

Digitally mediated parent involvement: A review of the evidence

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ARC Discovery Project

Parent involvement goes online: New
ecologies of school-home relations
DP210101226

Project website:

<https://sahnd.unisa.edu.au/>

Published Article: Nichols, S., & Selim, N. (2022).
Digitally Mediated Parenting: A Review of the
Literature. *Societies*, 12(2), 60. MDPI AG.
<http://dx.doi.org/10.3390/soc12020060>



Introduction & method

- Parental mediation theory examines the ways in which parents manage their children's relationship with media.
- Models have generally focused on whether parents' control is "overt and compliance focused, or whether it employs reason and negotiation." (Nichols & Selim, 2022, p.2)
- Researchers and theorists introduced four key modes of mediation: (1) *restrictive*, (2) *instructive* (or sometimes 'active'), (3) *co-viewing*, and (4) *participatory learning*.
- The large project entitled EU Kids provided five dimensions to mediation: (1) *restrictive*, (2) *active*, (3) *technical*, (4) *monitoring*, and (5) *risk management*.

(Nichols & Selim, 2022, p. 2-3).

Structured literature review

Databases: Scopus & Web of Science

Search period: 26/09/2021 & 08/10/2021

Search terms: parent* / father / mother AND engage* / involve* / participat* AND online / digital* / virtual*

Initial hits: 18,281. Duplicates were deleted, and the corpus of abstracts was assessed against eligibility criteria.

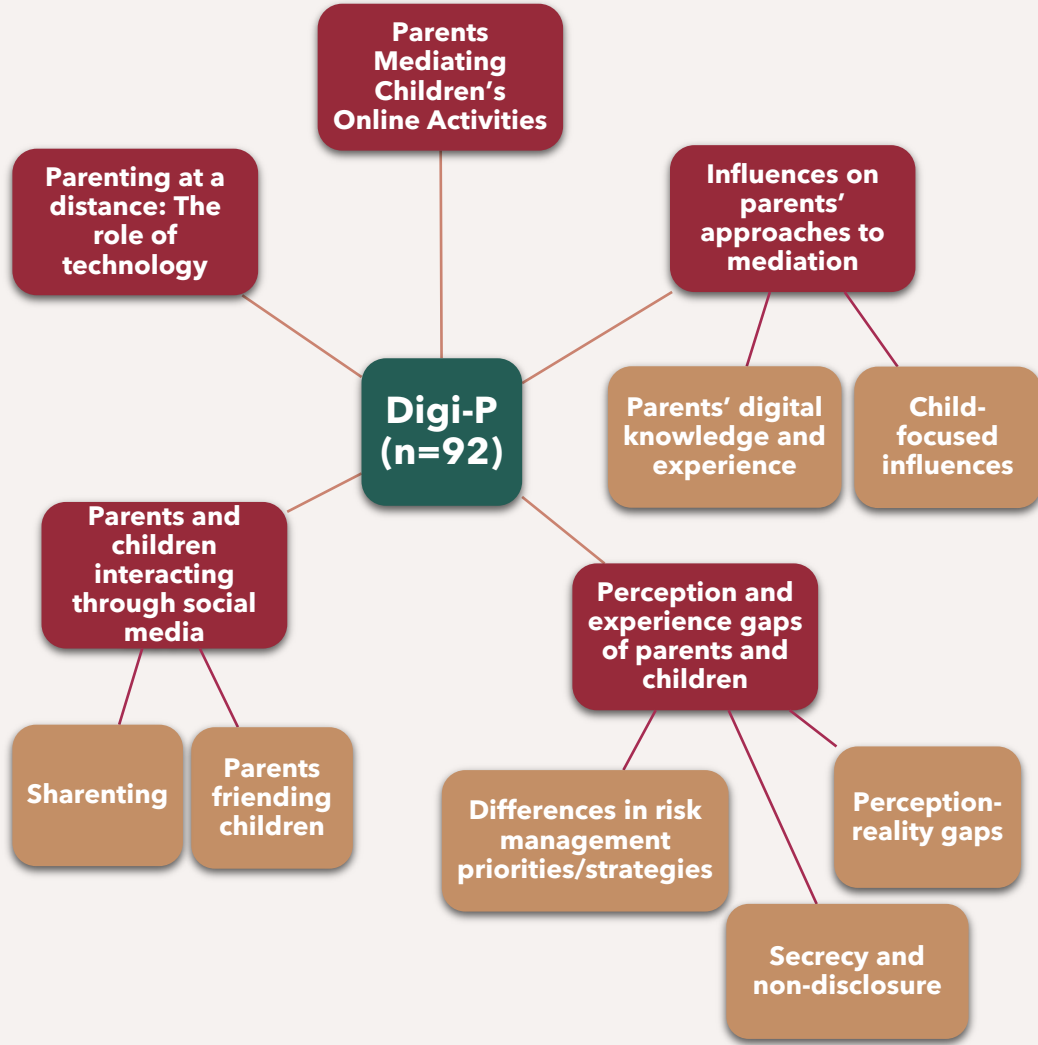
Final corpus: 144 of articles was analysed.

