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EXPLORING THE IMPACT OF DIGITAL DEVICE USAGE ON THE ISLAMIC UPBRINGING AND HOLISTIC DEVELOPMENT OF MUSLIM CHILDREN IN DHAKA, BANGLADESH

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ABSTRACT

The widespread use of digital devices has significantly transformed the way children interact with the world, raising questions about their impact on religious upbringing and overall development. This study explores the effects of digital device usage on the Islamic upbringing and holistic development of Muslim children in Dhaka, Bangladesh. Through a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods, including surveys and interviews with parents, teachers, and children, the research examines how digital media influences key aspects of child development, such as religious practices, moral values, social skills, academic performance, and emotional well-being. The findings reveal that while digital devices provide access to beneficial Islamic content and educational resources, they also pose risks related to screen addiction, exposure to harmful material, and potential disruptions to family dynamics and traditional Islamic teachings. This thesis discusses the challenges of balancing digital engagement with religious and developmental goals, and proposes strategies for parents, educators, and policymakers to guide children in using technology in ways that align with Islamic principles and support their overall growth. The study calls for a

more nuanced approach to digital device usage, one that encourages moderation and integrates Islamic values in fostering healthy, well-rounded development in children.

Keywords: *Digital, device, screentime, addiction, holistic development.*

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1. INTRODUCTION

Digital devices have become an integral part of our lives and children are being exposed to these devices at an unprecedented rate. Due to constant exposure to screens, they are getting increasingly apathetic towards educational and recreational activities. The scenario is greatly impeding their Islamic upbringing too.

Islamic upbringing traditionally relies on face-to-face teaching, community involvement, and direct parental guidance to instill religious and moral values. However, the rise of digital media has introduced both challenges and opportunities in the religious socialization of Muslim children (Rahman & Singh, 2020). On the one hand, digital devices can provide children with instant access to Qur'anic resources, Islamic teachings, and educational tools. On the other hand, the absence of parental

supervision and guidance in navigating these resources often exposes children to secular or inappropriate content that may undermine religious values (Hossain & Alam, 2021). This shift has led to concerns regarding the potential erosion of traditional Islamic principles in the lives of children growing up in digital environments (Livingstone & Byrne, 2018). The development of children is multi-dimensional, encompassing cognitive, emotional, social, and spiritual growth. While digital media can enhance cognitive abilities through educational content, excessive screen time may detract from other developmental aspects, such as social interaction and physical activity (Kabir & Rahman, 2020). Furthermore, the role of parental mediation becomes critical in ensuring that digital media are used in a way that complements rather than contradicts the Islamic values embedded in the upbringing process. Studies have emphasized that active parental involvement in children's digital media usage, especially in religious contexts, can help mitigate the negative effects of digital exposure (Khan & Ahmed, 2022).

Active engagement in educational and recreational activities is crucial in ensuring holistic development among children. At the same time, the ideal age to inculcate Islamic values is childhood. Given the situation, both school authorities and parents are having to cope with these new trends of screen exposure among children while trying to ensure the best possible upbringing – both Islamic and holistic - during their formative years. It has thus become essential to explore the impact of the usage of digital devices on these tender beings and navigate through possible solutions. This study aims to explore the impact of digital devices on school-going children aged six (6) to

ten (10), particularly within the purview of Islamic upbringing alongside educational and recreational activities. The research will be conducted within the context of primary school-going students in Dhaka, Bangladesh. By examining the experiences of parents and children, the research will shed light on how digital devices are shaping religious education, family dynamics, and overall development in an urban Muslim context.

In line with the study's aims, the following research questions are formulated:

RQ.1. How concerned / cautious are parents regarding the harmful effects of screens? What challenges are the parents facing in tackling this?

RQ.2. Does excessive exposure to screens impair a child's healthy psychological development? If so, in what ways?

RQ.3. What are the physical drawbacks of excessive exposure to screens?

RQ.4. What are the social and financial implications for families?

RQ.5. Does excessive indulgence in screens hamper Islamic and Quranic education in children?

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The widespread usage of digital devices among children has become a central concern in modern societies. Jamir et al. (2019) points out the unprecedented rate at which device penetration is occurring all over the world among youngsters. The situation is no different in the Muslim world (Ebrahim Hosseini et al., 2014).

The digital revolution has transformed how families function, particularly in the context of child upbringing. The family is the smallest unit of society and supports the formation of the larger community, or ummah. In Islam, the family plays a crucial role in shaping a child's personality, as it is the first institution to interact directly with the child. Consequently, whatever happens within the family significantly impacts the child (Fatmawati & Sholikin, 2019; Ratningsih et al., 2021; Sholihah & Nurhayati, 2022). Parents play an important role in shaping the child's personality until the child grows into a responsible adult (Ikhwansyah et al., 2023). Consequently, a child's personality development is significantly influenced by what they receive from their parents.

A study by Alam and Khan (2017) examined how digital devices impact family communication in Bangladeshi Muslim households. They found that as children became more absorbed in their digital screens, family members, including parents, struggled to maintain meaningful communication. This shift not only hindered emotional bonding but also led to less frequent participation in religious practices, such as prayers or family discussions about Islamic teachings.

Similarly, a study by Siddiqi and Islam (2019) found that digital devices often acted as a barrier to family interactions in Dhaka, particularly during meals or family time. This lack of engagement with family members was linked to a decrease in religious observance, as children were often distracted by social media or video games, which conflicted with prayer times and family discussions about Islamic values.

