Chapter 1

Reflections of Technology Addiction in Children on Eating Behaviour and Interaction Quality

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Abstract

The usage of technology is increasingly woven into the fabric of the lives of children from a young age. On the positive side, technology can provide opportunities that can support the learning and developmental phases of children, with risks being posed to attention, regulation, and eating behaviors from excessive and inappropriate usage. Frequent usage and unhealthy use of digital technology can compromise the interaction between parents and children during the feeding of the former, reduce the awareness generated from the perception of the eating process, and amplify the risk for irregular eating patterns and an increased risk for overweight and obese status. The usage of technology at various developmental phases from infancy to the adolescent phase has implications for the interaction between parents and the antecedent environment related to attitudes and contributes to the risk for the eating behaviors of the children. From the effects posed, the positive expression of technology usage from parents can be considered as a protective factor.

1. Introduction

The use of technology, which has become an integral part of our lives in line with technological studies and developments, also affects children's development in different ways. Today, the use of technological devices such as phones, tablets, computers, televisions and other online platforms begins to interact at a very early age, such as infancy and early childhood. Technology

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use varies depending on socio-economic status, as well as the home, school, and different environments. In this case, it affects children's perspectives on technology and their learning experiences (Navarro-Martinez & Peña-Acuña, 2022; Tena et al., 2022).

The appropriate and correct use of technology offers significant opportunities for children to gain alternative learning experiences and support their development (Liu et al., 2023; Tatar & Gerde, 2023). Consequently, children and parents are expected to be aware of and pay attention to technological literacy (Lazonder et al., 2020; Navarro-Martinez & Peña-Acuña, 2022; Soyoof et al., 2024).

The uncontrolled, unconscious, and age-inappropriate use of technology poses risk factors in many areas, particularly in children's brain development (Anitha et al., 2021; Muppalla Sudheer et al., 2023). Brain development is negatively affected in many areas, such as executive function skills like attention, cognitive flexibility, and problem solving, as well as withdrawal from social interaction, isolation, and behavioural problems (Clemencıa et al., 2024; Hu & Hu, 2024; Ricci et al., 2022; Wu et al., 2024). Alongside these negative effects, different risks have become apparent in recent years, particularly in eating behaviours, eating patterns, and the quality of interaction at mealtimes (Chu et al., 2024; Coleman et al., 2025; Nagata et al., 2021).

In children, eating behaviour is explained not only as satisfying a biological need but also as an important part of social, emotional, and cognitive development beyond the daily care routine (Birch & Fisher, 1998). Eating behaviour is influenced by many factors, including genetic factors, individual characteristics, family dynamics, and broader environmental contexts (Leuba et al., 2022; Wolstenholme et al., 2020).

In daily life, mealtimes should take place within a shared time frame where parents and children interact together (Smith et al., 2022). This feeding routine helps strengthen family bonds and facilitate communication. It is also crucial for children to learn to recognise hunger and fullness cues and to experience a variety of foods (Robson et al., 2020). With the advent of technology, parents' and children's engagement with technological devices during feeding routines causes major problems in communicative and interactive processes and eating behaviours (Jones et al., 2023). The frequency of technology use can change eating behaviour not only during feeding routines but also throughout all time periods.

Increased use of technology and longer screen time are creating a desire to eat outside of children's regular eating routines (Miguel-Berges et al., 2023).

This leads to irregular eating habits, snacking, and consumption of high-calorie foods such as fast food in children, which in turn increases the risk of obesity in the long term (Fathima et al., 2024; Kristo et al., 2021; Semar & Bakshi, 2022). Technology addiction further increases eating behaviour in children and disrupts their developmental processes and physical activities (Sezer Efe et al., 2025).). In this context, technology addiction in children is a highly risky area in many respects (Park et al., 2022). This section examines the reflections of technology addiction in children on eating behaviour and the quality of mealtime interactions.

2. Technology Addiction and Problematic Digital Media Use in Children

Technology use in children can become addictive. In such cases, problematic digital media use and screen time emerge in children. Concepts related to technology addiction and problematic digital media use in children are explained within an appropriate conceptual framework. Furthermore, information regarding problematic digital media use in the context of technology use, screen time, and eating behaviour in children is included.