Two key clusters were identified:

1. Digital Parenting (Digi-P)
2. Digital Parental Involvement in Schooling (Digi-S)



Results



(Nichols & Selim, 2022, p. 5-11).

1. Parents Mediating Children's Online Activities

Mediation types	% reporting
Restrictive	69%
Instructive	55%
Monitoring	49%
Technological	25%
Collaborative	19%
Other	26%

"A recurrent finding was the predominance of attempts to limit children's online activities by imposing restrictions." (Nichols & Selim, 2022, p. 6).

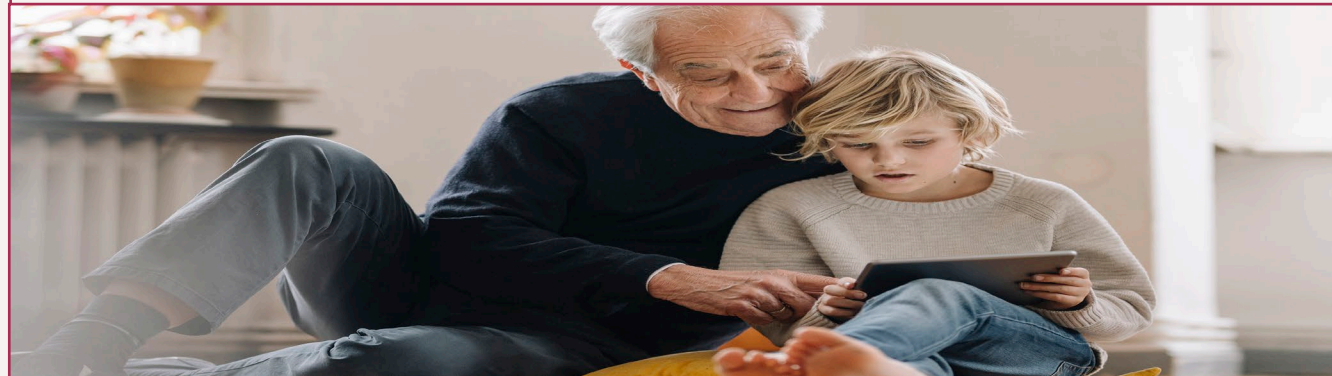
2. Influences on parents' approaches to mediation



- Age, gender, challenging behaviour, and learning or intellectual disabilities can influence parental mediation strategies.



- Parents' knowledge and experience with digital technology influences parental mediation approaches. "Specifically, when knowledge and experience were limited, there appeared to be a higher likelihood of either minimal mediation or restrictive mediation" (Nichols & Selim, 2022, p. 8).



Results

3. Perception and experience gaps of parents and children

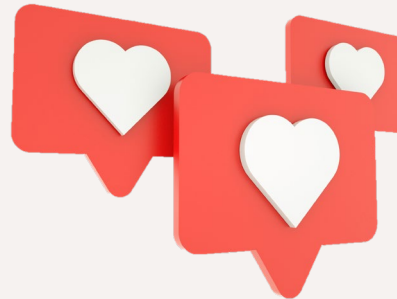
- “Gaps between parents’ perceptions of adolescents’ online activities and the reported activities of adolescents are reported in several papers” “Adolescents believe that parent knowledge of online activities is limited” (Nichols & Selim, 2022, p. 8).
- Two key reasons for perception / experience gaps are secrecy and disclosure. The literature suggests that concerns “about independence, privacy, and fears of device confiscation” contribute to adolescents’ tendency to “keep risky online experiences ‘under the wraps’ ” (Nichols & Selim, 2022, p. 9).



4. Parents and children interacting through social media

- **Friending** emerged as an important form of interaction between parents and their children. This practice involves parents requesting their children to add them as a friend on social networking sites. (Nichols & Selim, 2022, p. 10).
- **Sharenting** is a prevalent parental practice. It involves posting / sharing material related to the “parent’s family life and children” “Prevalence is high; figures reported in the reviewed literature include 78.7%” (Nichols & Selim, 2022, p. 10).

“The most intensified case of sharenting involves the sub-group of parents who invest heavily in their online identities with the intention of becoming ‘influencers’.” (Nichols & Selim, 2022, p. 10).



