Gendered mediation of children’s internet use: A keyhole for looking into changing socialization practices

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* Social mediation
* Content-related issues
* Risks and harms

## Sample

In the first two sections of empirical analysis dealing with gendered mediation in the cross-cultural context and gender patterns of parental mediation in Estonia, we use data from the EU Kids Online survey. A random stratified sample of 1000 internet-using children aged 9–16, and one of their parents was interviewed in each of 25 European countries. Then, two focus group interviews (n=9 and n=6) were conducted with Estonian parents.

## Implications For Parents About

Parental practices / parental mediation

## Implications For Policy Makers About

Stepping up awareness and empowerment

## Implications For Stakeholders About

Researchers

# Abstract

This study focuses on parental mediation of children’s internet use in the context of broader gendered socialization patterns. Analyses were carried out in three steps using quantitative and qualitative methods. Firstly, based on EU Kids Online survey data, gendered patterns in parental mediation across European countries were explored. Secondly, detailed analysis of mediation practices in Estonia, one country in the EU Kids Online survey, was carried out. As the last step, data from two focus group interviews were used for in-depth analysis of Estonian mothers’ everyday practices of mediating their children’s internet use. Quantitative analysis revealed significant correlations between the number of gender differences in parental mediation, and country-level variables of internet penetration and gender equality. In Estonia, as a country with low gender equality, but high internet use, mediation strategies do not depend purely on children’s gender, but on a more complex interrelation of gender and children’s and parents’ socio-demographic characteristics and parent-child interactions. This finding was supported and explained by qualitative analysis, showing that Estonian mothers’ methods for mediating boys’ and girls’ internet use differ in several aspects, reflecting the broader context of changing socialization practices, gender norms, and the generation gap in using digital technologies.

# Outcome

"The macro-level findings of this study, somewhat surprisingly, refer to a pattern of positive correlations between the number of gender differences in parental mediation, indicators of gender equality, and the broadband penetration rate, giving rise to the hypothetical explanation that an earlier and more extensive diffusion of online technologies may have provided parents with more time and opportunities to adopt different mediation strategies for boys and girls." (Talves Kalmus, 2015, p. 11). "More specific analysis of gendered parental mediation in Estonia shows that parents’ use of different mediation strategies does not depend purely on children’s gender, but on a more complex interrelation of gender and children’s and parents’ socio-demographic characteristics and parent-child interactions." (Talves Kalmus, 2015, p. 12). "Our results support the findings of previous studies arguing that in the context of social transformation parents struggle between old and new parenting paradigms in supporting traditional socialization values while trying to adapt their parenting practices to rapid changes in society." (Talves Kalmus, 2015, p. 12).