Khan (2020) argues that the digital age has made it increasingly difficult for parents to enforce traditional Islamic practices in the home. Many Muslim parents in urban areas of Bangladesh reported struggles in limiting screen time, particularly as children are exposed to peer pressure regarding digital devices and content. This difficulty is exacerbated by the increasing prevalence of smartphones, which allow children constant access to social media, entertainment, and educational material at all hours of the day.

In Muslim households, the family plays a pivotal role in reinforcing religious and cultural values. However, the introduction of digital devices has led to concerns about how these technologies might influence Islamic family norms. The family structure in many Muslim societies is traditionally built around collective rituals, such as prayer, fasting, and communal gatherings, which contribute to family cohesion and unity.

Siddiqi and Islam (2019) highlight that in Dhaka, the proliferation of digital devices has led to an erosion of these traditional practices, as children become more absorbed in the virtual world. This shift often results in a weakened sense of communal responsibility and a reduced emphasis on Islamic ethics, such as modesty, charity, and family respect.

Furthermore, the impact of digital devices on family cohesion is particularly pronounced in multi-generational Muslim households. Older family members, particularly grandparents, often report feeling isolated from younger family members who are immersed in their devices. This generational divide can erode the transmission of Islamic values from one generation to the next, as older family members may struggle to understand

the digital culture that shapes the lives of younger children (Alam & Khan, 2017).

Given the challenges associated with digital device usage, many Muslim families are exploring strategies to balance screen time with religious and familial obligations. Parental guidance and regulation play a crucial role in managing this balance. Research by Khan (2020) suggests that Muslim parents who set clear rules about screen time and ensure that children are exposed to appropriate content are more likely to foster a healthy relationship with digital devices.

Moreover, family routines can be structured to ensure that digital devices do not interfere with religious practices. Siddiqi and Islam (2019) recommend setting specific times for prayer and family gatherings, during which digital devices are set aside to encourage face-to-face interactions and religious observance.

Despite the potential advantages, excessive or poorly regulated screen time can have detrimental effects on children's academic performance. One of the primary concerns is the negative impact on attention span and concentration. Digital media, particularly entertainment-focused platforms like social media, video streaming, and gaming, are designed to be highly stimulating and distracting, which can interfere with a child's ability to focus on academic tasks. Research indicates that children who spend significant time on digital devices may develop shorter attention spans and have difficulty concentrating during schoolwork or homework (Lillard & Peterson, 2011).

In addition to altering family dynamics, the overuse of digital screens can have significant psychological and social consequences for children. This is especially true for Muslim children, who may face the dual pressures of navigating modern technology while adhering to traditional religious values. Research by Maqsood and Alam (2020) suggests that excessive screen time leads to various mental health issues, including anxiety, depression, and loneliness. These effects are particularly noticeable when children engage in social media platforms, where they are exposed to unrealistic standards and online bullying.

A study by Hinkley et al. (2019) found that high screen time is associated with delays in language development and deficits in executive function, particularly in young children. The study highlights that children who spend long periods on screens may have fewer opportunities to engage in interactive or verbal activities with parents and caregivers, which are essential for language development.

Furthermore, a review by Leung (2018) suggests that excessive exposure to digital media may lead to attention problems, such as difficulty focusing or hyperactivity, which are often linked to conditions like Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). The overstimulation caused by fast-paced digital content, such as those found in video games or social media platforms, can contribute to difficulties in sustaining attention and can disrupt the development of concentration skills in children. Huang (2023) observes that the prolonged use of digital devices negatively affects the cognitive development of young children, such as decreased attention span, delay in

language development, and impaired learning abilities. Factors like restriction in outdoor activities, lack of quality attention from either or both parents, easy availability of devices etc. also significantly contribute to already aggravating situation (VJ,2020).

The shift from face-to-face communication to virtual interactions can also affect children's ability to read non-verbal cues, such as body language and facial expressions, which are crucial for effective communication and building strong social connections.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study entails data collection from both primary and secondary research, comprising online research and questionnaire surveys conducted among students, parents, counselors and teachers. This study employs a mixed-methods approach, combining both quantitative and qualitative research methodologies to provide a comprehensive understanding of the research problem. The research design integrates survey data, qualitative research, and qualitative surveys to triangulate findings, ensuring robustness and reliability.

Survey data were collected from a hundred participants who were invited through email invitations with a link to the survey. Reminders were sent at specified intervals to improve response rates.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the findings from the survey questionnaire and interviews conducted to explore the impact of digital device usage on the Islamic upbringing and holistic development of Muslim children in Dhaka, Bangladesh. The data collected from 100 participants through surveys and in-depth interviews with parents, educators, and religious scholars provides valuable insights into the multifaceted relationship between digital technology and the social, emotional, educational, and religious growth of children in the contemporary Bangladeshi context. By analyzing the responses, this study aims to highlight the ways in which digital device usage influences children's adherence to Islamic values, their academic performance, mental well-being, and overall development. The discussion also explores the implications of these findings on parenting practices, educational policies, and community engagement, with a particular focus on balancing technological advancements with the preservation of traditional Islamic upbringing.

4.1 Questionnaire Survey

A survey was conducted among the parents of Muslim school children aged six to ten, based in Dhaka through a survey questionnaire. The sample size was 100. The questions and responses are discussed below.

