

University of Nevada, Reno

**General Parenting Philosophy and Parental News Mediation: Designing a  
Qualitative Interview Process**

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree of  
Bachelor of Arts in Journalism and the Honors Program

by

Emily Jane Fisher

Dr. Sheila Peuchaud, Thesis Advisor

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We recommend that the thesis  
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Dr. Sheila Peuchaud, Thesis Advisor

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Erin Edgington, Ph. D., Assistant Director, **Honors Program**

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## **Abstract**

It is important to study how children interact with the news media and how their parents control these interactions. As the media landscape evolves and children's access to news media becomes greater, the effects on children's media literacy and development are called into question. The goal of this study was to create a qualitative interview process for analyzing how parenting style affects a parent's decision to mediate news content with their children. The research question for this project is therefore: How do general parenting strategies effect parental mediation techniques and how do these techniques change to fit the topics of violence and multiculturalism?

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## Introduction

When it comes to children, every parent believes that they are doing what is best for their child, but what about when it comes to news? Today's news media landscape is tumultuous, filled with emotionally charged stories and important world events. Many parents struggle with how to help their child navigate the news environment, oftentimes they resort to avoiding news in an effort to protect their young child. However, as the media landscape evolves and children's access to news media becomes greater, the effects on children's media literacy and development are called into question. This is when a parent's mediation decisions regarding the news media come into play.

Before understanding how mediation techniques effect children, it is necessary to understand why parents make the decision they do. To do this, this study will investigate the potential connections between the four main categories of parenting style—authoritative, authoritarian, permissive and uninvolved—and the two main types of parental mediation—active and restrictive— of the media. Due to the qualitative nature of the topic, this study's goal is to develop a qualitative interview process that will help researchers gain both insight and measurable results to help make claims about potential connections between parenting style and parental mediation of the news. The study also focuses on how each of these parenting elements change to either monitor or embrace multiculturalism and violence in the news media.

In general, the interview design will lead to a base for analysis on each parent's mediation method and the reasons behind why they use these methods.

## Literature Review

### General Parenting Styles

Parenting is an intricate activity that involves the culmination of many specific behaviors to influence a child's outcome. Individual parent actions studied in isolation do not always give accurate insight into parenting outcomes (Darling, 1999). Rather broad patterns of parenting, known as parenting styles, are studied to explain normal variations in a parent's attempt to control and socialize their children (Diana Baumrind, 1991). For more than 75 years, the effects of parenting styles on a child's development have been studied extensively. (Kuppens & Ceulemans, 2019). Many factors including family structure, socioeconomic backgrounds, and location can effect parenting style and a number of definitions and redefinitions have emerged as these factors have been studied (Maccoby, 1992).

Diana Baumrind's (1967) concept of parenting style is regarded as the foremost basis for research on parenting styles. Baumrind believed that socializing a child to conform to the necessary demands of others while maintaining a sense of personal integrity was the key element of a parental role (Baumrind, 1966). Baumrind established three basic models of parental control: authoritative, authoritarian, and permissive style parenting. An *authoritative* parent attempts to direct a child in a rational, issue-orientated manner (Baumrind, 1966). Authoritative parents tend to explain the reasoning behind their decisions, encourage open discussion, and support their child's individual talents and tendencies (Maccoby, 1992). The *authoritarian* style of parenting is usually based upon absolute standards and expect their orders to be obeyed without explanation and may be theologically motivated (Baumrind, 1966). Lastly, Baumrind (1966) defines the *permissive* style as a parent that attempts to control their child with nonpunitive, accepting, and affirmative actions. Permissive parents are nontraditional and lenient, do not require mature behavior, allow considerable self-regulation, and avoid

confrontation (Baumrind, 1991, p.62). In families that utilize permissive parenting styles, children are often allowed to regulate their own activities, and are not encourage to “obey externally defined standards” (Uji et al., 2014). In addition to Baumrind’s three parenting styles, Maccoby and Martin (1983) added a fourth that is now widely accepted: *uninvolved* parents have poor communication and low interaction with their child. Sometimes called the Laissez-faire Parenting Style (Maccoby, 1992), these parents rarely give their children feedback.

