

# THE EFFECT OF PARENTS' STRESS LEVELS RELATED TO THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC ON DIGITAL PARENTING AWARENESS, IN TURKEY

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## ABSTRACT

**Objective:** The research was conducted to determine the effect of parents' stress levels related to the COVID-19 pandemic on digital parenting awareness.

**Materials:** This descriptive study was conducted between November 2020-January 2021 with 452 parents residing in Turkey, whose children attended primary school. The data were collected online with a data collection tool consisting of the PSS and the DPAS.

**Results:** It was found that the variables of occupation and number of children of the parents participating in the research are influence the mean scores of DPAS, while the variables of occupation, age, income perception, adaptation to the pandemic process, time spent with the child and the way the relationship with family members are perceived are influence the mean scores of PSS. It was found that, among the characteristics of using digital tools, the parent's phone/tablet usage time, the parent's daily phone/tablet usage time, and the child's status of having his/her own tablet were effective on the mean DPAS score; the variables of parents not knowing their children's use of smart phones/tablets for playing games, homework or educational purposes and not knowing the usage for what purpose were effective variables the mean PSS score. The total mean score of DPAS was determined to be 45.13±9.06, and the mean total score of PSS was determined to be 13.82±2.82.

**Conclusion:** As a result of the research, it was determined that the stress levels perceived by the parents had an effect on digital parenting awareness.

**Keywords:** COVID 19, digital parenting, nursing, stress.

## INTRODUCTION

COVID-19 is a pandemic that started in China, became a worldwide threat in just a few months, and was declared a "public health emergency" by the World Health Organization (WHO) in January 2020. [1,2] As of June 25th, 2021, more than 179 million people worldwide were infected with COVID-19, resulting in 3,899,172 deaths. [3] The COVID-19 pandemic has caused social and economic turmoil, causing great tension for many families. [4] Parents living with their children during the pandemic have been particularly affected by COVID-19 due to social and physical isolation, financial difficulties, school closures and taking an educational role with the distance education process, the difficulties of balancing work and family life when schools are closed, and the risk of unemployment. This situation significantly increased the risk of parents experiencing stress. [4,5] In a study conducted with 2103 mothers in Jordan during the COVID-19, it was found that stress, depression and anxiety levels increased in mothers with low income and low education level, unemployed and devoted to the care and education of their children. [6]

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In Turkey, as of April 25th, 2020, all the schools closed and approximately 1.5 million children were home schooled. As a result, when considering outdoor activities, children were more prone to spend excessive time in front of screens such as digital tablets, smartphones, desktop computers and TVs for completing online activities as part of home-schooling and socializing with their peers. [2,7] Teens and children have become particularly vulnerable to harm associated with excessive screen time or gaming, such as sedentary lifestyles, exposure to harmful content (violent or sexual), misinformation about COVID-19, cyberbullying, the development of gaming disorder, or online gambling. [2] Behaviours such as playing video games, watching TV series, using social media or surfing the internet have been exhibited more in order to reduce stress and anxiety and/or alleviate depressive mood due to the pandemic. [8]

Parents with stress may experience inability to guide their children during this challenging period. In order for parents to support their children in the use of digital technology, they need to be knowledgeable with digital technological developments and its use. The digital age, which brings new responsibilities to parents, has revealed a new concept - digital parenting awareness. [9] Digital parenting, in line with the requirements of the digital age, is a behaviour of an individual who has a basic command of digital tools, is aware of the digital environment with numerous possibilities and can protect his/her child against the risks in these environments, teaches his/her child that the rights of people should be respected in the same way in the virtual environment as in real life, and is open to technological developments. [10]

Due to COVID-19, both mothers and children were more exposed to digital tools, and the new responsibilities brought by the digital age to parents have increased the stress level. Therefore, this research was conducted to determine the effect of parents' stress levels due to the COVID-19 pandemic on digital parenting awareness.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

### Type of the Research

The research was conducted as a descriptive study to determine the effect of parents'

stress levels due to the COVID-19 pandemic on digital parenting awareness.

### Place and Time of the Research

The research was conducted with parents who live in Turkey and whose children attend primary school, reached via electronic media between November 2020-January 2021.