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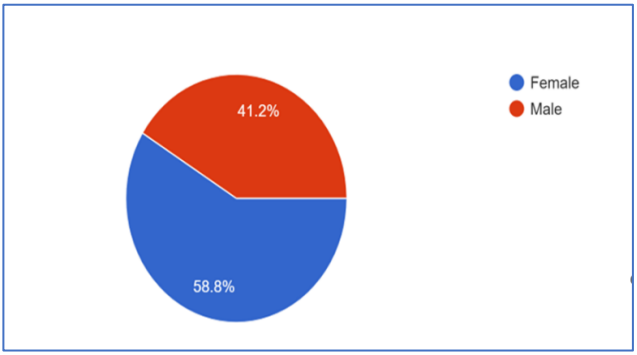

Figure 1. Gender of the children

Question 1: The first question in the questionnaire asked about the gender of the children. 58.8 % of the respondents responded 'female' while the rest were 'male'.

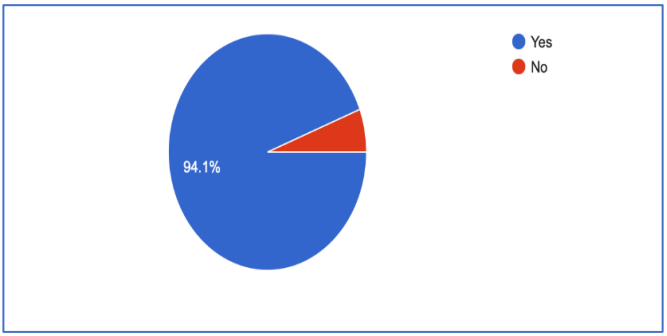

Figure 2. Whether children were allowed screen-time

Question 2: The next question that was asked was whether the children were allowed screen time or not. A whopping 94.1% responded affirmatively while a meager 5.9% responded

negatively. This shows how much internet penetration is among the group in question.

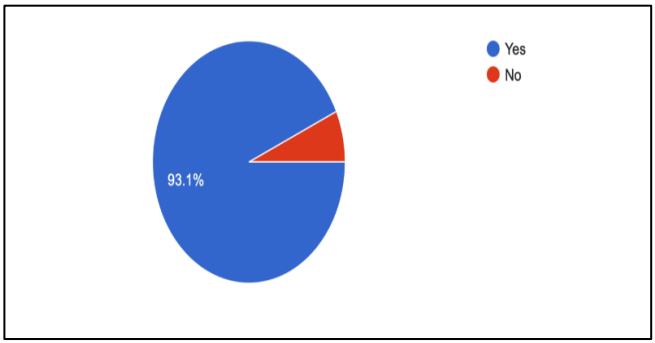

Figure 3. Is there a limit to how much screen time a child has?

Question 3: The following question inquired whether the parents set any limit to how much screen time a child can have or not. 93.1% of the parents responded affirmatively, meaning they do set a limit for screen time for their children while the rest responded negatively, meaning they do not set up any limit.

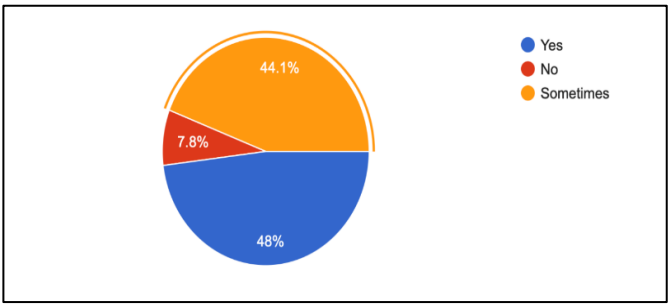

Figure 4. Whether the children obey the limit set

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Question 4: When asked whether the children stick to the set time limit or not, more than half of the respondents replied negatively, meaning, the children do not stick to the set time limit – 7.8% said they do not stick to the limit at all, and the rest said they do sometimes and do not at other times. Less than half of the respondents, 48%, said their children stick to the limit.

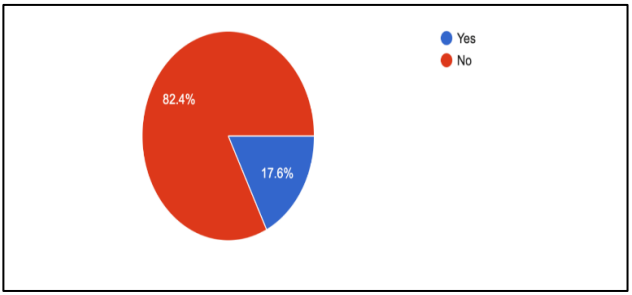

Figure 5. Do the children own their own device?

Question 5: When asked whether the children have their own device, a surprising 17.6% replied affirmatively, meaning, their children had their own device. The rest replied negatively, meaning the children did not own a device.

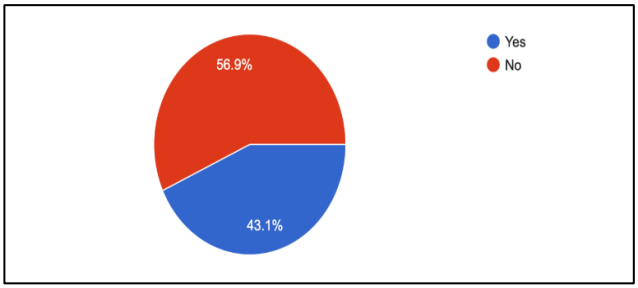

Figure 6. Whether children are allowed screens during mealtimes.

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Question 6: The following question asked whether the children were allowed screens during mealtimes or not. More than half of the respondents – 56.9% responded affirmatively; meaning, they provided the children with screens during mealtimes. The rest of the respondents responded saying they do not.