Parenting styles may differ depending on social context, the developmental stage of the child, and the method of assessment but they all depend on the interplay of certain behavioral characteristics, such as *demandingness* and *responsiveness* in parent-child interactions. More recently, these concepts have been relabeled as *control* and *support*, respectively (Özgür, 2016). Control refers to the requests a parent make on children to become integrated into the family whole (Baumrind, 1991, p.62). Control can be measured by a parent’s maturity demands, supervision, disciplinary efforts and willingness to confront a child who disobeys. Support refers to the extent to which parents intentionally foster individuality, self-regulation, and self-assertion in their child (Baumrind, 1991, p.62). Support is measured by how attuned, supportive, and acquiescent to children’s special needs and demands a parent is. These two overarching methods of parenting are often combined with Maccoby and Martin’s (1983) concept of *parental warmth*. Parental warmth refers to three specific behaviors: parental expression of emotional support or affection, parental expression of rejection, and perceived parent–child closeness’ (Warren, 2001). Various combinations of control, support, and warmth in parent-child interactions form each specific parenting style and can help compare and contrast different styles.

Although Baumrind’s typology has greatly influenced parenting research, other scholars have identified other dimensions of parenting that her classifications fail to address. For



example, Baumrind's control dimension emphasized parental socializing practices aimed at integrating the child in the family and society, to the exclusion of *psychological control* (Darling & Steinberg, 1993). Psychological control "refers to control attempts that intrude into the psychological and emotional development of the child" (Barber, 1996, p. 3296). Psychological intervention has almost exclusively been classified as a negative form of parental control, though there are some forms with a positive effect (Barber, 1996). For example, when a parent uses reasoning to encourage understanding and awareness of consequences. Psychological control plays a key role in distinguishing between types of parenting. For example, both authoritarian and authoritative parents generally place high demands on their children and expect them to obey parental rules and behave appropriately. Authoritarian parents, however, also expect their children to accept their judgments, values, and goals without questioning, while authoritative parents are more open to give and take with their children and explain their choices. In this way, though authoritative and authoritarian parents are equally high in behavioral control, authoritarian parents tend to be high in psychological control while authoritative parents are low (Darling, 1999, pg. 3).

Households are not necessarily limited to one prevalent parenting style. In fact, parenting styles can differ between paternal and maternal figures (Kuppens & Ceulemans, 2019). Kuppens and Ceulemans (2019) found slight differences between each parent's perception of positive parenting and rule setting. Despite slight differences, when parents operate as a team their individual parenting styles blend to create a unique environment (Martin, Ryan, & Brooks-Gunn, 2007). In some cases, the co-parenting environment can alter parenting style effectiveness. For example, the benefits a child may receive from a supportive parent may be enhanced or eroded by a second parent's parenting behaviors (Martin et al., 2007). Kuppens & Ceulemans (2019)

found that there is an additive effect when parents with similar parenting styles work as a team. The combination of two authoritarian parents was associated with the least favorable child behavior outcomes, while two authoritative parents was associated with the most favorable child behavioral outcomes (Kuppens & Ceulemans, 2019). Children with poor behavior outcomes are perceived as internalizing and externalizing problems and displaying less prosocial behavior (Kuppens & Ceulemans, 2019). Past research has found that children with authoritative parenting styles have the most positive developmental outcomes (e.g., Baumrind, 1991; Darling and Steinberg, 1993). This finding demonstrates the importance of rule setting as opposed to disciplinary actions in attempt to prevent behavioral problems.

### **Parental Mediation**

One way parenting styles can be evaluated is through how parents choose to mediate their children's consumption of news media. Parental mediation is defined as "any strategy parents use to control, supervise or interpret media content for children (Warren, 2001, p.212)." Parental mediation techniques are used by parents that wish to control their children's emotional response to the news (Buijzen, van der Molen, & Sondij, 2007). Nikken (2015) found the parents who are concerned about risks and harm more often try to protect their children by monitoring, applying restrictions on media use, supervising the child, and by critically talking to the child about media content. This was also found to be true with parents who feel that media offers educational or entertainment opportunities (Nikken & Schols, 2015). Nikken (2015) also states that a parent's attitude toward media, and a child's perceived amount of media literacy influences which type of method is used within the home. If a parent perceives their child to be more literate, parental mediation techniques are used less often, and vice versa for parents who perceive their child to be less literate.