### Population and Sample of the Research

The population of this study consisted of parents living in Turkey, and their children attending primary school. The sample consisted of parents whose children attended primary school, had internet access, and volunteered to participate in the research during the period of the research. Çalışmada örneklem büyüklüğünü hesaplamak amacıyla "G.Power 3.1.9.2" programı kullanılmıştır. In the literature review, based on the percentage measurement values of the methods to be studied, the total sample size was calculated as  $n=278$  by using the G-POWER program with an effect size of 0.4, a power of 95%, and a margin of error of 0.05. [11] The performed power analysis determined that 452 data collected were of sufficient size. [12]

### Data Collection Tools

**Questionnaire:** In this section, there are some descriptive characteristics of parents (9 questions) and questions about their internet usage (10 questions).

**Perceived Stress Scale (PSS);** was developed by Cohen, Kamarck & Mermelste in 1983, and the Cronbach Alpha value was found to be 0.86 in its reliability study. [13] In this study, the scale adapted to Turkish by Bilge, Ögce, Genç, and Oran (2009) was used, and the Cronbach Alpha value was found to be 0.81 in the reliability study. [14] Three items of the scale prepared in a 5-point Likert type (0 never, 4 very often) are reversed (4th, 5th, 6th items), and five items are positive (1st, 2nd, 3rd, 7th, 8th items). A total score of between 0 and 32 is obtained from the scale. It has two subscales: perceived stress (1st, 2nd, 3rd, 7th, 8th items) and perceived coping (4th, 5th, 6th items). The scale is evaluated

on both the total score and the subscale scores. A high total score means a high perceived stress level. High scores on subscales are a negative situation. [14] In this study, the Cronbach's alpha value of the scale was determined as 0.74 for the PSS, 0.78 for the Perceived Stress Sub-Domain, and 0.72 for the Perceived Coping Sub-Domain.

**Digital Parenting Awareness Scale:** was developed by Manap and Durmuş in 2020 to measure parents' digital parenting awareness. Parents were asked to indicate how often they encountered each statement with a Likert-type rating (1=Never, 2=Rarely, 3=Sometimes, 4=Often, 5=Always). The Digital Parenting Awareness Scale consists of 16 items and 4 sub-domains. There were 4 items (1,2,3,4) in the Being a Negative Role Model (BNRM) sub-domain, 4 (5,6,7,8) items in the Digital Negligence (DN) sub-domain, 4 (9, 10,11,12) in the Efficient Usage (EU) sub-domain, and 4 (13,14,15,16) in the Protecting From Risks (PFR) sub-domain. Sub-domains of DPAS are evaluated independently of each other. The scores that can be obtained from the sub-domains vary between 4 and 20. Higher scores from Protecting From Risks and Efficient Usage sub-domains indicate high digital parenting awareness; high scores in Being a Negative Role Model and Digital Negligence sub-dimensions indicate low digital parenting awareness. [9] In this study, the Cronbach's alpha value of the scale was found to be 0.80 for DPAS, 0.75 for BNRM Sub-Domain, 0.81 for DN Sub-Domain, 0.87 for EU Sub-Domain, and 0.80 for PFR Sub-Domain.

### Data Collection

After obtaining legal permissions, the survey link including the questionnaires, Perceived Stress Scale and Digital Parenting Awareness Scale used in the research was created by the researchers through Google forms. The survey link was sent to the WhatsApp groups used by the participants electronically, and the participants were asked to fill in the survey link completely. Participants were asked to share the survey link with other parents using the snowball method. It took an average of 10-15 minutes to complete the survey forms.

### Analysis and Evaluation of Data

SPSS 19.0 package program was used in the statistical analysis of the data. Percentage, means, and in independent groups t test, Anova test and Pearson correlation analysis were used in the evaluation of the data. The statistical significance level was taken as 0.05 in all tests.

### Ethical Principles of the Research

In order to conduct the research, ethics committee approval dated 10/30/2020 and numbered 09-02 from the Human Research Ethics Committee, written permission from the Ministry of Health, and electronic informed consent from the participants were obtained before starting the survey.

