Guiding Young Children’s Digital Media Use: SES-Differences in Mediation Concerns and Competence

# Details

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## Sample

"The final sample (N = 781) contained more mothers (64.8%) than fathers. The marital status of 17.8 percent of the respondents was coded as ‘single-parent’; more often being mothers (21.7%) than fathers (10.5%). Following the Dutch system of educational attainment (OECD, n.d.), more than half of the parents (62.7%) was lower educated (i.e., having a vocational level of education or lower) as compared to higher educated parents (i.e., having a bachelor or master degree or higher). Four in ten parents (42.6%) earned up to 33,000 euro per year, which is somewhat less than the Dutch modal income (34,200 euro; CBS 2015), whereas the other parents earned more than 33,000 euro per year" (Nikken Opree, 2018, p. 1847)

# Abstract

Previous research about parents’ mediation of their young children’s (digital) media use has predominantly focused on the different types, determinants, and effectiveness of parental mediation strategies. Although research on parents’ perceived mediation concerns and competences is scarce, it is known that, compared to mothers and high-educated parents, fathers and low-educated parents experience greater insecurity (i.e., higher concern and lower competence) when applying media mediation. Based on Bourdieu’s theory of social capital it may be expected that—in addition to educational level—marital status and family income predict parents’ perceived mediation concerns and competences: Family demographics may predict parents’ media proficiency and adoption of new media technologies and these media ecological factors may, in turn, affect perceived concerns and competences. To test this assumption, survey data were collected among 1029 parents of children between the ages of 1 to 9 years. We found that parents’ basic media proficiency was lower in low income, low educated, and single-parent families, whereas parents’ advanced media proficiency was only lower in low educated and single-parent families. As expected, parents’ ease of active co-use was positively associated with parents’ basic proficiency, ease of restrictive mediation by basic and advanced proficiency, and ease of imposing technical restrictions by advanced media proficiency. Parents’ perceived mediation concerns were, however, unrelated to parents’ media proficiency. Also, as expected, low educated parents were less inclined to adopt new media technologies. Adoption of new media was negatively related to perceived mediation concerns, yet did not predict parents’ perceived competence.

# Outcome

"From our findings we may, first, conclude that the majority of parents on average are not very bothered by concerns about their young child and the media at home (RQ1). Also, most parents on average are positive about their co-active and restrictive mediation activities, and
their application of technical restrictive measures (RQ2)." (Nikken Opree, 2018, p. 1855)
"Parent’s media proficiency was not related to the prevalence of concerns about children and media (H6a). Given the fact that lower income parents, lower educated parents and single parents all reported lower basic or advanced media proficiency, specifically in these families parental mediation may be more difficult when these parents have less skills in handling the media" (Nikken Opree, 2018, p. 1855)
"As we surmised, along with the child’s proficiency in media use, the parent’s own proficiency strongly paralleled their ease of applying mediation (H7a). In families where both parents and children have more confidence in handling the media, mediation poses less of a burden on the parent.
We presumed that the parents’ media adoption of new media technologies would affect their mediation competences and concerns (H6b, H7b). In families less inclined to adopt new media technologies parents indeed have more concerns about children and media and also more easily apply restrictions on their children’s media use" (Nikken Opree, 2018, p. 1855-1856)