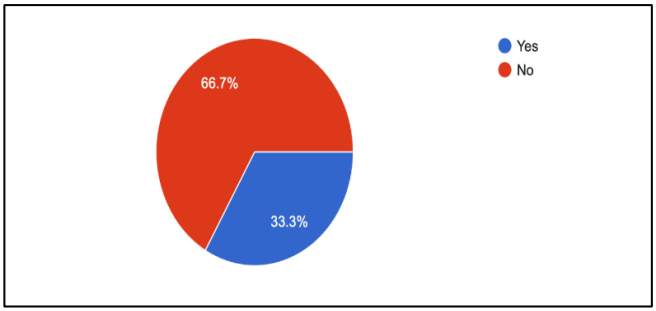

Figure 7. Whether the child needs spectacles/glasses.

Question 7: On asking whether the children required spectacles/glasses or not, a significant 33.3% responded affirmatively, which is alarming given the age range. The rest 66.75 responded negatively.

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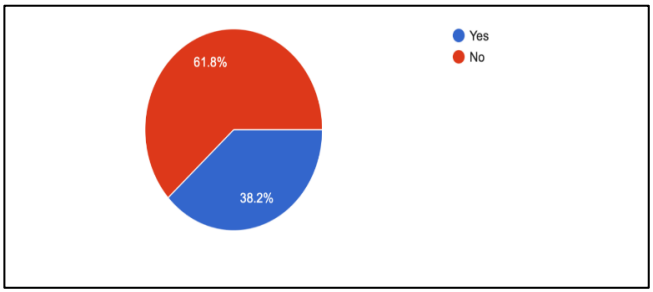

Figure 8. Whether the children are displaying apathy towards physical activities due to constant exposure to screens.

Question 8: When asked whether the children displayed any apathy towards physical activities due to constant exposure to screens or not, a staggering 38.2% parents responded affirmatively, meaning their children displayed signs of apathy to physical activities and preferred to stick to watching screens.

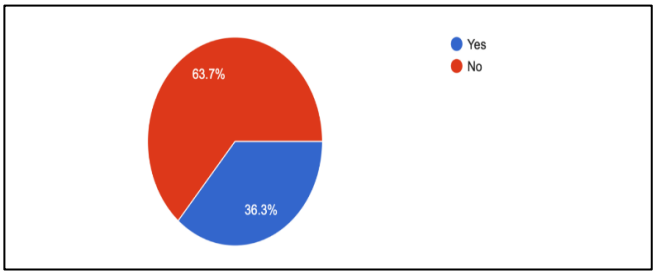

Figure 9. Whether children lost interest in academic studies due to constant exposure to screens.

Question 9: The following question inquired whether the children lost interest in academic studies due to constant exposure to screens or not. More than a third of the respondents replied that their children lost interest.

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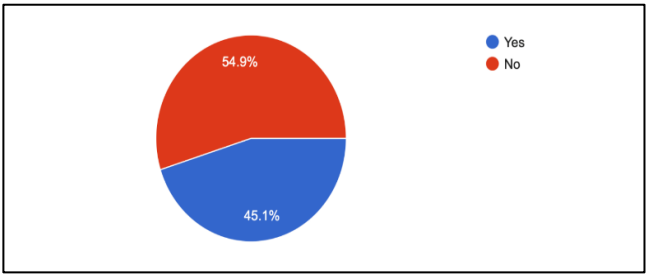

Figure 10. Whether the children are postponing essential needs like eating/going to the toilet/sleeping while using a screen.

Question 10: When asked whether the children were postponing essential needs like eating/going to the toilet/sleeping while using a screen, more than half of the respondents affirmed that their children postponed such essential needs while using a screen.

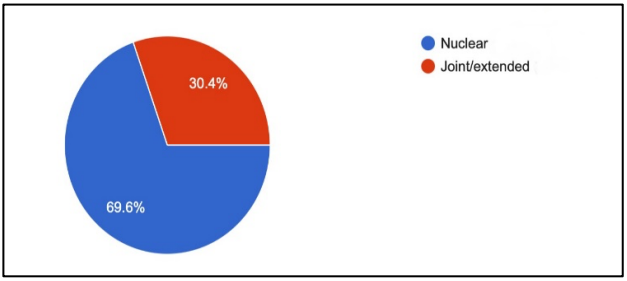

Figure 11. The household setting.

Question 11: When inquired about the setting of the household, almost 70% of the respondents responded saying they have a nuclear setting while the rest responded saying they live in a joint/ extended family arrangement.

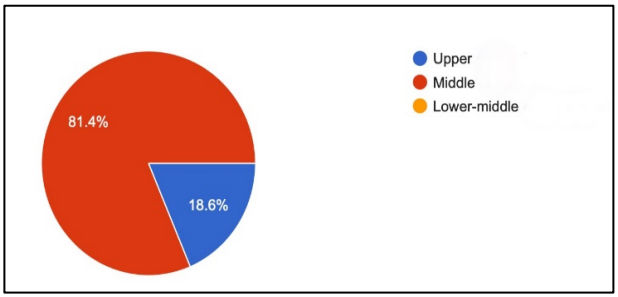

Figure 12. Family income level.

Question 12: When inquired about the level of family income, majority of the respondents, more than 80%, said that they belonged to the middle-class tier

4.2 Analysis of Questionnaire Survey Results

The survey results regarding children's screen time reveal significant insight into the prevalence of internet access and technology usage among the group in question.

4.2.1 RQ1. How concerned / cautious are parents regarding the harmful effects of screens? What challenges are the parents facing in tackling this?