### Limitations of the Research

Since the research questions were applied online, the accuracy of the data is limited to the statements of the parents. In the study, parents' stress levels are limited to the structures in the Perceived Stress Scale, and their digital awareness is limited to the structures in the Digital Awareness Scale.

## RESULTS

The distribution of DPAS and PSS mean scores by the demographic characteristics of the parents is presented in Table 1. It was determined that 83% of the parents included in the study were females, 50.7% were housewives, 36.9% were between the ages of 31-35, 57.5% had income equal to their expenses, 48.7% had 2 children, 32.1% of their children were in the first grade, 74.6% of them adapted to the pandemic process, 51.1% spent time with their children whenever possible, and 46.7% perceived their relationship with family members as normal.

According to the descriptive characteristics of the parents participating in the research, the mean scores of DPAS and PSS were compared. It was found that the variables of occupation and the number of children, among the descriptive features, influenced the mean DPAS score, while the variables of occupation, age, income perception, adaptation to the pandemic, the time spent with the child, and the perception of the relationship with family members were found to be effective variables on the mean PSS score ( $p<0.05$ ) (Table 1).

Table 1. Distribution of Parents' Demographic Characteristics (n=452)

Characteristics	n	%	DPAS		PSS	
			X±SS	Test p	X±SS	Test p
<b>Gender</b>						
Woman	375	83.0	45.22±8.85	t: -1.420	13.18±4.90	t: -1.747
Man	77	17.0	46.79±8.69	p: 0.156	14.25±4.92	p: 0.081
<b>Profession</b>						
Self-employment	67	14.8	44.11±9.43	<b>F: 3.080</b> <b>p:0.016*</b> <b>a&gt;b</b>	13.22±4.93	<b>F: 6.751</b> <b>p: 0.000*</b> <b>c&gt;a</b>
Housewife <sup>a</sup>	229	50.7	46.59±7.88		13.14±4.66	
Officer <sup>b</sup>	137	30.3	47.21±7.95		13.00±4.70	
Unemployed <sup>c</sup>	15	3.3	46.33±8.35		19.66±4.51	
Retired	4	0.9	43.75±9.53		14.00±2.16	
<b>Age</b>						
20-25 <sup>a</sup>	21	4.6	46.14±5.96	F: 1.190 p: 0.315	17.38±5.00	<b>F: 5.466</b> <b>p: 0.000*</b> <b>a&gt;c. a&gt;d</b> <b>a&gt;e</b>
26-30 <sup>b</sup>	47	10.4	45.82±9.16		14.57±5.24	
31-35 <sup>c</sup>	167	36.9	46.13±8.94		13.40±4.84	
36-40 <sup>d</sup>	132	29.2	45.63±8.72		12.78±4.85	
40 and over <sup>e</sup>	85	18.8	43.65±9.14		12.54±4.43	
<b>Perceived income</b>						
Negative income (income < expenses) <sup>a</sup>	99	21.9	44.53±9.22	F: 0.746 p: 0.475	14.63±4.98	<b>F: 4.628</b> <b>p: 0.010*</b> <b>a&gt;b. a&gt;c</b>
Positive income (income > expenses) <sup>b</sup>	93	20.6	45.83±8.47		12.64±5.37	
Neutral income (income = expenses) <sup>c</sup>	260	57.5	45.73±8.82		13.14±4.65	
<b>Number of children</b>						
1 <sup>a</sup>	89	19.7	48.19±8.72	<b>F: 7.95</b> <b>p:0.000*</b> <b>a&gt;d</b> <b>b&gt;d</b> <b>c&gt;d</b>	13.67±4.94	F:0.283 p: 0.838
2 <sup>b</sup>	220	48.7	45.51±8.29		13.21±4.94	
3 <sup>c</sup>	106	23.5	45.09±9.06		13.54±4.90	
4 and over <sup>d</sup>	37	8.2	40.00±9.18		13.05±4.93	
<b>Child's Grade Level</b>						
1	145	32.1	45.69±8.83	F:0.346 p: 0.792	13.55±4.54	F: 2.176 p: 0.090
2	101	22.3	45.76±8.14		14.14±4.83	
3	97	21.5	44.68±10.47		13.30±5.24	
4	109	24.1	45.68±7.89		12.45±5.10	
<b>Adaptation to the Pandemic Process</b>						
Yes	337	74.6	45.46 ±9.24	t: 0-.101	12.79±4.84	<b>t: -4.329</b>
No	115	25.4	45.55±7.55	p: 0.919	15.05±4.78	<b>p:0 .000*</b>
<b>Time Allotted to the Child</b>						
We can't spend any time <sup>a</sup>	3	.7	38.33±9.71	F:0.768 p:0.512	13.66±3.21	<b>F: 7.828</b> <b>p: 0.000*</b> <b>b&gt;c. b&gt;d</b>
We spend very little time <sup>b</sup>	26	5.8	45.34±9.33		16.76±4.62	
We spend time whenever we get the chance <sup>c</sup>	231	51.1	45.77±9.16		13.82±4.33	
We spend enough time <sup>d</sup>	192	42.5	45.28±8.36		12.35±5.36	
<b>Perception of the relationship with family members</b>						
Normal <sup>a</sup>	211	46.7	44.85±8.74	F: 1.052 p:0.350	13.47±4.98	<b>F: 31.492</b> <b>p:0.000*</b> <b>b&gt;a&gt;c</b>
Conflicted <sup>b</sup>	42	9.3	45.71±9.30		18.40±3.81	
Supportive <sup>c</sup>	199	44.0	46.11±8.83		12.19±4.36	