There are two basic parental mediation categories: *active* and *restrictive*. Active parental

mediation is generally defined as “discussing content and giving explanations or instructions to the child to enhance safety, raise critical awareness, or stimulate learning outcomes”(Nikken & Schols, 2015, p.3424). Restrictive parental mediation, on the other hand, is defined as posing restrictions on time and content in regard to their children’s access to media (Nikken & Schols, 2015, p.3424).

Active and restrictive parental mediation are sometimes referred to as *prearming* and *cocooning* (Padilla-Walker & Coyne, 2011). The focus of active mediation, or prearming, is to help the child critically think about media and take a more active role in their understanding of the media. This is opposed to the default “passive” role that most children experience media. For example, if a parent and child witness coverage of a fatal car accident on the news together the parent is able to explain to the child what caused the accident and start a conversation about safe driving techniques. In the absence of this active parent role a child may mis-interpret the accident. Restrictive mediation, or cocooning, focuses on avoiding negative media exposure altogether before the child can be negatively influenced. The frequency that active and restrictive methods are applied also influence a child’s consumption and interaction with the news media (Nikken & Schols, 2015). If a child is accustomed to active mediation techniques, they are more likely to ask critical questions about the news they see and are more likely to understand and form validated opinions about events.

Along with active and restrictive mediation, two other parental mediation methods are *co-viewing* and *deference*. Co-viewing when an adult caretaker watches television with a child (Buijzen et al., 2007). Deference is when parents actively choose to do nothing in response to potentially conflicting values in television, as a display trust in their child’s ability to understand the information and come to their own conclusions (Padilla-Walker 2011). Many studies

(Buijzen et al., 2007; Nikken, 2015; Padilla-Walker, 2011) classify co-viewing and deference as types of active mediation, especially when used with older adolescents (age 12-16). Co-viewing, however, needs to be intentional and paired with parent comments in order to operate as an effective form of active mediation (Buijzen et al., 2007).

Demographic variables, such as the parent's age, gender, and education, and income level, as well as the parent's own media use and skills have all been shown to play a role in parents' decision of which mediation method they will use in their home. (Nikken & Schols, 2015). Parents often perceive young children to have limited media-literacy, and therefore more susceptible to negative media effects, resulting in more restrictions on young children's media use and more supervised media use and co-use methods (Nikken & Schols, 2015, p.3425). The overall media climate also impacts a parent's mediation choices (Padilla-Walker et al., 2018). For example, parents may choose to use more active mediation techniques during an important local election to help their child understand the information they are seeing on the news. On the other hand, parents may choose to take a more restrictive approach if the news environment is particularly tumultuous.

While an individual parent may have a tendency to use one type of mediation more than another, it is unlikely that they use only one form of media monitoring when managing their child's media use (Padilla-Walker, et al., 2018). Parents most likely use combinations of media monitoring strategies that depend on the context of the news event and their specific child's characteristics (Padilla-Walker, et al., 2018). Consequently, it becomes necessary to look at parental approaches to media through a more personal framework. Padilla-Walker (2018) states that taking person-centered framework will allow researchers to understand how specific parent strategies work together to create unique family media climates.

**Effects of parental mediation**

The way that children interact with the news media can have many effects on different areas of their development and the method that a parent chooses can have a direct effect on these subjects. It has been found that just the act of a parent or guardian sitting down to watch television news with a child—co-viewing—without discussing anything with the child, can benefit a child (Rasmussen, Keene, Berke, Densley, & Loof, 2017). Children's psychophysiological responses to media content in the Rasmussen study were altered; children exhibited greater arousal and cognitive resource allocation both on average and over time when they watched TV in the presence of a Coviewing parent, compared to those who watched TV alone. In other words children receive environmental stimulus that signals the motivational significance of the media content they are consuming with their parent et al., 2017). When parents watch news with their child, this communicates to the child that the content being consumed is important, truthful, and worthy of attention Rasmussen (2017). This can be a positive or negative effect, depending on what type of news content is being watched.

