=6	0.207 NS
	1–3 years	13	6	0	19		
	4–6 years	5	0	1	6		
	7–9 years	4	1	0	5		
	Total	22	7	1	30		
8	Gender of the child					2.555 df=2	0.279 NS
	Male	7	9	0	16		
	Female	6	6	2	14		
	Total	13	15	2	30		

9	Types of gadgets used by the child					5.188 df=6	0.520 NS
	Tablet	0	2	0	2		
	Television	2	1	0	3		
	Laptop/Desktop	0	2	0	2		
	Phone	11	10	2	23		
	Total	13	15	2	30		
10	Average daily screen time of your child					11.256 df=6	0.081 NS
	Less than 1 hour	5	0	1	6		
	1–2 hours	2	6	0	8		
	2–3 hours	5	5	0	10		
	More than 3 hours	1	4	1	6		
	Total	13	15	2	30		
11	The Purpose of screen usage by the child					1.378 df=4	0.848 NS
	Education	2	2	0	4		
	Entertainment	8	7	1	16		
	Games	3	6	1	10		
	Total	13	15	2	30		

**Note:** S: Significant at  $p < 0.05$

The above table demonstrates the association between knowledge level and selected demographic variables of the participants. The demographic variable educational status of employed mothers was significantly associated with behavioural problems of children. Hence research hypothesis H3a is partially accepted.

**Results**

Among children of employed mothers, 60% had moderate-to-high screen exposure with less parental control, whereas 86.7% of children of unemployed mothers had average screen exposure with sufficient parental control. Behavioural problems were more frequent among children of unemployed mothers (76.7% mild, 20% moderate-to-severe). A significant difference was found in behavioural problem scores between groups ( $t=4.10, p<0.001$ ). Maternal education was significantly associated with children’s behavioural problems among employed mothers ( $p=0.012$ ).

**Discussion**

The study found that despite higher screen exposure among children of employed mothers, their behavioural issues were fewer compared to those of unemployed mothers. This may be attributed to structured supervision, educational screen content, and balanced routines. Children of unemployed mothers, although under direct parental care, had higher behavioural problems possibly due to passive screen viewing and limited outdoor activities.

**Conclusion**

The study concludes that maternal employment status influences both the duration and the behavioural impact of screen time on children. Children of unemployed mothers exhibited higher behavioural

problem scores despite lower average screen exposure, indicating the importance of content type, parental engagement, and environmental structure.

**Recommendations**

1. Conduct parental awareness programs to promote healthy screen habits.
2. Encourage educational screen content over entertainment-based media.
3. Develop school and community initiatives promoting outdoor and creative activities.
4. Support unemployed mothers with parenting and stress management resources.
5. Implement policy-level interventions defining screen time limits and awareness education.

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#### Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that there are no financial, personal, or professional conflicts of interest that could have influenced the conduct or outcomes of this research.

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