DPAS: Digital Parenting Awareness Scale PSS: Perceived Stress Scale \*p<0.05

It was determined that 55.3% of the parents participating in the study have been using a smartphone/tablet for 8 years or more, 38.1% spent 3-4 hours a day with a smartphone/tablet, 88.5% of their children did not have a smartphone, 52% did not have a tablet, 40.3% of their children spend 1-2 hours daily with a smartphone/tablet, 69.9% of parents' children sometimes watch movies with their smartphone/tablet, 69.5% sometimes watch videos and play games, 86.3% never use social networks, 53.5% always used it for homework or educational purposes, and 69% never knew for what purpose they used it (Table 2).

According to the digital tool usage characteristics of the parents participating in the research, the DPAS and PSS mean scores were compared. It was found that among the descriptive characteristics, parent's phone/tablet usage time, the parent's daily phone/tablet usage time, and the child's status of having his/her own tablet were influenced the mean DPAS score, and the variables of parents not knowing their children's use of smart phones/tablets for playing games, homework or educational purposes and not knowing the usage for what purpose influenced the mean PSS score ( $p < 0.05$ ) (Table 2).

Table 2. Distribution of Parents by Digital Driving Characteristics (n=452)

Characteristics	n	%	DPAS		PSS	
			X±SS	Test p	X±SS	Test p
<b>Parent's Smart/Phone Tablet Usage Time</b>						
1 Year	13	2.9	42.30±13.13	<b>F: 3.552</b> <b>p:0.014*</b> <b>b&gt;a</b>	14.23±5.06	F: 1.324 p:0.266
2-4 Year <sup>a</sup>	52	11.5	42.73±10.71		13.76±5.03	
5-7 Year	137	30.3	44.99±8.34		13.88±5.05	
8 Year and over <sup>b</sup>	250	55.3	46.50±8.26		12.96±4.80	
<b>Parent's Daily Smartphone/Tablet Time</b>						
Less than 1 hour <sup>a</sup>	53	11.7	12.69±4.67	<b>F:6.063</b> <b>p:0.000*</b> <b>c&gt;a</b> <b>d&gt;a</b> <b>d&gt;b</b>	12.69±4.67	F:2.509 p:0.058
1-2 hour <sup>b</sup>	170	37.6	12.96±4.67		12.96±4.67	
3-4 hour <sup>c</sup>	172	38.1	13.48±5.10		13.48±5.10	
5 hour and over <sup>d</sup>	57	12.6	14.85±5.11		14.85±5.11	
<b>Child Owning a Smartphone</b>						
Yes	52	11.5	45.11±8.90	t: -0.326	12.69±5.07	t: -1.055
No	400	88.5	45.54±8.83	p: 0.745	13.45±4.90	p: 0.292
<b>Child's Tablet Ownership Status</b>						
Yes	217	48.0	46.65±8.79	<b>t: 2.708</b> <b>p: 0.007*</b>	13.08±5.00	t: -1.190 p: 0.235
No	235	52.0	44.41±8.75		13.63±4.83	
<b>Child's Daily Smartphone/Tablet Time</b>						
Less than 1 hour	113	25.0	44.92±9.07	F:0.380 p:0.767	12.99±4.66	F:0.329 p:0.805
1-2 hour	182	40.3	45.97±8.68		13.56±4.86	
3-4 hour	114	25.2	45.21±8.84		13.37±5.17	
5 hour and over	43	9.5	45.65±9.03		13.53±5.25	
<b>My Child Watches Videos or Movies on a Smartphone/Tablet</b>						
Always <sup>a</sup>	83	18.4	46.67±10.55	F:0.952 p:0.387	14.00±4.59	F:1.165 p:0.313
Sometimes <sup>b</sup>	316	69.9	45.27±8.48		13.14±5.03	
Never <sup>c</sup>	53	11.7	44.90±7.90		13.73±4.71	
<b>My Child Plays With Smartphone/Tablet</b>						