2.1. Conceptual Framework

Among children, technology is used for listening to music, receiving education, playing games, watching videos, and acquiring information (Uslu, 2022). The uncontrolled increase in technology use leads to technology addiction. Technology addiction is defined as the unconscious, uncontrolled, excessive use of technological devices that disrupts an individual's routine and activities in daily life (Amudhan et al., 2021; Serenko & Turel, 2022). Technology addiction negatively affects not only the individual but also those around them, primarily causing communication problems, developmental problems, eating disorders, sleep disorders, attention deficit, and behavioural problems (Lazonder et al., 2020).

Technology addiction is treated differently from behavioural addictions seen in adults. In children, the concept of problematic digital media use is generally used, focusing more on developmental characteristics rather than addiction. This situation is defined with this in mind (Domoff et al., 2019).

Problematic digital media use is defined as the process whereby a child's daily life is negatively affected by intense emotional and behavioural reactions arising from exceeding the screen time determined according to the child's developmental level and age, and resistance to parental attempts to limit this use (Fitzpatrick et al., 2025). Problematic digital media use leads to

impairments in daily functional behaviours. It also causes socialisation and communication problems, deprivation, inhibition of the child's creativity and work, and negative consequences for physical health and activity (Horwood & Anglim, 2018; Marino et al., 2021).

Problematic digital media use in children is associated with a decline in self-regulation skills, executive function skills, and attention deficits (Fam et al., 2023). The importance of parental control in children's media use is explained by the fact that children have not yet fully developed a sense of time and self-regulation skills (Rudnova et al., 2023; Sun et al., 2022).

The continuity of digital content, coupled with exposure to rapid and intense stimuli, poses risks for children, such as passive thinking and speaking skills and an inability to tolerate delayed gratification. Furthermore, the instant reward mechanisms of digital content cause children to expect rewards in their daily lives for events and situations they encounter, with the support of external stimuli (Clark & Zack, 2023; Wadsley & Ihssen, 2022).

2.2. Technology Use and Screen Time in Children

It is necessary to ensure mindful use of digital media in line with screen time for problematic digital media use. Screen time varies depending on the age of the child. It should definitely not be given to children under the age of 2, and for children aged 2-5, it is set at a maximum of 1 hour with parental interaction (Sezer Efe et al., 2025).

American Academy of Pediatrics (2025), published in 2023 and updated in 2025, states that imposing screen time limits on children's technology use is not appropriate and that the quality of interaction with technology should also be considered. One of the fundamental processes that constitute interaction quality is eating behaviour. Exposure to technology negatively impacts eating behaviour, feeding routines, and parent-child interaction (McArthur et al., 2022).

2.3. Problematic Digital Media Use in the Context of Eating Behaviour

From the perspective of eating behaviour, problematic digital media use causes a disruption in shared attention during mealtimes, a decrease in the quality of communication and interaction, and a lack of awareness of the process. Technology use among children generally continues to be screen-based (Haghjoo et al., 2022; Wu et al., 2024).

In children exposed to screens, the desire to eat in front of the screen becomes dominant, and they lose control over the food consumed in front of the screen, losing awareness of the food and quantity consumed (Kim & Mackert, 2022; Nagata et al., 2021). This leads to the development of overeating habits, and bodily mechanisms such as satiety do not function properly (Higgs & Thomas, 2016).

3. Technology Addiction and Eating Behaviour According to Age Groups

The use of technology, particularly smartphones, video content on digital platforms, and social media content, is described as the fundamental components that create technology addiction in children. This situation affects children's perspectives on technology and their learning experiences. Eating behaviour also varies depending on the child's age and developmental stage. Technology addiction and eating behaviour in children are examined in four sections according to age groups: infancy, pre-school age, school age and adolescence.

3.1. Infancy (0-2 Years)

Infancy is a crucial period during which the baby begins to understand the world, forms learning experiences driven by a sense of discovery, observes and models the parents in their immediate environment, and experiences rapid development in brain development and other areas, laying the foundation for all future behaviour (Berk, 2015).

Technology addiction and eating behaviour in infancy are influenced by factors such as screen exposure, screen time, parental technology use and modelling, and early exposure to processed foods/nutrients. During this period, it is essential to ensure secure attachment by meeting the infant's daily routines within the framework of responsive caregiving (Madigan et al., 2024). It is clearly stated that children should not be exposed to technology or screens during infancy. At this point, it is crucial that parents do not model technology/screen use in front of their children and do not expose them to technology/screens (Brauchli et al., 2024).