With 94.1% of respondents confirming that their children are allowed screen time, this data highlights a clear trend toward the integration of digital devices into daily life for a vast majority of the population. This high percentage indicates that the internet and technology are deeply embedded in the lifestyles of the respondents, suggesting widespread availability and access to digital tools. It could reflect the societal norms or necessities that encourage screen time, such as remote

learning, entertainment, or social interactions. The remaining 5.9% of respondents reported that their children are not allowed screen time, while a minority, still points to an interesting divergence. This group may represent a more conservative stance on technology use, possibly due to concerns over screen addiction, content exposure, or a preference for more traditional forms of education and play.

Overall, these findings underscore the growing influence of technology and the internet within this demographic, while also hinting at the small but significant portion of individuals who are either resisting or limiting its role in their children's lives. The survey demonstrates the overwhelming prevalence of internet penetration and the embrace of screen time in this group, while also highlighting a small, but noteworthy, segment that remains resistant or restrictive toward it.

The survey results regarding parents setting limits on their children's screen time reveal important insights into the approach toward managing technology use in the household. A substantial 48% of respondents reported that they do set limits on how much screen time their children are allowed, and 44.1% responded that they sometimes impose restrictions; indicating that the vast majority of parents are actively involved in regulating their children's technology use. This suggests a recognition of the need to balance screen time with other activities and the potential concerns around the negative effects of excessive screen exposure, such as screen addiction, disrupted sleep patterns, and reduced physical activity. The fact that such a large percentage of parents impose screen time limits highlights a widespread awareness of the importance of

moderation in technology usage. These parents may view screen time as an essential tool for learning and entertainment but also acknowledge the need for boundaries to promote a healthier lifestyle and ensure that children engage in other activities such as outdoor play, social interaction, and academic work. On the other hand, the remaining minority of respondents, who do not set any limits on screen time, make up a smaller but still noteworthy segment. This group may feel that screen time does not need to be restricted, or they may have different parenting philosophies or cultural perspectives that do not prioritize setting limits on digital device usage. There may also be a belief that children should have the autonomy to decide how much screen time they need or that technology is a natural and beneficial part of modern childhood.

Overall, this answer indicates that a large majority of parents are concerned with managing their children's screen time, taking a proactive approach to limit excessive use. However, the small percentage of parents who do not set any limits suggests a diversity of parenting practices and attitudes toward the role of technology in children's lives.

The survey results regarding whether children adhere to the set screen time limits offer valuable insights into the challenges parents face in managing their children's technology use. More than half of the respondents (over 50%) reported that their children do not consistently stick to the established screen time limits. Specifically, 7.8% of parents indicated that their children do not stick to the limit at all, while a larger proportion noted that their children sometimes adhere to the limits but often fail to do so at other times. This suggests that, despite the high

number of parents who set screen time limits (93.1% as revealed earlier), enforcing those limits consistently is a struggle. Several factors could explain this: children may resist restrictions, may have more access to devices outside of direct parental control, or may find ways to circumvent the set boundaries. It could also reflect the challenging nature of modern parenting, where technology is deeply embedded in everyday life, making it harder to impose and enforce limits, especially with distractions like streaming services, social media, and online games.

This finding is concerning, particularly when considering the potential negative impact of excessive screen time on children's health and development. Studies have shown that extended screen time is linked to a range of adverse outcomes, including disrupted sleep patterns, decreased physical activity, poor academic performance, and social isolation. The fact that over half of parents struggle to enforce screen time limits suggests that despite awareness of these risks, many children are not following the boundaries set by their parents, possibly due to the persuasive allure of screens, lack of enforcement consistency, or resistance from children themselves.

On the other hand, less than half of the respondents (48%) reported that their children consistently stick to the time limits. This indicates that while many parents are successful in maintaining boundaries, almost half of the parents still face difficulties in ensuring full adherence. It suggests that consistent monitoring, communication, and support may be essential in helping children respect screen time limits, though these strategies may not always work perfectly for every child.

Overall, the survey highlights the ongoing challenges parents face in regulating screen time, emphasizing that setting limits is only part of the equation. Effective enforcement of these limits appears to be a more complicated task, requiring ongoing attention, negotiation, and adaptability from parents.

The survey results regarding whether children have their own device reveal an interesting and somewhat surprising trend. Only 17.6% of respondents indicated that their children own a device, while the remaining respondents (82.4%) reported that their children do not have their own device.

The relatively low percentage of children owning their own devices may suggest that, despite the widespread availability and use of technology, many parents prefer to share devices among family members rather than providing individual devices for each child. This could be driven by concerns about excessive screen time, the cost of purchasing additional devices, or the belief that shared devices foster more responsible use. Additionally, parents might be more comfortable with their children using devices under supervision, thereby limiting unrestricted access. The small proportion of children who do own their own device, however, could point to a growing trend in which children, particularly in older age groups, are gaining more independence and access to technology. These children may be using their devices for educational purposes, entertainment, or social interaction, with parents acknowledging the necessity of individual devices for modern learning and communication. However, providing children with personal devices can also open the door to increased screen time, which might lead to the negative impacts of overexposure

to screens, including impaired cognitive development, poor posture, and a reduction in face-to-face interactions with peers and family members.

Overall, the data suggests that most parents are taking a cautious approach to device ownership for their children, likely to avoid the potential harm of excessive screen time. The minority who do provide their children with personal devices may be motivated by the perceived educational benefits or convenience, but they may also be unknowingly exposing their children to the risks associated with increased screen use. The survey results reflect the varying approaches parents have toward providing children with personal technology, with the majority still opting for shared devices or limiting access altogether. The relatively small proportion of children who own their own devices could also suggest a more cautious stance from parents regarding the implications of early and unrestricted access to personal technology.