5. Parenting at a distance: The role of technology

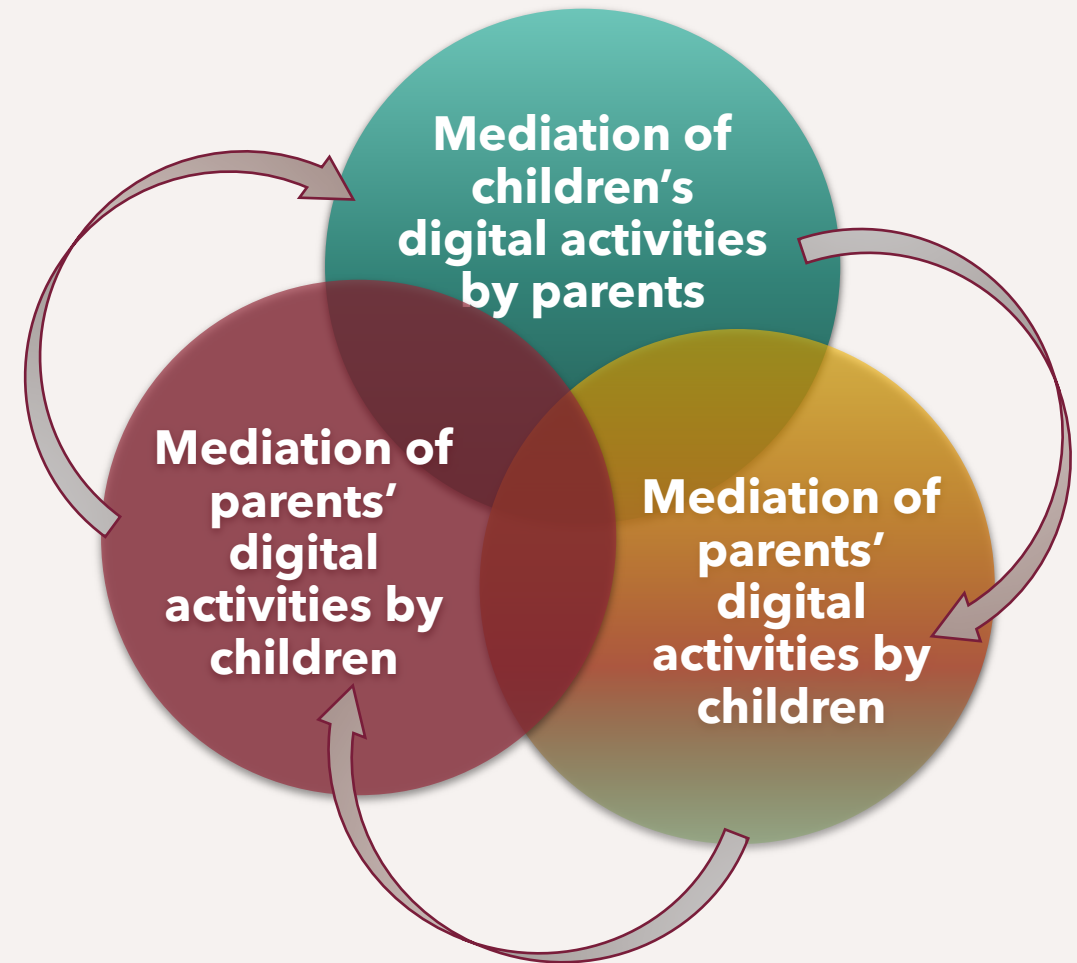
- As parents/families cannot always be co-located with their children (e.g. immigration, work, divorce, military deployment), the literature demonstrated that technology played an important role in maintaining “parental involvement and family connection at a distance” (Nichols & Selim, 2022, p. 10).
- Various tools and platforms emerged in studies (e.g. messaging apps, video conferencing tools, social networking sites). The studies also showed various types of activities that are undertaken, for instance, co-viewing at a distance through video conferencing tools.

Reconceptualization

1. Networked interaction blurs boundaries between the public/private and embodied/virtual domains.
2. Mediation approaches are influenced by parents' perceptions of their knowledge/experience; their children's vulnerability; and the risks posed by various online activities.
3. "The relational environment in the family emerges as a key element in the negotiation of relationships with technology. The parent-child relationship is dynamic and subject to negotiation".
4. Parents' social media activity can directly impact children and prompt children to try and mediate their parents' activities.
5. Different digital tools and platforms can impact "identities, relationships, and parent responses.
6. "One element appears to be the potential of the technology for the privatisation of activities".

(Nichols & Selim, 2022, p. 11)

A "model which focuses only on the parental mediation of children's online activities is too limited a picture of this complex landscape." We recommend integrating three dimensions (Nichols & Selim, 2022, p. 12)



References and copyright information:

1. Nichols, S., & Selim, N. (2022). Digitally Mediated Parenting: A Review of the Literature. *Societies*, 12(2), 60.
2. All images and templates are provided by Microsoft PowerPoint.