Understanding the infant's responses to hunger and fullness within their feeding behaviour and responding appropriately with sensitive care tailored to the child helps develop the child's self-regulation skills and lays the foundation for orderly eating behaviour in later years (Harris et al., 2022). Parents provide opportunities to recognise the foods/nutrients that the baby likes and dislikes through interaction during feeding routines (Savage et al., 2007).

Ballarotto et al. (2021) show that mothers of underweight babies are less sensitive to the baby's individual behaviour and less responsive to the baby's wishes during eating behaviours. This situation may lead mothers to view their child's thinness as a problem in gaining autonomy and to encourage them to eat more to gain weight

The use of technology by parents in feeding routines for babies is a situation that undermines sensitive care. When parents use technology during feeding, it diverts their attention, preventing them from noticing their baby's behaviour and reactions and responding appropriately to their needs. Exposing the infant to technology to make feeding easier prevents the infant from understanding the quality of the food/nutrients, and from recognising the quantity, speed, and duration of feeding. This can negatively affect the infant's development of self-regulation skills and their ability to recognise their own bodily signals. It also contributes to the baby becoming screen-dependent in their eating behaviour (Selak et al., 2025).

3.2. Pre-school Age (3-6 Years)

The pre-school period is characterised as a time when children begin to socialise outside the family for the first time and when their feeding routines also begin to take place outside the family. Eating habits and food/nutrient choices also become apparent in line with the child's individual preferences. Feeding routines and eating behaviours can also be influenced by environmental factors other than parents (Savage et al., 2007).

Socio-economic factors, parenting styles such as authoritarian, democratic, avoidant, or inconsistent, behavioural dynamics of grandparents, popular food/nutrient consumption, and cultural eating routines such as the prominence of meat or vegetable consumption are some of the factors shaping children's eating behaviours during this period (Leuba et al., 2022; Yang et al., 2020; Zhao et al., 2025). These factors demonstrate the influence of a multidimensional structure on the child's eating behaviour. When supporting the child's eating behaviour, a multidimensional intervention may be required.

One of the multidimensional factors affecting a child's eating behaviour is the use of technological devices and screen time. The use of screens during a child's eating behaviour and the lack of interaction within the family during mealtimes also negatively shape nutrition and eating behaviour. With the use of technology turning into addiction, children cannot actively participate in the eating process, and food/nutrition awareness does not develop. Because the child's attention is focused on the screen rather than the food, shared attention and attention to food/nutrition cannot be achieved (Selak et al., 2025).

Parents of children who use problematic digital media and have reached the stage of technological device addiction also use technology as a tool to get their children to eat. The child's food/nutrition choices, refusal to eat, and failure to adhere to daily nutritional routines are some of the reasons parents prefer technology. Although this situation has negative consequences for all areas of the child's development, it is observed as one of the most commonly used methods by parents (Aslan & Turgut, 2024). Children who are more dependent on technology in their eating behaviour may experience a decline in the perception and focus of senses such as food/nutrient selectivity and taste.

3.3. School Age Period (7-11 Years)

The school age period is a time when children are more independent than in previous periods, and social and environmental factors increase significantly. Children generally continue to think in concrete terms. They tend to use experiences they have observed, known, and examined more. It is explained that a child's eating habits and behaviour are fully formed before adolescence (Berk, 2015).

Peer relationships that begin during the school period are considered among the social factors that shape a child's eating behaviour. School canteens and cafeterias are areas where children make their food/nutritional choices. These areas, especially the dining hall, generally consist of menus prepared with the help of a dietician in line with children's daily nutritional needs. Canteens, on the other hand, are generally seen as areas where children have easier access to unhealthy foods/nutrients. In canteens, children exhibit more carbohydrate-heavy eating behaviour (Yörük & Haney, 2022).

School-age children may be exposed to less physical activity due to homework and lessons. When at home, eating meals and doing homework, along with the family providing food/nutrition in line with their eating habits, can lead to inactivity-based obesity in children (Demir, 2016). Parents should focus not only on education and academic processes, but also on their child's eating and physical activity habits and on their ability to form positive relationships with friends.

