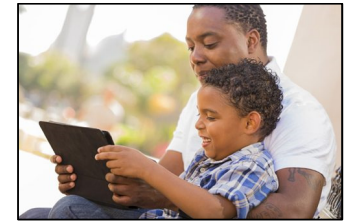# PARENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF BOOK VERSUS TABLET SHARED READING EXPERIENCES

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INTRODUCTION

Technology has become much more prevalent in the day-to-day activities of family life (Lauricella, Wartella, & Rideout, 2015; Rideout, 2013). According to Rideout (2013), the use of mobile media devices such as smartphones and tablets, have increased dramatically in the last several years by families of young children. The most recent account indicates that 40% of families own a tablet and that, on average, parents use tablets for approximately 45 minutes a days, and children under 8 years of age use tablets close to half an hour each day (Lauricella, Wartella, & Rideout, 2015). Further, tablets (e.g., iPad, Nook, Kindle) and similar electronic devices are increasingly being used for reading (Rideout, 2013). As a result, researchers have begun to examine the use of electronic books on children's reading experiences. However, whereas most research comparing reading of traditional books and tablets or e-readers have consistently found difference across reading modalities (e.g., Korat & Or, 2010; Korat, Shamir & Heibal, 2013; Krcmar & Cingel, 2014), parents' perceptions of shared reading on a tablet versus on a book have not yet been investigated.

RESULTS

Paired samples t-tests were conducted to investigate parents' ratings of reading from the book and from the tablet. Results indicated significant differences between parents' ratings of the book and tablet.

First, parents reported that it was more important that their young child learn something from the stories when reading from the book ($M = 2.85$, $SD = 1.04$) as compared to the tablet ($M = 2.56$, $SD = 1.12$), $t(54) = 3.28$, $p < .01$.

Parents also felt that it was more important that their child have fun while reading the stories from the book ($M = 3.42$, $SD = 0.69$) as compared to the tablet ($M = 3.11$, $SD = 0.90$), $t(54) = 3.00$, $p < .01$.

Lastly, parents felt that their child was more interested in the stories when read from the book as compared to the tablet ($M = 2.80$, $SD = 1.06$, $M = 2.16$, $SD = 1.23$), $t(54) = 3.46$, $p < .01$.

POSTER INFORMATION

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METHOD

Participants

All participants were 18 or older and had to be parents of children aged 1-4 years as well as owners of a smartphone. Participants were compensated with a $40 gift card.

- **Sample:** N = 55
- **Parent Age:** $M = 30.62$ (SD = 4.85)
- **Child Age:** $M = 31.52$ months (SD = 10.59)
- **Parent:** mothers (87.3%), fathers (12.7%)
- **Ethnicity:** White (54.5%), Hispanic (32.7%), other (7.3%), Asian/Pacific Islander (3.6%), African American (1.8%)
- **Employment:** stay-at-home caregivers (40%), employed full-time (32.7%), employed part-time (20.0%), self-employed (5.5%), and unemployed (1.8%)
- **Marital Status:** married (72.7%), two-parent households (85.5%)
- **Education:** some college education (45.5%), baccalaureate degree (32.7%), graduate degree (18.2%), some high school (3.6%)

Measures

Parental Beliefs about Reading Survey. Parents were asked to reflect on their experience of reading with their child. Parents used a 5-point scale (1 – not at all; 2 – a little; 3 – somewhat; 4 – important/interested; 5 – very) to rate the following about their experiences with both the book and the tablet: how interested their child was in the stories read, how important it was that their child learn something from the stories read, and how important it was that their child have fun when reading the stories.

Procedures

As part of a larger study, participants and their children were brought to a lab room on campus and were videotaped while they interacted and read four age-appropriate stories (i.e.,). Each parent-child pair was exposed to two 8-minute reading conditions: during the "Book" condition, parents were asked to read to their child two stories (e.g., "Chica Chica Boom Boom", "Hand, Hand, Fingers, Thumb") from a book. During the "Tablet" condition, parents were asked to read to their child two different stories from a tablet (e.g., "Are You My Mother?", "Brown Bear, Brown Bear"). The stories were counterbalanced across "Book" and "Tablet" conditions. After the reading conditions, parents were asked to reflect on their experience of reading with their child via the Parental Beliefs about Reading Survey.
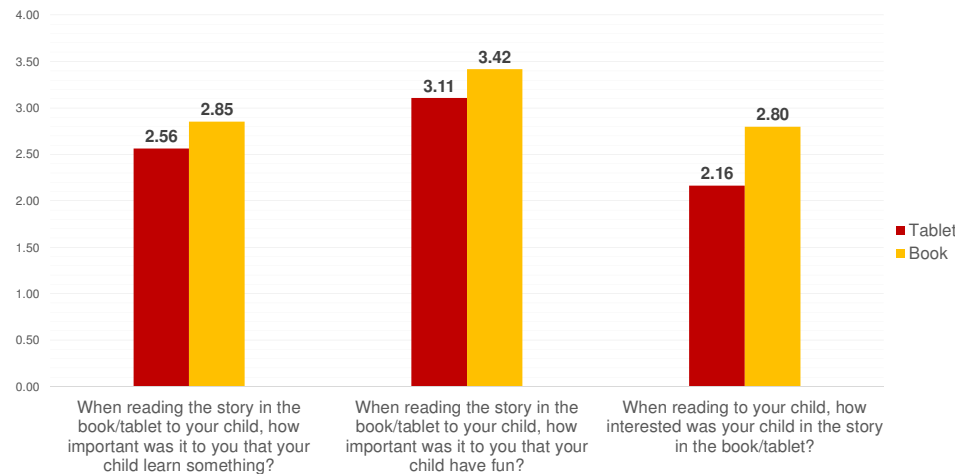

Figure 1. *Means for Parent Responses for Reading with a Book vs. Tablet*

DISCUSSION

Overall, these results indicate that parents perceived shared book reading more positively than tablet reading. Specifically, they reported their child learned more, had more fun, and was more interested in the stories read from the book versus the tablet, even though the same four stories were read using both modalities. This is surprising given how pervasive technology has become in the home in the last 10 years. However, as Rideout (2013) points out, while tablets provide an alternative modality for reading, they can also be used for playing games and watching videos. As a result, this multifunctional aspect of the tablet may negatively influence parents' perceptions of reading on a tablet as a true "reading" experience.

Similarly, the different ratings between book reading and tablet reading may reflect parents' own childhood experiences with book reading and that tablet reading, which is still in its infancy, is still regarded as a less traditional way to read.

So, will parents actually read less to their child with a tablet? Further research is needed to determine if these perceptions ultimately influence parents' shared reading behaviors.

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