4.2.2 RQ.2. Does excessive exposure to screens impair a child's healthy psychological development? If so, in what ways?

The survey results regarding children's interest in academic studies in relation to constant exposure to screens highlight a significant concern. More than a third of respondents reported that their children have lost interest in academic studies due to excessive screen time. This finding is particularly alarming given the growing body of research that links prolonged screen exposure with negative impacts on children's focus, academic performance, and cognitive development.

The correlation between screen time and reduced interest in academic studies could be attributed to several factors. First, the constant availability of digital entertainment, such as video games, social media, and streaming services, can create a distraction-rich environment that competes with academic work. For many children, screens provide immediate gratification through entertainment, making the slower-paced, effortful nature of academic tasks less appealing. This shift in attention from schoolwork to screen-based activities may result in decreased motivation to engage with academic content, leading to poorer academic performance and disengagement from studies.

Additionally, research suggests that excessive screen time can negatively affect children's ability to concentrate and retain information. The fast-paced nature of digital media, characterized by rapid content shifts and constant stimulation, can impair attention span and hinder the development of deep focus necessary for academic success. This may contribute to a diminished interest in school-related tasks, as children may struggle to maintain the sustained attention required for learning.

The finding that more than a third of parents reported their children losing interest in academic studies due to screen exposure underscores the growing concern about the impact of digital devices on children's educational development. This trend emphasizes the need for parents and educators to implement strategies that balance screen time with academic focus, fostering environments where children can thrive both in their studies and in healthy digital consumption. Reducing

screen time and encouraging more active, engaging learning methods are crucial steps in combating the negative effects of excessive screen exposure on children's academic interest and performance.

4.2.3 RQ.3. What are the physical drawbacks of excessive exposure to screens?

The survey results regarding children being allowed screens during mealtimes provide important insights into parenting practices, particularly in relation to the potential negative impact of screen exposure on children. Over half of the respondents (56.9%) indicated that their children are allowed screens during mealtimes, suggesting that for many families, technology is integrated into even traditionally screen-free moments, such as meals. This trend could be due to the convenience of using digital devices to keep children entertained, prevent distractions, or help make mealtimes more manageable for parents, especially in busy households.

However, this practice raises concerns, especially considering the well-documented negative impacts of digital screen exposure on children. Research suggests that allowing screens during mealtimes can disrupt important family bonding time, hinder the development of healthy eating habits, and contribute to attention problems. Mealtimes, ideally, should be a time for socialization and communication, where children can engage with family members and focus on their food, which supports both cognitive and social development. Prolonged exposure to screens during meals could also lead to overeating, poor digestion, and limited awareness of hunger cues.

On the other hand, the remaining respondents, who do not allow screens during mealtimes, represent a minority that is potentially more conscious of these risks. These parents may recognize the value of mealtimes as an opportunity for face-to-face interaction, promoting healthier eating habits, and fostering more mindful eating practices. In a nutshell, while more than half of the respondents allow screens during mealtimes, this practice may inadvertently contribute to some of the negative consequences associated with screen time, such as impaired family interaction, poor eating habits, and attention issues. The relatively smaller proportion of parents who do not allow screens during meals may reflect a growing awareness of the importance of creating technology-free zones in the household to support children's overall well-being.

The survey results regarding whether children require spectacles or glasses provide concerning insights, especially when considering the negative impact of digital screens on children's health. A significant 33.3% of respondents indicated that their children need spectacles or glasses, which is alarming given the age range of the children involved. This finding suggests a notable prevalence of vision problems in a population that, ideally, should be experiencing little to no vision impairment at such a young age.

The rise in vision issues among children could be linked to the increased exposure to digital screens, which has become a major concern in recent years. Excessive screen time is known to contribute to a condition called digital eye strain, which can lead to symptoms such as blurred vision, headaches, dry eyes, and difficulty focusing, particularly after prolonged use of

screens. Additionally, the overuse of digital devices has been associated with an increased risk of myopia (nearsightedness), a condition where distant objects appear blurry. The surge in screen usage among children, whether for educational purposes, entertainment, or socializing, may be contributing to these vision problems, especially as children spend more time indoors and engaged with digital devices. The fact that 66.7% of respondents reported that their children do not require spectacles or glasses is somewhat reassuring, but the 33.3% who do represent a significant portion of children potentially suffering from vision issues that could be exacerbated by excessive screen time. These results underscore the growing need for parents and caregivers to monitor screen time more closely, encourage frequent breaks, and promote outdoor activities to reduce the risks associated with prolonged screen exposure.

In a word, the survey results indicate a concerning trend regarding children's eye health, with a third of the respondents reporting that their children require spectacles or glasses. This highlights the need for greater awareness of the negative effects of digital screens on children's vision and the importance of limiting screen time and promoting healthier habits to protect their long-term eye health.

The survey results regarding children's apathy toward physical activities, linked to constant exposure to screens, reveal a concerning trend that highlights the negative impact of excessive screen time on children's physical well-being. A significant 38.2% of parents reported that their children displayed signs of apathy toward physical activities, preferring

instead to stick to screen-based entertainment. This finding raises alarm bells, as physical activity is crucial for the healthy development of children, contributing to not only physical health but also cognitive and emotional well-being. A lack of interest in physical activities, especially in favor of screen time, can lead to a range of negative outcomes, such as obesity, poor posture, diminished motor skills, and overall sedentary lifestyles. Moreover, insufficient physical activity can impact children's mental health, increasing the likelihood of conditions such as anxiety, depression, and reduced self-esteem.