During school age, technology use is preferred more in terms of both quantity and quality for lessons and homework, in addition to personal use. However, high technology use among children indicates problematic digital media use. Children generally use smartphones or tablets during this period. In terms of technological content, they tend to gravitate towards online games or digital video and platforms, as well as television programmes (Hietajärvi et al., 2022).

Problematic digital media use among school-aged children is also addressed within the scope of smartphone addiction. It has been found that smartphone addiction in children leads to eating behaviour problems and increases the risk of obesity in children (Gill & Chung, 2025). Similarly, Nagata et al. (2021) state that screen time is highly correlated with eating behaviour problems, such as binge-eating disorder, in children.

Children who are obese or at risk of obesity are also compared with healthy children in a study on internet addiction and food/nutrient addiction. The study reveals that children with a high body mass index have a high level of internet addiction and eating behaviour problems. It is stated that food/nutritional advertisements encountered while watching films/series, sports events, and social videos in internet addiction increase children's preference for products high in sugar and fat (Koca et al., 2023).

Problematic media use among school-aged children may decrease with increased parental interaction. In this context, it is recommended that families maintain their eating routines through family interaction to establish order in eating behaviours. It is thought that technology addiction and eating behaviour problems will decrease depending on the quality of family interaction.

3.4. Adolescence (12-18 Years)

Adolescence is described as one of the most critical periods in a child's development across all developmental areas. Adolescence can also be explained as the transition period from childhood to adulthood. During this period, adolescents distance themselves from their parents and family and turn more towards their social environment. Friends' words, relationships, and attitudes are seen as more important than those of parents, depending on the parents' words and behaviour. It is observed that adolescents focus more on their future, academic success, and friendships (Berk, 2015).

Adolescence is a period marked by numerous changes, and it is also a period that draws attention in terms of eating behaviour. Understanding adolescents' eating behaviour and attitudes is important for developing effective interventions to promote healthy eating habits among adolescents. Adolescents generally focus on peer influence and distance themselves from their parents, leading to a decline in breakfast routines and an increase in fast-food eating behaviour (Chu et al., 2024; Doggui et al., 2021).

It is also known that adolescents diet in order to be liked. Emotional eating disorder, characterised by consuming food in response to emotions, is also commonly seen during this period of frequent emotional changes. Adolescents may resort to restrictive diets in the context of popularity and body image,

and may also eat to cope with emotional problems, potentially developing emotional eating disorder (Marb et al., 2022).

Problematic digital media use, prolonged screen time, irregular sleep patterns, and hormonal changes significantly impact an adolescent's daily life. It has been observed that technology addiction leads to a decrease and irregularity in breakfast routines and fruit and vegetable consumption, resulting in unhealthy food/nutrient consumption and problems with eating behaviour (Ardesch et al., 2023). Sezer Efe et al. (2025) found a relationship between eating disorders and problems with cognitive flexibility skills in adolescents with technology addiction.

4. The Effects of Technology Use on Eating Behaviour

The effects of technology use on children's eating behaviour are examined in several dimensions. These are generally addressed through the dimensions of technoference, the environmental quality of the mealtime setting, and parenting styles.

4.1. Technoference

The concept of technoference is a term that has emerged in recent years with the advancement of technology. Technoference refers to technology interrupting or interfering with parent-child interaction (Gahler, 2025). Allowing technology use during interactions with children reduces the quality of the time spent with them and negatively impacts communication. Technoference negatively affects interaction quality and is of great importance for child development (Komanchuk et al., 2023).

Parents' technoference-related smartphone use leading to addiction contributes to the development of negative parenting styles and causes problems in parent-child relationships (Shao et al., 2024).

Feeding routines, one of the parent-child interaction processes, provide an environment for family communication, bonding and socialisation. Eating behaviours within the family not only involve consuming food, but also facilitate the formation of social and emotional connections. This process is highly valuable for each stage, from infancy to adolescence (White et al., 2022).

Mealtime routines are being disrupted by technological devices. This situation can also occur within the scope of tecnoference by parents. Parents using their phones during mealtime routines has negative effects such as setting an inappropriate example for children, creating an unhealthy family dining environment, and forcing children to eat. In addition, the amount of

interactive time parents spend with their children is decreasing. The frequency of breakfast and dinner, which are part of daily eating routines, is decreasing, and family meal habits are changing (Vik et al., 2021).

