



The Relationship Between Temperament, Screen Time and Psychological Adjustment in Preschoolers

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Abstract

This research aimed to describe the current trends in screen exposure among preschoolers and to understand the relationship between temperament, screen exposure, and children's psychological adjustment. Participants in the study were 115 mothers of preschool children from Zagreb, Croatia, who gave answers to measures of screen exposure, temperament dimensions, externalized and internalized behaviour problems, and prosocial behaviour of their children. The results show that average screen exposure during the week exceeds the recommended guidelines of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, while weekend exposure does not. Screen time exposure during the weekend positively correlates with externalized behaviour problems and the Impulsivity dimension and is negatively related to prosocial behaviour. In addition, externalized behaviour problems are positively correlated with Impulsivity, Activity, and Emotionality; internalized behaviour problems are positively correlated with Impulsivity and Emotionality and negatively with Sociability, while prosocial behaviour correlates negatively with Impulsivity. All aforementioned correlations are considered significant. Furthermore, the moderating effect of screen time exposure during the weekend significantly changes the relationship between both Impulsivity and Activity with externalized behavioural problems in a way that with more prolonged exposure, the relationship between both Impulsivity and Activity and externalized behavioural problems weakens. Finally, it was determined that screen time during the weekend significantly moderates the relationship between Impulsivity and prosocial behaviour, so it weakens with more prolonged screen time exposure. The research deepens the knowledge about the relationships between permanent characteristics (temperament dimensions) and screen time exposure with externalized and internalized behaviour problems and prosocial behaviour in preschoolers.

Keywords: Screen Time; Preschoolers; Psychological Adjustment; Temperament