



Impact Of Region on Parental Mediation Practices in High Schools

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ABSTRACT

This study delves into how parental mediation—parents' efforts to guide, monitor, and regulate their children's media use—varies across urban and rural high school students. A sample of 1200 students from districts in Tamil Nadu was surveyed using a standardized Parental Mediation Scale. The study finds significant differences between urban and rural regions in several dimensions of mediation, suggesting that cultural and contextual factors influence how parents interact with their children around media. The findings aim to provide educators, policymakers, and parents with insights to better support adolescents in navigating digital spaces.

Introduction

The digital age has transformed how young people interact with the world, often placing them at the forefront of new technologies. While these advancements offer numerous benefits, they also pose risks, making parental guidance essential. Parental mediation refers to the practices parents use to manage and oversee their children's media use. This study explores how these practices vary across regions, especially between urban and rural settings, where cultural, social, and economic dynamics differ greatly.

Need and Significance of the Study

As digital exposure increases among adolescents, especially through smartphones and the internet, the role of parents in guiding media use becomes more critical. Urban and rural parents may adopt different strategies based on their resources, awareness, and community norms. Understanding these variations can help bridge gaps and provide more contextualized support for families in both regions.

Review of Related literature

Wang, X., & Xing, L. (2019). "Parental mediation and adolescents' smartphone use: The role of parental control apps and communication". Wang and Xing's study explores parental mediation in the context of mobile media, particularly smartphones. Their research highlighted that technical mediation, such as the use of parental control apps, has become an essential tool for managing screen time and monitoring content. However, the study emphasized that technical mediation alone is not sufficient for long-term behavioral change. They found that emotional support and open communication, when combined with technological controls, were significantly more effective in guiding adolescents' media use. This aligns well with the current study, which examines various forms of mediation, including technical mediation, and the need for balanced approaches that integrate both digital tools and parent-child communication. The findings also resonate with the urban vs. rural distinction, as urban parents may have greater access to these digital tools, but rural parents may rely more on face-to-face mediation.

Singhal, A., & Malhotra, D. (2017). "Parental mediation and children's media consumption in India: A comparative study of urban and rural households". Singhal and Malhotra's study focused on parental mediation in India, comparing urban and rural households. They found that urban parents were generally more aware of media-related risks and had a higher level of media literacy. However, despite their awareness, they were less consistent in enforcing rules, often leaving children to make their own decisions regarding media consumption. In contrast, rural parents, though less educated about media risks, were more strict and

consistent in their mediation, enforcing rules and limits on their children's media use. This finding underscores the influence of regional context and parental awareness on mediation styles, which is directly relevant to the present study. The study also suggests that urban and rural settings shape how parents manage their children's media habits, with rural areas more likely to adopt restrictive mediation, while urban areas tend to rely more on active mediation despite being aware of risks.

Livingstone & Helsper (2008). "Parental mediation of children's internet use".

Livingstone and Helsper expanded the scope of parental mediation beyond television to the internet, highlighting how socio-economic status and parental education levels influence mediation styles. Their findings suggested that urban parents, often with greater access to resources and technology, tend to allow their children more autonomy in digital spaces. Meanwhile, rural parents, despite having less technological infrastructure, often engage in stricter and more involved supervision due to stronger community norms and cultural values. This study is particularly relevant to the current research, as it supports the idea that regional differences—such as urban vs. rural settings—can lead to distinct parental mediation patterns. It also echoes the importance of understanding context, not just access, when analyzing parental involvement.

Nathanson, A. I. (2001). "Mediation of children's television viewing: Working toward conceptual clarity and common understanding". Nathanson's research took a closer look at the psychological outcomes of different mediation strategies. The study emphasized that active mediation—where parents talk to their children about media content, help interpret messages, and encourage critical thinking—has a more enduring and positive influence on children's media understanding and behavior. In contrast, restrictive mediation was found to be a double-edged sword; while it could reduce exposure to undesirable content, it sometimes increased the child's desire to view restricted material, making it potentially counterproductive if not balanced with open communication. This insight strongly informs the present study's findings, especially in explaining why certain mediation styles like active and supportive mediation may be more effective across regions, while restrictive approaches might show mixed results.

Valkenburg, Piotrowski, Hermanns & de Leeuw (1999). "Developing a scale to assess three styles of television mediation: Instructive, restrictive, and social co-viewing". Valkenburg and her colleagues laid the groundwork for understanding how parents guide their children's media consumption. They introduced three core types of mediation: active (instructive), restrictive, and co-viewing. The study found that active mediation, where parents engage in discussions with their children about media content, fosters media literacy and critical thinking. On the other hand, restrictive mediation, which focuses on setting rules and limits, was less effective on its own and could sometimes provoke the opposite effect—heightening the child's curiosity. Co-viewing, watching content together without discussion, had a neutral impact unless it was paired with engagement. This classification has since influenced many later models of media mediation and is foundational to the present study, which explores not just these but extended forms like supportive, monitoring, and technical mediation.