The preference for screen-based activities over physical ones is a well-documented consequence of prolonged screen exposure. Studies suggest that children who spend excessive time on screens are more likely to engage in sedentary behaviors, which can make them less inclined to participate in active play or exercise. This trend is particularly concerning as it can create a cycle where children become more comfortable and engaged with passive forms of entertainment, making it increasingly difficult for parents to encourage outdoor play or sports activities.

On the other hand, the remaining 61.8% of parents who did not report signs of apathy toward physical activity may reflect a variety of factors, including more active lifestyles, stronger parental involvement in encouraging outdoor play, or a more balanced approach to screen time. These parents may be more successful in promoting a healthy balance between digital entertainment and physical activity, helping their children develop more well-rounded habits. To summarize, the 38.2% of parents who reported that their children exhibit apathy toward

physical activities due to excessive screen exposure is concerning. This highlights the need for parents to be more proactive in setting limits on screen time and encouraging children to engage in physical activities. Creating a balance between screen time and outdoor play is essential for supporting children's overall development and well-being, helping to mitigate the negative impacts of excessive screen exposure.

The survey results regarding children postponing essential needs like eating, going to the toilet, and sleeping due to screen use are particularly concerning. More than half of the respondents affirmed that their children engage in such behavior, highlighting the potential negative impact of excessive screen time on children's well-being.

Postponing basic needs for the sake of screen use is a clear indicator of how screen time can become all-consuming for children, leading them to prioritize digital entertainment over their health and self-care. This behavior is concerning for several reasons. For one, it can disrupt children's natural routines, leading to irregular eating habits, poor hydration, inadequate rest, and even neglecting personal hygiene. These disruptions can contribute to a range of health issues, including poor digestion, sleep deprivation, and reduced physical activity, all of which are linked to long-term negative effects on physical and mental health.

Sleep deprivation, in particular, is a significant concern. Research has shown that excessive screen time, especially before bed, can interfere with sleep quality due to the blue light emitted by screens, which disrupts the body’s natural circadian

rhythm. As children delay sleep or sacrifice rest in favor of more screen time, they risk developing chronic sleep problems, which can affect cognitive function, emotional regulation, and overall health.

Similarly, postponing meals or bathroom breaks can lead to physical discomfort, unhealthy eating habits, and even digestive problems. This behavior suggests that children may be losing the ability to recognize their body's signals, as the immersive and addictive nature of screen activities can lead them to become less attuned to their natural needs.

On the other hand, some parents may still be able to establish boundaries around screen time, encouraging their children to take regular breaks for meals, sleep, and hygiene. These parents likely understand the importance of maintaining a healthy balance between digital entertainment and self-care. However, for the majority of respondents who reported that their children postpone essential needs, it underscores the difficulty of managing screen time in an age where digital devices are an integral part of daily life.

In a nutshell, the fact that more than half of parents reported that their children are postponing essential needs like eating, sleeping, or using the toilet due to screen time raises serious concerns about the impact of excessive screen use on children's health. This behavior highlights the need for parents to enforce stricter boundaries, promote healthy routines, and ensure that children are mindful of their physical needs, helping them to develop a healthier relationship with technology. Limiting screen time and encouraging breaks are crucial steps in

protecting children from the negative effects of prolonged screen exposure.

4.2.4 RQ.4. What are the social and financial implications for families?

The survey results regarding household setting reveal a striking trend: nearly 70% of respondents reported living in a nuclear family setting, while the remaining 30% live in a joint or extended family arrangement. This demographic distribution provides an opportunity to explore the potential implications of family structure on children's screen time habits and, more broadly, on their overall well-being.

A nuclear family structure, where parents and children live together in a single household, can sometimes lead to increased screen time among children. In such settings, parents may find themselves balancing work, household responsibilities, and limited support from extended family members, leading to less time and energy to actively engage with children outside of screen-based activities. The pressure of modern life in nuclear family units can make it easier for children to spend excessive time on screens, whether for entertainment or educational purposes, without the necessary supervision or boundaries. Without the presence of extended family members, who could play a more active role in monitoring screen time or engaging in non-digital forms of entertainment, children may have fewer opportunities to take breaks from screens or engage in physical play.

In contrast, joint or extended family arrangements, where children are surrounded by a broader network of family

members (such as grandparents, uncles, aunts, and cousins), often provide more opportunities for children to engage in face-to-face interaction, outdoor play, and other non-screen-based activities. In these settings, the influence of extended family members may provide a balance to the digital world, as there is likely a stronger emphasis on group activities and communal engagement. For example, grandparents may encourage more traditional play, help with homework, or simply spend time talking with children, offering valuable opportunities for connection that might mitigate the potential negative effects of digital screens. Furthermore, the presence of multiple caregivers in a joint family setup can reduce the pressure on parents to be constantly involved in every aspect of a child's daily routine, allowing for a healthier balance between screen time and other activities.

However, it's important to note that while a joint family structure may offer more opportunities for supervision and alternative activities, the effectiveness of this arrangement in reducing screen time ultimately depends on the values and behaviors of the family members involved. In both nuclear and joint family settings, the key to mitigating the negative impact of digital screens lies in setting clear boundaries, promoting physical activity, and encouraging face-to-face socialization.