During infancy, mothers who breastfeed their children and use technology interact less with their babies, and the quality of their interactions declines. This leads to differences in children's cognitive development (Ventura et al., 2019).

Parents being preoccupied with their phones, tablets or televisions during mealtimes reduces their responsiveness to their child's hunger and fullness cues. Parents' use of technological devices leads to delayed awareness of communication with their children, disruptions in communication and more limited responses (Radesky et al., 2020).

Eating behaviours are becoming detached from emotionality due to technoference and are taking on a more automatic and mechanical structure. With the absence of family interaction, eating behaviour is becoming disconnected from its social context. Each individual thus begins to respond only to environmental stimuli. Furthermore, awareness of eating behaviour is disappearing at the individual level. Parents and children develop excessive or irregular eating behaviours (Cimino & Cerniglia, 2025).

Parents' use of technology during their children's feeding routines can lead to behavioural problems as children seek to draw their parents' attention. This negatively affects parent-child interaction during mealtimes, creating an environment conducive to arguments. When this pattern persists, it can cause mealtimes to become associated with negative emotions (McDaniel & Radesky, 2018).

4.2. Environmental Quality of the Setting During Mealtime

The environmental quality of the setting during the eating process is influential in providing important environmental cues for regulating eating behaviour. Environmental quality refers to components such as the orderliness of the physical environment during eating behaviour, the presence of distractions, and the level of social interaction (Smith et al., 2022).

The presence of positive environmental stimuli during mealtimes facilitates healthier eating behaviour within the family. Parent-child interaction occurs with the support of environmental quality. Establishing a social-emotional bond between parent and child reduces the risk of childhood eating disorders and obesity (Harbec & Pagani, 2018).

Positive environmental stimuli are present in eating behaviour linked to parent-child interaction. However, technology use negatively impacts

environmental quality. The use of technological devices focuses attention on the screen during eating behaviour. In this way, shared attention within the family is lost, and eating behaviour continues in the background. Parents focused on technological devices are unable to respond to their child's needs in a timely and appropriate manner. With technology addiction, parents' supportive role towards their child weakens (Vik et al., 2021).

Children who focus on technology and screens fail to develop food awareness and consequently encounter difficulties in regulating their eating speed and quantity. In this way, children may eat more because they are unable to recognise the feeling of fullness (Fathima et al., 2024; Yong et al., 2021).

Food/nutritional content and advertisements presented through television and digital media negatively impact environmental quality. In their eating routines, parents and children may be exposed to advertisements and food images on screen. This leads to the parent or child's desire to eat being directed towards the food/nutrition on the screen and to unhealthy food/nutrition choices (Harris et al., 2022). Eating behaviour can thus be said to change according to external, environmental stimuli rather than internal, individual impulses.

4.3. Interaction with Parenting Styles

The effects of technology use on eating behaviour are closely related to parenting styles. Parenting styles play an important role in guiding eating behaviour within feeding routines and regulating digital media use in parent-child interactions. Within parenting styles, the process varies greatly across the dimensions of authoritarian, democratic, permissive, avoidant, and inconsistent/unpredictable parents (Van der Horst & Sleddens, 2017).

In authoritarian parenting styles, parents do not favour the use of technology. Strict prohibitions are imposed on technology use, and eating behaviours must comply with these prohibitions. This situation causes stress in children in terms of parent-child interactions in daily life and eating behaviours in feeding routines. In authoritarian parents, children's eating behaviours are negatively affected in terms of self-regulation skills. This leads to eating disorders in children. In an overly permissive parenting style, the parent's permissiveness prevents the development of nutrition and eating behaviour (Birch & Ventura, 2009).

Alongside parenting styles, parents' own technology use or dependency also influences their approach to these processes. Children who observe and model their parents' behaviour begin to use technology in similar ways. Therefore,

it is crucial to be an appropriate role model in order to facilitate parent-child interaction within daily routines (Costa & Oliveira, 2023).

5. Reflections of Meal Times on Interaction Quality

Within feeding routines, the process of eating is seen as one of the most intense social contexts for parent-child interaction in daily life. Feeding routines not only facilitate eating behaviour but also aid emotional sharing through interaction and communication, promote bonding, and support other areas of development. Higher frequency and quality of family meals are associated with reduced obesity prevalence, improved eating behaviour, and better mental health outcomes for both children and parents. It helps the child express themselves and learn social rules (Berge et al., 2023).