**Multiculturalism and the News**

The effects specific categories of the media may have on a parent's decision of which mediation method to use are important to consider. Television news broadcasts have remained a constant in the media landscape of most homes since television was popularized in the 1950's. Since its introduction it has promised to be a source of truthful information that audiences can use to develop an understanding of the state of our society. One of the key elements of television news broadcasts are their visuals, and how information is presented influences a child's visual cognition. The brain responds to form, depth, movement, and color at a level that can bypass our pre-established structures for meaning, language and decision making (Lester 2006). That is why it is so important to understand the effects of television news on children during their most

formative years. Visual communication is more malleable and amorphous, and it is immediately absorbed without much cognition. This makes it much more difficult to filter than other types of news media (Kelley 2008). It is also what people are most likely to use to support a sense of reality (Campbell 1968).

It is also important to realize that the thin line between “traditional news media” and “entertainment news media” is a challenge when controlling what information about society and the world children are receiving from the news media. Entertainment news media, programs like Inside Edition or Entertainment Tonight follow a format to entice the viewer at the affective or emotional level rather than being directed at the analytical or intellectual level. Recently, traditional news broadcasting has followed the style of entertainment news for the benefits of retaining viewership (Kelley 2008). It is more difficult for children to distinguish reality from fantasy, and therefore also difficult for them to understand the differences in value between traditional news and entertainment news, especially when they have very similar formats (Epstein 2007).

As an information source, television news affects a child’s development as a citizen in society as well as one’s aptitude in a multicultural environment (Kelley, 2008) Multiculturalism as a practice is important because it allows each culture within a society to operate with efficacy and agency and to be recognized for their contributions to society. A child’s multicultural aptitude or intelligence is defined as a “general awareness of one’s attitudes toward a home culture and the self, as well as toward others and their cultures (Kelley, 2008, p.259)” Interestingly, many experts argue that a combination of both active and restrictive media monitoring is beneficial to parents when helping their children to establish accurate multicultural views for news media. “In this multiracial, multiethnic world, it is essential that children not only

develop positive racial and ethnic identities but also develop an appreciation and respect for diversity,” (Glaubke and Miller, 2008,p.433).

They outline three rules for parents to help create a positive, healthy multicultural media environment for their children. The first rule takes a form of restrictive mediation and calls for parents to minimize children’s amount of time with media. Second, parents need to monitor, or be aware of, the media content their children are exposed to. This rule combines both active and restrictive mediation techniques, asking parents to go beyond setting basic rules for media. Instead they should actively monitor their children’s media for multicultural content and to turn off media that they feel offer negative images or stereotypes of people of color. In addition, parents should actively search for media content that offers quality portrayals of a diverse array of persons beginning in their children’s early preschool years (Glaubke and Miller 2008). The third rule is co-view and discuss, which is a purely active form of parental control. Glaubke and Miller conclude that these three rules create a balanced multicultural environment that contribute to a child’s healthy development of multicultural understanding.

One way the mass media provides information to children about themselves and the world is through the quantity and quality of representation and media portrayals of members of both their own racial/ethnic group as well as others. This means that the absence and underrepresentation of certain ethnicities and races in television news is a big barrier in the multicultural development of children (Kelley, 2008). As minorities are underrepresented, dominant cultures form an invisible force that legitimizes itself through sheer force of repetition (Morris 1993). When minorities are present in news broadcasts, it is often in a shocking report of recent violence, missing people, terrorist attacks, etc. The images and framing children are exposed to act as symbolic constructions of their place and function in society (Banks & Grambs

1972; Douglas 1997; Ehrlich, Weller, & Eden n.d.; Sue & Sue 1990).

### **Children and the News: Violence**

The Keiser Family Foundation found that almost 4 in 10 (37%) of parents' reported that their children had been frightened or upset by something they had seen in the news, concerned that it can happen to them or their family. The Keiser poll also found that while there is common belief that children's negative response to violence in the media will decrease with age, older children are more likely to believe that TV news is frightening, causes them anxiety, and to express fear over personal safety. Studies have shown there is a direct correlation between violence in the media and elementary school aged children's feelings of fear, worry, sadness and anger (Buijzen 2007). The effects of violence in TV news on children may include heightened levels of involvement and aggression, immediate fright reactions, fear of the world as a scary place, and desensitization (Molen 2004). Padilla (2016) found that active mediation was more effective in reducing the relations between news exposure and fear, worry, and anger among the younger children in the sample. Restrictive mediation, such as prohibiting children from watching the news, had no or even an opposite effect on the emotional responses of children. Essentially, not allowing children to watch the news can harm a child more than actively monitoring their media consumption with co-viewing.