The survey results suggest that a significant majority of families operate within a nuclear family setting, which may contribute to increased screen time among children due to the logistical and time constraints faced by parents. In contrast, joint family setups may offer greater opportunities for children to engage in non-digital activities, potentially reducing the negative impact

of excessive screen exposure. However, regardless of family structure, the responsibility remains with parents and caregivers to actively monitor screen time, promote healthier routines, and foster environments that prioritize both digital and physical well-being for children.

The survey results regarding the family income levels reveal that a significant majority of respondents, over 80%, belong to the middle-class tier. This demographic insight has important implications for understanding children's exposure to digital screens, as income status can influence access to technology and, in turn, impact the way children interact with digital devices.

Middle-class families often have the financial means to afford digital devices, such as smartphones, tablets, and computers, which are increasingly seen as essential for education, entertainment, and communication. This may result in children having more frequent access to screens for a variety of purposes. While access to technology can offer educational benefits, such as online learning tools and resources, the potential downside is that it also opens the door to increased screen time, which has been linked to a range of negative outcomes, including impaired social development, attention issues, and sleep disturbances.

In middle-class households, children may be more likely to own personal devices or have access to shared family devices. The use of screens for both educational and recreational purposes is common, especially with the rise of digital learning platforms and the growing reliance on technology for school-related tasks. However, without adequate monitoring and boundaries

set by parents, the exposure to screens can quickly exceed recommended limits, contributing to the negative effects of overuse.

One of the key factors influencing digital exposure in middle-class families is the potential balancing act parents face between providing their children with access to digital devices and managing screen time effectively. Middle-class families may have less financial pressure than lower-income families, giving them the ability to invest in technology, but they may also face demanding work schedules and other time constraints that limit their ability to supervise their children's screen use. This can create an environment where children are left to self-regulate their screen time, often with little resistance from parents, leading to excessive use.

Additionally, for middle-class families, technology can be both a tool for education and a means of entertainment, which complicates efforts to limit screen time. Parents in these households may struggle to draw clear boundaries between educational screen time and recreational use, leading to the blurring of lines between productive and non-productive screen exposure.

Regardless of the benefits of technology, excessive screen time has well-documented negative impacts on children, including poor academic performance, reduced physical activity, and diminished attention span. Middle-class children, who often have access to a variety of digital devices, are at risk of experiencing these adverse effects if their screen time is not managed properly. The potential for decreased interest in

physical activities, social isolation, and disrupted sleep patterns is particularly concerning.

The survey findings reveal that a large majority of respondents belong to the middle-class tier, a group that likely has both the resources to afford digital devices and the challenges in managing their children's screen exposure. While access to technology can provide educational opportunities, it also increases the risk of children spending excessive time on screens, which can have negative effects on their physical, social, and cognitive development. It is crucial for parents, especially in middle-class families, to actively set boundaries, encourage physical activity, and promote a balanced approach to technology use in order to mitigate the negative impacts of digital exposure. This may involve creating clear distinctions between educational screen time and recreational screen time, as well as encouraging offline activities that support children's overall well-being.

4.2.5 RQ.5. Does excessive indulgence in screens hamper Islamic and Quranic education in children?

Excessive screen time is seen as directly undermining Islamic education. Children with significant screen exposure struggle more with Quran memorization, possibly due to their reduced attention span and poor memory retention. Children are also being exposed to inappropriate content (e.g., violence, inappropriate language) and the erosion of values like *haya* (modesty). The rise of social media influencers as role models, replacing the revered figures of Islamic history, presents a fundamental shift in value systems. This trend could significantly affect the students' ability to uphold the values of

the *deen* (faith), especially in their interaction with the opposite gender and their ambitions.

5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study has explored the complex relationship between digital device usage and the Islamic upbringing, as well as the holistic development of Muslim children in Dhaka, Bangladesh. The findings reveal that while digital devices can serve as valuable tools for enhancing education and providing access to Islamic knowledge, their impact on children's religious practices, moral values, social interactions, and overall well-being is multifaceted. On the one hand, digital media facilitates learning, increases exposure to Islamic content, and helps children stay connected with religious communities. On the other hand, excessive use of digital devices is linked to concerns such as screen addiction, exposure to inappropriate content, weakening of traditional religious practices, and disruptions in family dynamics. Through surveys questions and interviews with educators, counselors, parents and students, a clear pattern has emerged showing the positive and negative effects of screen exposure on both religious education and personal development.

In light of these findings, it is evident that while digital technology offers numerous opportunities, it also presents significant challenges to the Islamic upbringing and holistic development of children. The findings indicate that while screen time can offer educational benefits, it also poses significant challenges, particularly in terms of distractions that interfere with Quran memorization, academic studies, and social interactions. For many students, screen time, especially

when spent on recreational content such as games and sports, detracts from their ability to focus on their religious duties and engage meaningfully with their studies. The overuse of digital devices has also been linked to negative social outcomes, such as decreased socialization skills, with some students feeling more isolated or less confident in social settings. Thus, a balanced, mindful approach to digital device usage is essential in order to maximize its benefits while mitigating its risks.

Parents and students alike recognize the importance of balancing screen time with other enriching activities, such as physical exercise, social interaction, and reading, to support holistic development. While the younger generation is inevitably exposed to screens in today's digital world, there is a general consensus on the importance of managing screen exposure to protect their well-being and ensure that their Islamic upbringing remains a priority.

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APPENDIX:

Link to the Survey Questionnaire:
https://drive.google.com/file/d/14HeZp2OHu0nzbchaGLDJSqzCDxIEBrzc/view?usp=sharing