Parents' use of technological devices during mealtimes and exposure to screens prevents shared attention and communication. Parent-child interaction does not occur. Sensitive care is not provided to the child, and their needs are not fully met (Radesky et al., 2020).

In addition to negatively affecting eating behaviour during mealtimes, parental technoference has adverse effects on numerous aspects such as social bonding, emotional expression, self-regulation, and attention. Failure to recognise a child's needs in a timely manner can lead to behavioural problems (Shao et al., 2024; Vik et al., 2021). Each family member turning to their own screen leads to a reduction in shared experiences and the individualisation of eating behaviour and the eating process. When technology is not used during the eating process, parent-child interaction is facilitated, leading to the development of healthy eating habits and developmental adjustment in children (Berge et al., 2023; Zhao et al., 2025).

6. Conclusion

Technological integration in daily life has major effects on the development and growth of children. Modern society has witnessed the adoption and usage of different technology-based devices in a significant and unprecedented manner from birth to early childhood, including the use of cell phones, tablets, computers, and televisions. Appropriate usage of technology has immense advantages that lead to added value to the process of learning and development. Therefore, both the parents and the children should be technology-savvy. Exaggerated, uncontrolled, and unconscious usage of technology poses significant risk factors in different aspects, especially to the development of the brain. The adverse effects caused to children in recent times, besides the

previous ones, include the changes in eating behaviors and the nature of food interactions.

Eating patterns in children are perceived to be more than just a biological need fulfillment process; eating patterns are an essential part of socialization and development. These patterns are influenced by a combination of genetic elements and individuality of the child. Eating patterns as a daily activity shared between parents and children result in intense interaction that brings parents and children closer and enables the children to experience various foods. The rising use of technology factors adversely affects eating patterns as the rising use of screens affects parent-child interaction. The rising use of screens leads to irregular eating patterns, leads to higher instances of frequent eating of snacks, consumption of energy-rich foods, and raises the risk of a child's potential to be obese. The rising use of technology affects physical activity and development. Technology addiction adversely affects development.

Technology addiction refers to the unconscious and uncontrolled usage of technology that interferes with the daily life functions of the affected individual. In children, this problem not only affects the child but also has a negative impact on family relationships, communication, sleep cycles, attentional functions, and eating patterns. Issues related to technology in children are dealt with in a special context related to behavioral addictions seen in adults; therefore, the problem of digital media usage can be termed problematic digital media usage. Problematic digital media usage can be determined by the child exceeding age-normative screen time and displaying intense emotional and behavioral responses to parental limitation attempts.

The escalation of problematic uses of digital media is linked with decreasing levels of children's self-regulation and executive function, and increasing attention deficits. This phenomenon is even more apparent in younger generations of children, in whom the development of understanding of time and self-regulation is still in its developmental stages, hence substantiating the critical role of parental monitoring in this regard. The rapid, continuous and intense stimulation provided by digital content can cause children's thinking and speaking processes to become passive and make it difficult for them to wait and delay gratification. In addition, digital content that includes instant reward mechanisms paves the way for children to develop external reward expectations in their daily lives.

There has been widespread recognition in recent years of the impact of concerning digital media use on eating habits. The increased exposure to screens leads to disturbed shared attention during meals, impairs the interaction level between parents and children, and reduces the awareness level regarding the

eating process. The habit of eating in front of a screen leads to habituation among children to lose control regarding the amount as well as the kind of food. Therefore, concerning digital media use has a negative impact on the formation of healthy eating habits and, consequently, good health among children.

The use of technology, parental views and circumstances, and the environment at each developmental phase interact with and have a major role in creating the eating behaviors in a child. Infant life is a crucial phase in which accelerated brain development takes place and the groundwork for the underlying behavior patterns and skills of self-regulation are established. As technology addiction is not considered a direct condition at this phase, the use of screens and the parent's technology use as a modeling condition are considered major risk factors at this phase. In the context of the responsive care approach at the infant phase, the parent's ability to recognize and respond accurately to the infant's hunger and satiety cues is a central event in the long-term creation of eating behavior. However, the parent's preoccupation with technology use or the use of the screens as a means for infant feeding can reduce infant awareness of the feeding event and create obstacles for the infant's ability to accurately recognize the pace, intensity, and satiety cues for that event.

