

Conceptual Article

The Role of Parental Mediation in Shaping Students Attitude towards Electronic Media

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.34293/0974-2123.v18n1.002>

Abstract

The pervasive influence of electronic media on students has raised significant concerns about its impact on their academic, social, and psychological development. Parental mediation plays a crucial role in shaping students' attitudes towards electronic media, influencing how they perceive, engage with, and respond to it. This essay explores various types of parental mediation—restrictive, active, and co-viewing—and their implications for student behavior and attitudes. Drawing on research and theoretical frameworks, the discussion highlights the benefits and limitations of these approaches, emphasizing the importance of a balanced and informed strategy. The essay also examines the influence of cultural, social, and technological factors on parental mediation practices. By understanding the dynamics of parental involvement, this paper underscores the need for parents to adopt adaptive strategies that promote healthy media use among students.

Keywords: parental mediation, electronic media, restrictive mediation, active mediation, co-viewing

Introduction

The rapid proliferation of electronic media has transformed the way students learn, communicate, and entertain themselves. From educational apps and social networking sites to streaming platforms and video games, electronic media is an integral part of students' lives.

While these technologies offer immense benefits, such as access to knowledge and improved communication, they also pose challenges, including addiction, exposure to inappropriate content, and potential impacts on mental health. Parents, as primary caregivers, play a pivotal role in guiding their children's interaction with electronic media.

Parental mediation refers to the strategies and practices that parents use to manage and influence their children's media use. These interventions aim to maximize the benefits of electronic media while minimizing its risks. This essay explores the role of parental mediation in shaping students' attitudes towards electronic media, examining its types, effectiveness, and influencing factors.

Need for Parental Mediation

Electronic media significantly impacts students' cognitive, emotional, and social development. Unchecked use can lead to problems such as decreased academic performance, reduced attention spans, and exposure to harmful content. Parental mediation addresses these challenges by guiding children in their media consumption, ensuring that it aligns with their developmental needs and family values. Effective mediation fosters critical thinking, media literacy, and self-regulation, enabling students to use electronic media responsibly.

Types of Parental Mediation

Parental mediation can be categorized into three primary types: restrictive mediation, active mediation, and co-viewing. Each approach has its own strengths and limitations in shaping students' attitudes toward electronic media.

1. Restrictive Mediation

Restrictive mediation involves setting rules and limitations on media usage, such as screen time, content restrictions, and device access. For example, parents may prohibit the use of certain apps or enforce time limits on gaming.

- **Advantages:** Restrictive mediation protects students from inappropriate content and excessive screen time. It instills discipline and prioritizes academic and extracurricular activities.
- **Challenges:** Overly strict restrictions can lead to resistance, secrecy, and reduced opportunities for students to develop media literacy. Excessive control may also hinder students' autonomy and critical thinking.

2. Active Mediation

Active mediation entails open discussions between parents and students about media content. Parents engage in conversations to explain the benefits and risks of media use, encourage critical thinking, and address misconceptions.

- **Advantages:** This approach promotes understanding and empowers students to make informed decisions. It strengthens parent-child communication and builds trust.
- **Challenges:** Active mediation requires parents to be well-informed about electronic media, which may be challenging in rapidly evolving technological landscapes.

3. Co-Viewing

Co-viewing involves parents and children consuming media together. This approach allows parents to monitor content, provide real-time guidance, and share opinions.

- **Advantages:** Co-viewing fosters shared experiences, strengthens family bonds, and facilitates immediate discussion of sensitive topics.
- **Challenges:** It is time-intensive and may not always be feasible for working parents. Additionally, the effectiveness of co-viewing depends on the quality of interaction and content.

Influence of Parental Mediation of Students Attitudes

Parental mediation significantly shapes students' attitudes toward electronic media by influencing their perceptions, habits, and decision-making processes.

1. Positive Attitudes

Effective mediation fosters a balanced perspective on media use. Students learn to appreciate educational content, practice responsible usage, and recognize the importance of moderation. For example, students guided by active mediation are more likely to critically evaluate the credibility of online information and avoid harmful behaviors.

2. Resistance and Rebellion

Overly restrictive or inconsistent mediation may provoke resistance. Students might develop negative attitudes toward parental involvement or seek covert ways to access restricted media. This underscores the need for flexible and adaptive strategies.

3. Media Literacy

Active and co-viewing approaches enhance media literacy by encouraging critical thinking and informed decision-making. Media-literate students are better equipped to navigate digital landscapes, evaluate content, and resist manipulation.

Factors Influencing Parental Mediation

Several factors shape how parents mediate their children's media use, including cultural, social, and technological influences.

1. Cultural Factors

Cultural norms and values significantly impact parental mediation practices. For instance, collectivist societies may emphasize co-viewing and shared decision-making, while individualistic cultures may prioritize autonomy and active mediation.

2. Socioeconomic Status

Families from higher socioeconomic backgrounds often have greater access to resources and information, enabling more informed mediation. Conversely, limited access to technology and knowledge may hinder effective mediation in lower-income households.

3. Technological Proficiency

Parents' familiarity with electronic media influences their ability to mediate effectively. Tech-savvy parents are more likely to engage in active mediation, while less proficient parents may rely on restrictive measures.

4. Parent-Child Relationship

The quality of the parent-child relationship affects the success of mediation. Open communication, trust, and mutual respect create an environment conducive to effective guidance.

Challenges in Parental Mediation

Despite its importance, parental mediation is not without challenges. Rapid technological advancements, peer influences, and conflicting work schedules can complicate parents' ability to monitor and guide media use. Additionally, generational gaps in technology usage may lead to misunderstandings and ineffective mediation.

Strategies for Effective Parental Mediation

To address these challenges, parents can adopt the following strategies:

1. **Educate Themselves:** Staying informed about emerging media trends and technologies enables parents to engage meaningfully in their children's media use.
2. **Foster Open Communication:** Encouraging discussions about media promotes understanding and trust.
3. **Set Realistic Boundaries:** Combining rules with flexibility ensures a balanced approach.
4. **Model Positive Behavior:** Parents should demonstrate responsible media use to reinforce desired behaviors.

5. **Collaborate with Schools:** Partnering with educators helps align media guidance with academic goals.

Role of School and Society

While parents play a central role, schools and society also contribute to shaping students' attitudes toward electronic media. Schools can integrate media literacy programs into curricula, and policymakers can regulate content quality. Society, through awareness campaigns, can promote responsible media use.

Conclusion

Parental mediation is a cornerstone of healthy media engagement among students. By adopting adaptive strategies and fostering open communication, parents can shape their children's attitudes toward electronic media in positive ways. Balancing restrictions with guidance ensures that students reap the benefits of technology while mitigating its risks. As electronic media continues to evolve, collaborative efforts between parents, educators, and society are essential to create an environment that nurtures responsible and informed media use.

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