

The economic gap also affects the consumption of screens by children

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The presence and variety of mobile devices in Spanish households, regardless of social and economic circumstances, has been mainstream for years. Several studies focus on parental mediation in children's consumption of smart screens, although there is a lack of scientific evidence concerning how the level of training and the professional

profile of mothers and fathers affect children's digital media consumption.

A study by Mònika Jiménez and Pilar Medina, researchers with the Department of Communication at UPF, and Mireia Muntanya, a researcher at the Department of Information Sciences at the UOC, analyses the influence of families' social and [educational level](#) on the consumption of smart screen contents. The study was published in the advanced online edition of the journal *Comunicar* on 15 April and the results were obtained in the framework of the project MediaCorp, "Media representation of the unhealthy body image. Development of a prevention tool in children aged 5 to 8 years: I like my body," funded by the Ministry of Economy, Industry and Competitiveness.

"This study provides data on the role of parents in areas such as their role in the construction of children's body image, or their involvement in children's media consumption patterns," says Mònika Jimenez, co-author of the study, with Pilar Medina, co-principal investigator of MediaCorp.

The research, published in *Comunicar*, examines parents' level of education as well as their professional status. It uses a quantitative methodology based on a sample of 792 children (363 boys and 429 girls) aged 5 to 9 years, in three Spanish cities; 196 in Barcelona, 320 in Madrid, and 276 in Seville. It analysed their television, mobile phone, tablet, computer and video game consumption.

The results suggest that the lower the mother's level of studies and professional status, the greater the consumption by children of content via mobile devices. "We would not like to criminalize mothers with limited financial resources but the results show that the economic gap also affects the consumption of screens by children," said Pilar Medina, co-author of the research. The study highlights the importance of considering parents' educational and professional level as an opportunity

to better understand the [consumption](#) of smart screens and to design family strategies that foster critical thinking and digital media education.

More information: Mònika Jiménez-Morales et al, Childhood use of mobile devices: Influence of mothers' socio-educational level, *Comunicar* (2020). [DOI: 10.3916/C64-2020-02](https://doi.org/10.3916/C64-2020-02)

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