Implicados, intermitentes, desengajados? Estilos de mediação de pais de crianças de 3-8 anos que usam a internet

Engl. transl.: Involved, intermittent, disengaged? Mediation styles of parents of 3 to 8-year-old children who use the internet

# Keywords

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# Details

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## Sample

656 parents representative of Portuguese households with children between 3 and 8 years old, chosen through a random sampling process, were selected for the study. This publication focuses on a specific cut of the sample, namely, the responses of parents who declared that their children use the internet. This cut reduces the initial sample to 38% of the cases (N = 251).

## Implications For Parents About

Parental practices / parental mediation

## Implications For Educators About

Other

# Abstract

This article presents results from the first national survey on how children aged 3-8 years old interact with screens in the household, focusing on mediations reported by the parents whose children use the internet. Bearing in mind the literature on the topic and the results on the Portuguese context, we conducted a statistical analysis of multiple correspondences and clusters considering factors related to children and related to parents regarding active and security mediations. Three types of mediators emerged from the analysis — involved, intermittent and disengaged — whose characteristics are discussed and problematized.

# Outcome

- The three styles of parental behavior (involved, intermittent and disengaged) in relation to their young children (3-8 years old) should not be seen as singular. As the qualitative research of the study found, the family dynamics are fraught with paradoxes and tensions.
- The very low use of digital safety tools remains largely widespread among Portuguese parents of young children who make use of the internet. In families where young children often share their parents' devices, parents should receive orientation and support for using filters and other control tolls.
- The higher cluster (intermittent mediation) covers around half of the sample and points to an active intervention, although sporadic. It covers younger (3-5) and older (6-8) age groups, without gender distinction. Parents express a strong confidence on the potential of technology as a resource for learning and occupation of children's free time.
- The other two clusters point to a quarter of parents each one, and differ in relation both to parents education and online expectations and children's age and gender.
- 'Disengaged' mediation are more associated to younger children (3-5) and to girls; they tend to leave the children to themselves and have a low perception that online experience involves risks. As this cluster also presents lower digital skills, promoting their digital skills should take into account their characteristics and involve local schools and kindergartens - where children should start the acquisition of digital skills.
- 'Involved mediation' covers older children (-8), more boys than girls and parents present higher levels of education and digital skills. Their behavior is in line with Livingstone et al (2017) denominates as 'enabling mediation', including communication on the digital experiences activated by both parents and children.
- Interestingly, both in the intermittent and the disengaged mediation - the results regarding child's agency - initiative to talk about their experiences, upset situations or asking for advice - has remained empty.