Teachers’ dispositions towards the role of digital devices in play-based pedagogy in early childhood education

# Details

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## Sample

185 teachers from each country who had worked between 5 and 10 years in early childhood education (ECE) and were working with children from the age of 2-4 years.

## Implications For Educators About

# Abstract

A body of research is emerging on early childhood education teachers’ views on the integration of digital technologies in their practice. Despite evidence of the digitalisation of homes in affluent societies and children’s interactions in highly mediated digital environments, few teachers so far have integrated digital devices into a play-based pedagogy. Thus, this project aimed to examine the attitudes and aptitudes towards digital devices of teachers in their personal lives and professional practice in five countries (England, Luxemburg, Malta, Greece and Kuwait). An online survey designed to collect broad-scale data was followed by focus group interviews. The findings demonstrated that although teachers are digitally competent in their personal lives, there is a dominant ideology regarding the nature of play-based pedagogy that hinders the integration of digital devices into their practice.

# Outcome

"It is evident from the data that ECE [early childhood education] teachers have fully integrated digital devices into their everyday personal lives, have positive attitudes towards them, have developed appropriate skills and were coping with their use. When it comes to their beliefs about their use in ECE, however, this study demonstrates their hesitation in integrating digital devices. This hesitation begins with their view of play-based pedagogy as a situation where children enjoy active first-hand experiences in the physical environment. Digital devices are not seen as offering such opportunities and are viewed as static and controlling children’s creativity, motivation and exploration. Although the teachers did not suggest that digital devices have no role in ECE, they could not see, or were not convinced, that they could support children. They felt unprepared, unsure, confused and concerned about different recommendations for children’s use of digital devices. It is evident that digital devices were viewed as being socially and physically limiting, directive and not offering mediated activities. Furthermore, teachers considered their use to be in opposition to what they actually try to do, believing that digital devices do not create opportunities for play in which children explore all their senses, but tend to limit both language interaction and opportunities for self-directed actions. They feared that digital devices could not support them in their role as teachers, feeling that they had very little control over how the applications were developed or how they felt as users." (Palaiologou, 2016; pp. 315-316).