Always <sup>a</sup>	87	19.2	46.51±9.94	F:1.751 p:0.175	14.47±4.86	<b>F:3.474</b> <b>p:0.032*</b> <b>a&gt;b</b>
Sometimes <sup>b</sup>	314	69.5	45.51±8.57		12.98±4.86	
Never <sup>c</sup>	51	11.3	43.60±8.32		13.88±5.14	
<b>My Child Surfs Social Network with Smartphone/Tablet</b>						
Always <sup>a</sup>	8	1.8	39.87±10.61	F:1.680 p:0.188	14.62±3.29	F:2.492 p:0.084
Sometimes <sup>b</sup>	54	11.9	45.87±8.35		14.66±4.82	
Never <sup>c</sup>	390	86.3	45.55±8.85		13.16±4.94	
<b>My Child Uses Smartphone/Tablet for Homework or Educational Purposes</b>						
Always <sup>a</sup>	242	53.5	45.86±8.72	F:0.495 p:0.610	12.88±4.74	<b>F:4.761</b> <b>p:0.009*</b> <b>c&gt;a</b>
Sometimes <sup>b</sup>	190	42.0	45.10±9.17		13.70±4.98	
Never <sup>c</sup>	20	4.4	44.65±6.93		16.10±5.41	
<b>There Are Times When I Don't Know For What Purpose My Child Is Using The Smartphone/Tablet</b>						
Always <sup>a</sup>	23	5.1	47.13±11.17	F:0.453 p:0.636	15.17±4.47	<b>F:10.25</b> <b>p:0.000*</b> <b>b&gt;c</b>
Sometimes <sup>b</sup>	117	25.9	45.21±9.06		14.84±4.88	
Never <sup>c</sup>	312	69.0	45.47±8.57		12.68±4.82	

DPAS: Digital Parenting Awareness Scale PSS: Perceived Stress Scale \* $p<0.05$

The mean scores of the parents in DPAS and PSS are given in Table 3. It was found that the mean of DPAS total score was 45.13±9.06, the BNRM Sub-domain Total Score was 7.99±2.85, the DN Subdomain Total Score was 8.32±3.04, the EU Subdomain Total Score was 14.76±3.94, and the PFR Subdomain

Total Score was 14.06±4.27. The mean of PSS total score was determined to be 13.82±2.82, the Perceived Stress Subdomain Total Score to be 8.26±2.40, and the Perceived Coping Subdomain Total Score to be 5.55±1.36.