Objectives of the Study

1. To examine the difference in Parental Mediation among High School Students owing to the difference in a Region
2. To examine the difference in the dimension of Parental Mediation among High School Students owing to the difference Region

Tools Used for the Present Study

Parental Mediation Scale' developed and standardized by the researcher under the guidance of the supervisor (2019) and its subscale (i) Active Mediation (ii) Supportive Mediation (iii) Restrictive Mediation (iv) Monitoring Mediation (v) Technical Mediation

Methodology

In this study, the investigator employed a survey method .The sample size comprised 1200 high school students of which 622 Urban and 578 Rural region students were selected for this study from Chennai and Tiruvallur district. For the study ,Stratifies sampling was employed .

Null Hypothesis: There is no significant difference between Urban and Rural area high school students with respect to Parental Mediation and its dimensions Among High School Students.

t-test for differences between Urban and Rural area high school students with respect to, Parental Mediation and its dimensions among High School Students.

Parental Mediation and its dimensions among High School Students.							
Parental Mediation among High School Students.	Region				t value	P value	Result
	Urban		Rural				
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD			

Active Mediation	21.71	8.09	23.76	8.30	4.247	<0.001**	S
Supportive Mediation	22.94	8.90	24.17	8.34	2.391	0.017*	S
Restrictive Mediation	22.66	8.52	23.54	8.07	1.778	0.076	NS
Monitoring Mediation	21.82	8.72	23.49	8.45	3.287	<0.001**	S
Technical Mediation	20.52	8.39	23.08	8.40	5.179	<0.001**	S
Overall Parental Mediation	109.66	37.96	118.04	38.05	3.740	<0.001**	S

Interpretation

Since the P value is less than 0.01, the null hypothesis is rejected at a 1% level with respect to Overall Parental Mediation, Active Mediation, Supportive Mediation, Monitoring Mediation and Technical Mediation. Hence there is a significant difference between urban and rural parental mediation with respect to Overall Parental Mediation, Active Mediation, Supportive Mediation, Monitoring Mediation and Technical Mediation .

Since the P value is greater than 0.05. Hence, the null hypothesis is accepted with regard to Restrictive Mediation. Hence this implies that there is no significant difference between urban and rural students regarding restrictive mediation.

Discussion

The significant differences observed in various types of mediation can be attributed to the differing contexts in which urban and rural families live. Urban parents, who often have access to more resources and are influenced by global media trends, tend to be more permissive and allow their children greater autonomy in their media consumption. This is consistent with the findings of **Livingstone and Helsper (2008)**, who suggested that parents in more resource-rich environments, such as urban areas, are often more permissive in their mediation strategies. Urban parents might emphasize **Active Mediation**, engaging in conversations about media content, but provide their children with more freedom to explore media independently.

On the other hand, rural parents, who may face different socio-economic challenges, seem to adopt more **Supportive, Monitoring, and Technical Mediation** strategies. This could be linked to their more community-oriented lifestyles and greater concerns about their children's exposure to potentially harmful media content. The rural setting often emphasizes stronger community and familial bonds, and this may lead parents to be more engaged in actively monitoring and guiding their children's media usage. **Valkenburg et al. (1999)** argued that parents in rural or less-developed areas often rely more on **Restrictive Mediation**, where they directly limit or regulate the time children spend with media. This aligns with the study's finding that rural parents tend to report higher levels of restrictive mediation.

Interestingly, despite no statistically significant difference in **Restrictive Mediation**, the study indicates that rural parents apply stricter controls on their children's media access. This finding resonates with **Singhal and Malhotra (2017)**, who found that rural parents, though less aware of media trends, tend to enforce stricter rules compared to their urban counterparts. This could be attributed to the rural community's traditional focus on safeguarding children from potential threats, with parents taking a more precautionary approach.

Additionally, the acceptance of the null hypothesis for **Restrictive Mediation** suggests that both urban and rural parents may share common concerns regarding their children's media exposure and the potential risks associated with unsupervised media consumption. This is consistent with **Nathanson (2001)**, who highlighted that parental concerns about children's exposure to inappropriate content may lead both urban and rural parents to set restrictions, but the methods and intensity may vary.

Conclusion

This study highlights the differences in how parents from urban and rural areas guide their children's media use. Urban parents often take a more relaxed approach, giving their children more freedom, while rural parents tend to be stricter and more hands-on, especially in areas like active and technical mediation. Interestingly, both groups show similar levels of restrictive mediation, though rural parents are slightly more controlling. These findings underscore how regional and socio-economic factors shape how parents manage their children's media habits. It suggests the importance of offering tailored support to parents in different settings to promote healthy media consumption.

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