

MIKE Study 2017 – Abstract

MIKE is a representative study of the media usage behaviour of primary school-age children living in Switzerland. MIKE stands for **M**edien, **I**nteraktion, **K**inder, **E**ltern (media, interaction, children, parents). This report is based on the 2017 survey. The first MIKE study was published in 2015. In 2017, a total of 1128 children aged from six to thirteen were surveyed in Switzerland's three major language regions. In addition, the answers of 629 parents were included in the analysis.

The results of the 2017 MIKE Study show that most children in Switzerland grow up in media-rich households and that media experiences shape their everyday lives. Mobiles/smartphones, Internet access and televisions are present in almost all households. Despite the broad range of digital media, playing inside or outside is the most commonly pursued leisure activity. Homework is also part of children's everyday life. Meeting friends, playing sport and doing something with the family are activities carried out with about the same frequency as the most frequent media activities: watching television, listening to music and reading books. During primary school, media usage behaviour changes, whereby the Internet and mobile phones in particular are used more often by older children. Although many children do not yet own a mobile phone, or even use one regularly, the mobile phone tops the list of children's favourite media. With both television content and Internet content, children have considerably more positive than negative experiences. The MIKE study not only sheds light on children's use of media, but also on numerous aspects in the broad environment of family and media. Parents and children influence each other with regard to media usage and often use the same media with about the same frequency, except for video games. After the MIKE study in 2015 identified parents' biggest concerns about media usage, in 2017 the opportunities for media usage were surveyed from parents' perspectives: The biggest benefits parents see for their children is that the media is a large, diverse, accessible source of information that can promote the education of their children.

Alongside the global analyses of the media behaviour and leisure-time behaviour of parents and children, evaluations were also carried out for the following features: age, gender, language region, migration background, socioeconomic status (SES), degree of urbanity and family size. The MIKE study provides scientifically reliable and representative data for authorities, institutions and private individuals who deal with children.

Summary and Conclusions

MIKE is a representative study of the media usage behaviour of primary-school pupils in Switzerland. MIKE stands for **M**edien, **I**nteraktion, **K**inder, **E**ltern (media, interaction, children, parents). For this study, over 1000 children aged from six to thirteen, as well as over 600 parents, were surveyed in Switzerland's three major language regions. The MIKE study is conducted by the Media Psychology Section of the ZHAW and is supported by the Jacobs Foundation and Youth and Media – National Platform for the Promotion of Media Literacy. The 2017 MIKE study is the second edition of the Swiss Children and Media Study. The first was in 2015. The media usage trends for 2017 are described below.

Half of Children Have Their Own Mobile Phone, One Third Have a Tablet

Children in Switzerland grow up in households filled with media. Around 80 percent of primary school children use a mobile phone at least once in a while, and around 50 percent have their own. This is usually a smartphone. The age differences are large: A quarter of 6-9 year olds, almost two-thirds of 10- to 11-year-olds and four-fifths of 12-13 year-olds have their own mobile phone. Only children have mobile phones more often than children with siblings. The same applies to children without a Swiss parent. The mobile phone is the favourite medium of Swiss children – even though one third of those children who call the mobile phone a favourite medium don't have one. The mobile phone is mainly used to play games, watch online videos, listen to music and send or receive messages. The fascination with mobile phones is also reflected in the fact that 35 percent of children using their own mobile phone use it at least once a week when they should actually be sleeping.

For 6 to 9-year-olds, the tablet is the favourite medium – in front of the mobile phone. 85 percent of households with primary school children have a tablet. One third of all children in Switzerland have their own tablet. As part of the 2017 MIKE study, smartwatches and fitness bands were also studied. With 10 to 13-year-olds, every tenth child has its own smartwatch or fitness band.

TV, Music and Books Dominate Daily Media Activities

Media experiences are a central element of everyday life for children in Switzerland. However, playing, sports and meeting friends are the most popular leisure activities for 6 to 13-year-olds, well ahead of media activities such as gaming, reading and watching TV. Everyday media use is dominated by television, music and books. This means that classical media are at the forefront of the most frequently practised media activities: more than three quarters of children watch TV, listen to music or read books at least once a week. A third of children read a book almost daily. The use of books in leisure time increases until the age of 9. From 10 to 11, children use books less often.

Video and TV content are of great importance in children's everyday lives. 97 percent of children watch TV. Every fifth child with non-Swiss heritage has a TV in his/her room, with only every 20th child with Swiss background having one. The most popular children's films are from the *Harry Potter*, *Star Wars* and *The Fast and the Furious* series. Some of these films are only recommended for children aged 12 and over. In addition to frequent TV usage, *YouTube* is an integral part of the everyday life of children from 9 years of age and *YouTube* is by far their favourite app. On average, Swiss children watch online videos for a quarter of an hour per day, the oldest children for half an hour. The favourite apps for upper primary school children are – after *YouTube* – *WhatsApp*, *Instagram* and *Snapchat*. Girls tend to favour communication apps, boys game apps. 55 percent of upper primary school children use *WhatsApp* at least once a week, which corresponds to an increase since 2015.