Table 3. Average Scores of Parents from DPAS and PSS (n=452)

Scale	Sub-Scale	Min-Max	X±SS
<b>DPAS</b>	BNRM Sub-Dimension Total Score	4-20	7.99±2.85
	DN Sub-Dimension Total Score	4-20	8.32±3.04
	EU Sub-Dimension Total Score	4-20	14.76±3.94
	PFR Sub-Dimension Total Score	4-20	14.06±4.27
	Total Score	16-78	45.13±9.06
<b>PSS</b>	Perceived Stress Sub-Dimension Total Score	2-16	8.26±2.40
	Perceived Coping Sub-Dimensional Total Score	2-10	5.55±1.36
	Total Score	6-24	13.82±2.82

DPAS: Digital Parenting Awareness Scale PSS: Perceived Stress Scale

Table 4 presents the relationship between parents' digital parenting awareness and parents' stress levels due to the COVID 19 pandemic process; a statistically significant correlation was found between the PSS total score and the mean scores of the BNRM, DN, EU and PFR subdomains ( $p<0.05$ ). In addition,

between the Perceived Stress subdomain and the mean scores of the BNRM and DN subdomains; between the Perceived Coping Subdomain and the mean scores of the DN, EU and PFR subdomains, a statistically significant correlation was found ( $p<0.05$ ).

Table 4. Correlation Evaluation of Parents' DPAS Sub-Dimensions and PSS Scores (n=452)

		<b>BNRM Sub-Dimension</b>	<b>DN Sub-Dimension</b>	<b>EU Sub-Dimension</b>	<b>PFR Sub-Dimension</b>
<b>PSS Total Score</b>	Pearson Correlation	0,184**	0,241**	-0,146**	-0,167**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<b>0,000</b>	<b>0,000</b>	<b>0,002</b>	<b>0,000</b>
	N	452	452	452	452
<b>Perceived Stress Sub-Dimension</b>	Pearson Correlation	0,217**	0,221**	0,047	-0,010
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<b>0,000</b>	<b>0,000</b>	0,318	0,827
	N	452	452	452	452
<b>Perceived Coping Sub-Dimensional</b>	Pearson Correlation	0,037	0,143**	-0,356**	-0,312**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0,431	<b>0,002</b>	<b>0,000</b>	<b>0,000</b>
	N	452	452	452	452

\*\*Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed) PSS: Perceived Stress Scale

DPAS: Digital Parenting Awareness Scale BNRM: Being Negative Role Model DN: Digital Negligence EU: Efficient Usage PFR: Protecting From Risks

The results of multiple regression analysis performed to explain the effect of individuals' stress levels due to the COVID-19 pandemic on digital parenting awareness are presented in Table 5. When the results were examined, it was observed that the established regression model was statistically significant (F: 26.147;  $p < 0.05$ ). The model explanatory power of the independent variables is 10%. In addition, it was

determined in the established model that there was no autocorrelation problem ( $1.5 < DW < 2.5$ ) and no multicollinearity problem (VIF10). The independent variable that most affects the dependent variable is the score it gets from the stress coping subdomain ( $\beta = -1.001$ ). In addition, as the individual's scores on the coping domain increase, digital parenting awareness decreases.

Table 5. The results of the regression analysis to explain the effect of parents' stress levels on digital parenting awareness due to the COVID-19 pandemic

	$\beta$	t	p	VIF	R <sup>2</sup>	<u>F</u>	DW
						<b>p value</b>	
Constant	46,603	40,370	0,000			26,147	
Stress total	0,527	4,888	0,000	1,045	0,100		1,871
Coping total	-1,001	-6,227	0,000	1,045		0,0000	

The established model is statistically significant.

## DISCUSSION

Parents have also faced the digital changes and transformation seen in the 21st century. This situation, to which families are exposed to with their children, has not only highlighted digital parenting, but also affected the stress levels of parents. This pandemic period, in which leaving the house is considered very risky and staying at home is especially recommended,

has been the period when family members are more exposed and affected by online environments. [15]

According to the descriptive characteristics of the parents participating in the research, the mean scores of DPAS and PSS were compared. The variables of occupation and number of children, which are descriptive characteristics, were found to be effective on the mean DPAS scores.

