Parents’ Degree and Style of Restrictive Mediation of Young Children’s Digital Gaming: Associations with Parental Attitudes and Perceived Child Adjustment

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## Sample

"Our sample consisted of 762 parents (82.6% mothers), who were on average 35.27 years old (SD = 5.65). As for educational attainment, the highest earned degree was primary
school for 1.5% of the parents, 41% secondary school, 40.6% bachelor’s degree, and 16.7% a master’s degree or higher. The target children were on average 5.52 years old (SD = 1.86, ranging in age between 3 and 9 years) and 55.8% of the children were girls. The majority of the children (91%) lived together with both biological parents, who were either married or in a relationship." (Van Petegem et al., 2019, p. 1382)

# Abstract

Objectives As young children increasingly grow up in a digital environment, parents are confronted with the question whether and how to regulate young children’s digital gaming effectively. The goal of this study was to examine correlates of parents’ degree of restrictive mediation and their (autonomy-supportive or controlling) style of doing so. Specifically, we
tested associations of parents’ degree and style of restrictive mediation with parents’ attitudes about digital gaming, parental perceptions of children’s defiance and problematic gaming, and their interest in social play.
Methods A sample of 762 parents of children between 3 and 9 years filled out questionnaires on their degree and style of restrictive mediation, their attitudes about gaming, and their perceptions of children’s oppositional defiance, problematic gaming, and interest in social play.
Results We found that parents who hold more negative attitudes about digital gaming were more likely to use a controlling style when mediating their child’s gaming. Further, a higher degree of restrictive mediation generally related to more adaptive child outcomes (i.e., lower levels of perceived defiance and problematic gaming, higher levels of perceived interest
in social play), whereas the opposite pattern was found for parents’ controlling style of mediation. Finally, these associations were not moderated by children’s age or gender, nor by parents’ gender or educational level.
Conclusions Also in the context of children’s digital gaming, it seems important for parents to set clear rules. Yet, when doing so, it is equally important to refrain from using controlling strategies, as they seem to be counterproductive.

# Outcome

"We found that parents who hold more negative attitudes about digital gaming were more likely to use a controlling style when mediating their child’s gaming. Further, a higher degree of restrictive mediation generally related to more adaptive child outcomes (i.e., lower levels of perceived defiance and problematic gaming, higher levels of perceived interest in social play), whereas the opposite pattern was found for parents’ controlling style of mediation. Finally, these associations were not moderated by children’s age or gender, nor by parents’ gender or educational level." (Van Petegem et al., 2019, p. 1379)

"Our study indicated that parents who hold more negative attitudes about digital gaming are more likely to use a controlling style when mediating their child’s gaming behavior.
Moreover, whereas a higher degree of parental restrictive mediation uniquely related to adaptive child outcomes (i.e., less perceived defiance and excessive gaming, more interest
in social play), the opposite pattern was found for parents’ controlling style of mediation. Finally, these associations held for mothers and fathers, for boys and girls, for younger
and older children (i.e., 3–5 years vs. 6–9 years), and for parents with lower and higher levels of education.