Preschool age represents a stage where the child starts interacting with society outside the family context, becomes exposed to varied meal patterns, and establishes distinct individual preferences when it comes to foods. The stage represents an eating behavior pattern that has multidimensional characteristics shaped by socioeconomic factors, child-rearing practices, and societal eating habits. The rise in technological gadgets and reduction in time through screens affects communication within the family and decreases the child's participation in the meal time activity. The occurrence of problematic use of digital media leads parents to resort to technology as a tool that promotes eating. The practice can reduce the child's awareness about foods and lead to problems such as food selectivity, loss of taste perception, and the development of dependent eating behavior on technology.

The school-age period is a developmental phase associated with growing autonomy, where peer and environmental factors play a significant role. It's widely accepted that the dietary behaviors of school-going children are largely determined during this period. School cafeteria food can be a significant environmental factor contributing to healthy eating behaviors; excessive exposure to unhealthy foods in these environments can impair eating behavior. Conversely, educational tasks associated with school age contribute to

minimized physical activity, leading to a significant risk of developing obesity because of physical inactivity. Even with the significant use of technology associated with school-aged individuals due to educational and play-related reasons, excessive use of screens and smartphones can indicate the risk of problematic behavior associated with digital media. Excessive use of digital media in school-age individuals was earlier documented to indicate issues related to eating behaviors and the risk of developing obesity. Watching food advertisements while using digital media was also found to enhance sugar and fat food choices among school-age children.

Adolescence involves the stage of life characterized by marked physical, cognitive, emotional, and social developments and represents an important transitional phase with regards to eating behavior. In this stage, adolescents begin to differentiate themselves from the control of their parents and begin relying on peer relations; in these respects, diet preferences begin to be significantly influenced by the company that one keeps. Typical adolescent behavior involves less breakfast eating, increased fast foods, and irregular meal times. The need for acceptance and body image sensitivity leads adolescents to begin observing strict dieting behavior, besides mood swings associated with emotion regulation. Unhealthy eating habits are also perpetuated by increased use of electronic screens and irregular sleep patterns. Using scientific evidence, the association between technology addiction and eating disorders, besides cognitive inflexibility in adolescents, bears important implications that technology use and eating practice should be simultaneously attended to.

Technoference, which is referred to as the interruption of parent-child interaction due to the use of technology, affects the quality of interaction, especially during the process of feeding. When the parent is distracted by smartphones, tablets, or televisions during the feeding process, the parent-child interaction will be reduced, and the response to the stimuli of hunger or fullness will also be decreased. This will make the process of feeding more mechanical, rather than being rooted in the social and emotional part of the process. Technoference during infancy, specifically for breastfeeding, may limit the mother-child interaction and the effect on the cognitive function of the infant will be adverse.

The environmental quality of the meals context plays a crucial role in regulating the eating behavior. The environmental factors include the architecture of the space, the level of distraction, and the level of family interaction, which have a direct influence on the child. Favorable environmental factors bring about positive eating behaviors, while the introduction of technology into the meals environment affects the level of mutual attention

and degrades the quality of interaction. The parents' obsession with the screen affects the timely response to the child's needs, while the children are also faced with struggles to attain food awareness and control the eating rate and quantity. The content consumed via technology can influence the regulation of the eating behavior.

Parenting styles play an important role in influencing technology use and eating habits. Overly restrictive technology use in authoritarian parenting styles might cause stress to the child, whereas an overly permissive approach might prevent the child from cultivating positive eating habits. The two contrasting styles of parenting will create different effects on the self-regulatory ability of the child with regard to their eating habits. The parent's use of technology serves as an influencing factor for children to follow.

Eating is an everyday activity where parent–child interaction is very rich and expressive, and where ties are strengthened. Mealtimes in the family support growing healthy eating habits in children and help them develop social skills. On the other hand, having technological devices during mealtime is detrimental to communication and joint attention and leads to individualization of eating behavior in addition to reduced quality of interaction. Technology-free meal context is positively associated with children's eating behavior as well as their development.

Considering the above results, controlling technology use, especially during meals, is significant for building healthy eating behaviors in children. Parents should be cautious and try to avoid personal unhealthy technology use, create a technology-free zone for dining, and adopt an interaction-focused approach. Having regular and positive family dinners can improve the usage and relationship aspects and create a protective environment that hampers developmental maladjustment in children.

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