Factors such as parents' values, living and working conditions, socioeconomic levels, technological literacy levels and digital media usage differentiate the approaches adopted in digital parenting and are important variables. [16,17] It was found that the variables of occupation, income perception and time spent with the child were effective on increasing? the mean PSS scores. It can be thought that the perception of income and occupations due to families having their workplaces closed during the pandemic process and having an unstable and irregular income affected the perceived stress levels. In the study of Keleşoğlu and Karduz [15], in which they examined digital parenting and parental stress during the COVID-19 process in 2020, they have stated that the time they spend with their children was effective in reducing? parental stress. Following further literature analysis, it has been observed that the less time allocated to their children increases the stress of parents. [15] In this study, it has been stated that the way in which the relationship with family members is perceived (conflicting) is effective on the mean PSS score, increasing it?. In the literature, it has been stated that there is a significant correlation between parents' stress levels according to the emotional state of the parents during the COVID-19. [15] In pandemic situations such as COVID-19, which has a strong effect, it is expected that individuals show different tendencies such as conflicted, anxious and angry in their relationships and their relationships are affected by this. [19] In order for families to be in a healthy relationship with their children and to maintain these relationships, it is important to develop strategies for coping with stress, since there is no real equivalent to a completely stress-free life.

According to the digital tool usage characteristics of the parents participating in our research, in the mean scores of DPAS and PSS, it was determined that the variables of the parent's phone/tablet usage time, the parent's daily phone/tablet usage time and the child's status of having his/her own tablet were effective on increasing? the mean DPAS scores. In the literature, it has been stated that digital parenting should not only be thought of as the parent's monitoring and management of their child's digital media and internet use and setting rules about it, but it also includes the use of digital media in the form of parent's

own access to digital media, frequency, duration and level of use. [20,21] It was found that the variables that the parents did not know about their children's use of smartphones/tablets for game purposes, homework or educational purposes and for what purpose were variables increasing? the PSS score averages. It shows that during COVID-19, every family has turned to the digital field in direct proportion to their own opportunities and conditions, and all of them are at similar and close stress levels. Considering that the restrictions experienced in the pandemic process will bring difficulties in many fields such as education, health, economy, etc. in the future, the relationship between digital access and stress levels can be found in the literature. [22-24]

It was found that the mean of DPAS total score of the parents was  $45.13 \pm 9.06$ , the BNRM Subdomain Total Score was  $7.99 \pm 2.85$ , the DN Subdomain Total Score was  $8.32 \pm 3.04$ , the EU Subdomain Total Score was  $14.76 \pm 3.94$ , and the PFR Subdomain Total Score was  $14.06 \pm 4.27$ . In the study by Keleşoğlu and Karduz, BNRM Subdomain Total Score has been found to be  $9.14 \pm 3.20$ , DN Subdomain Total Score to be  $9.72 \pm 3.55$ , EU Subdomain Total Score to be  $17.33 \pm 2.55$ , and PFR Subdomain Total Score to be  $15.33 \pm 3.41$ . These are comparable with our study results.

The relationship between parents' digital parenting awareness and parents' stress levels due to the COVID 19 pandemic process was examined; a statistically significant correlation was found between the PSS total score and the mean scores of the BNRM, DN, EU and PFR subdomains. Again, in the study of Keleşoğlu and Karduz [15], a statistically significant relationship has been found between the total PSS score and the mean scores of the BNRM and DN subdomains, while no statistically significant relationship has been found between the mean scores of the EU and PFR subdomains. It can be said that COVID-19 was a period when parents are forced to turn to the online area more and variables such as being a negative role model, digital negligence, efficient usage and protection from risks for digital parenting awareness are effective on stress, increasing it?. Here, although the neglect of parents towards their children in online areas creates a relatively intuitive expectation of relaxation or calming down for them, it has the opposite effect as seen in the research.

**It can be concluded that the stress level of the parents increases in direct proportion to the level of lack of awareness.**

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

As a result of our research, it was determined that there was a statistically significant correlation between the total PSS score and the mean scores of the subdomains of DPAS such as being a negative role model, digital negligence, efficient usage, and protecting from risks. Digital parenting awareness studies to be carried out with parents will provide awareness for both children and families during pandemic periods. Being positive role models and taking responsibility for the use of digital tools can be offered as a basic recommendation to parents, for a healthy digital environments use and for healthy family relationships.

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