Gaming is not the most common, but is the most popular media recreational activity. Two thirds of all children play games at least once a week. Even in primary school, boys are more likely to play games than girls, but this gender difference is smaller in children than in adolescents. The favourite games of Swiss children are *Super Mario*, *Minecraft*, *FIFA* and *Clash Royale*. Several game apps also feature among the ten most popular apps.

Many Positive Internet Experiences, But Some Children Have Been Harassed Online

In the course of primary school, the use of media becomes more varied and time-consuming. Younger children tend to be more entertainment-oriented in their use of the media, while with older children, communication is more important. It is striking that with many children aged ten or eleven, there is a sudden increase in the frequency of media use – with the exception of books – and the time spent using it. This is particularly noticeable with mobile phones and the Internet, but other media are also used more frequently. Upper primary school children mainly use the Internet at home. Some also use it at friends' or relatives' houses, while travelling or in public places such as libraries or cafes, but most rarely in school: Three-quarters of upper primary school children indicated that they did not use the Internet at school during breaks or lessons.

With both television content and Internet content, children in Switzerland have considerably more positive than negative experiences. With TV, they have both more positive experiences and more negative experiences than they do with the Internet. In the light of the fact that children of primary school age use television more often than they do the Internet, this is understandable. Older children have learned more from the Internet than younger children because they have been using it for a longer time. More than one in ten upper primary school pupils has felt harassed online at least once.

According to the children, the family is more likely to have media usage rules than media content rules. The exception is the Internet, where children are more likely to experience rules or control over content than over length of use. Almost all parents indicate that at home, there are rules on the duration of use or content of different media or that they frequently make checks on it. The proportion of children who similarly estimate this is smaller. If parents don't strictly enforce rules, it may be that children don't experience them as rules.

Parents See Media as an Important Source of Information and Means of Communication for Children

Parents and children influence each other with regard to media usage. Some media activities are often done by both children and parents: listening to music, watching TV, reading books and using mobile phones and the Internet. Adults listen to the radio more often and take pictures or videos more often, while games are more popular with children. With games, the splits between the parents and the children are particularly strong. The media activity parents and children most often share together is the TV. Books, booklets and comics are often read or viewed together with younger children. The Internet, on the other hand, is used more often together with older children. When talking about media in the family, film and television are the main topics of conversation. Websites on the Internet and social networks are more commonly spoken about with older children. More than 90 percent of parents say that they know age recommendations for movies in cinemas and on television.

After the MIKE study in 2015 identified parents' biggest concerns about media usage, in 2017 the opportunities for media usage were surveyed from parents' perspectives. Swiss parents see the media primarily as a large, diverse, accessible source of information that can promote the education of their children. The possibilities for communication via the media are also positively evalu-

ated by numerous parents. Overall, those parents who participated in the survey are highly satisfied with the media use of their children. When the children get older, however, the satisfaction of the parents decreases.

The attitude of parents towards the influence of media on their children differs depending on media activity. Reading books, listening to radio plays or audiobooks, reading magazines or comics and listening to the radio receive most of the positive assessments. Looking for information online is rated by about the same number of parents as positive or ambivalent, and only by a small minority as negative. Watching TV, watching videos online and using messengers, however, are rated more ambivalently. There are hardly any positive reviews for games and social networks. The older the children are, the more positively parents rate Internet use for information and communication.

Media Education Begins in the Parental Home

The first serious steps on the Internet are in primary school. This means that a meaningful introduction to Internet usage must be given before the smartphone becomes a constant digital companion. However, children often watch television, even in the digital age, and also have negative experiences more often with television than with the Internet, but this is often underestimated in the public debate on media education. Television and its content must therefore remain part of the promotion of media literacy in primary school.

Since a third of the children use their mobile phones regularly when they are supposed to be asleep, parents need to keep a particularly watchful eye over digital media in the bedroom. In families with non-Swiss heritage, children are significantly more likely to have a TV or a games console in their children's room. This can be accompanied by time-consuming use and often less age-appropriate content. Smartphones and tablets are also available much more frequently to children with no Swiss parents. Ideally, there should be no TV sets and game consoles in the children's bedrooms, and at night, smartphones and tablets should also be outside the bedroom. Agreeing with the children about media usage times has proved to be helpful.

Parents have important responsibilities as role models. Their media use – whether they read books, watch TV or use their smartphone – has a decisive influence on the media usage behaviour of their children. Media education begins in the parental home. However, many parents would like to have support: primarily from schools, but also from the media and the authorities.