Traditionally, control and studies of violence in the media is limited to violence found in video games, movies, and television shows. Molen (2004) argues that a broader definition of violence in the media, including unintended or structural violence like natural disasters and accidents, to account for violence in the news. For example, studies on news-induced fright reactions have shown that children of 7 to 8 years of age were almost as frightened by fires and accidents as they were by intended interpersonal violence (Cantor 1996; Walma 2002).

Both the studies regarding multicultural development and reactions and emotional responses to



violence in the media prove that different types and level of both active and restrictive parental mediation can have different effects regarding different subjects.

## **Methods**

This project outlines a qualitative research study that interviews as many families with elementary-aged children as possible. The participants can be recruited through a variety of methods – advertising for participants, incentivizing participation, or even using a type of snowball sampling technique, which first talks to accessible participants and then interviews people known to those primary participants. Each interview is audiotaped and transcribed, and then analyzed by the researcher. After the interviews are analyzed, the researcher would distribute a follow-up survey to each participant. The survey will cover basic questions regarding parental style and mediation and will be used to make connections between the in-depth interview and the other participant(s). Analysis of the data will be based in the grounded theory method, which shall be discussed shortly (Auerbach & Silverstein, 2003).

To collect information pertaining to parental behavior control and parenting styles, this project follows the Ghent Parental Behavior Scale, or GPBS (Van Leeuwen, Mervielde, Braet, & Bosmans, 2004). The GPBS is a questionnaire designed to assess parenting behavior by looking at nine different constructs of parenting: Autonomy, Discipline, Positive Parental Behavior, Harsh Punishment, Monitoring, Rules, Ignoring Unwanted Behavior, Material Rewarding, and Inconsistent Discipline. GPBS asks participants to rate the frequency of certain parental behaviors on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from never to always. Questions following this scale will be distributed in a follow-up survey distributed to the participant one day after the interview takes place. This ensures that the participants will not be influenced by the questionnaire in their

original responses during the initial interviews.

Within the interview, the study will focus on how parents screen and influence their children's views on violence and multiculturalism, respectively. By investigating violence and how it is explained or not to children, the study hopes to find how and why parents may change their methods to accommodate for violent events seen or heard in the news. Similarly, including questions concerned with multiculturalism can inform the study as to how parents communicate with their children about difference. These factors, then, can be assessed alongside parental behaviors by first coding the interviewees' responses in thematic terms and then evaluating correlations between those themes and the GBPS.

To analyze the information collected during the in-depth interviews and follow up surveys this project will follow the grounded theory method outlined by Auerbach and Silverstein (2003). The grounded-theory method uses two basic principles: questioning rather than measuring, and generating hypothesis using a theoretical code (Auerbach & Silverstein, 2003). By asking project participants about their subjective experiences, a series of hypotheses can be generated from their answers. Analysis of the data will look in detail at these elements: Raw text, relevant text, repeating ideas, themes, theoretical constructs, theoretical narrative, and research concerns (Auerbach & Silverstein, 2003). Once these themes have been identified and coded within the analysis, the researcher can then make claims about how parental mediation of the news affects parent-child relationships, children's perceptions of violence and multiculturalism, and the most effective forms of mediation techniques.

## Results

Below please find my interview and survey design.

### **Interview: Introduction**

Hello, my name is \_\_\_\_\_. Thank you so much for agreeing to be interviewed today. I am conducting a research study to learn how general parenting style affects the ways in which parents decide to mediate news media in their home.

Benefits of doing research are not definite; but I hope to learn if there is correlation between parenting style and a parent's decision regarding news media and their children. Added to existing literature and providing a base for future research, this insight could lead to helpful discoveries that may aid parents in making the best decisions regarding news media in their home. There are no direct benefits to you in this study activity, but you will receive a copy of my finished report if you'd like.

The interview today will be audio recorded and securely stored. I will treat your identity and the information collected about you with professional standards of confidentiality and protect it to the extent allowed by law. You will not be personally identified in any reports or publications that may result from this study. If at any time you wish to leave the interview you are allowed to do so.

The interview should last about an hour. Do you have any questions or concerns before we begin?

### **Parental Experience:**

1. Tell me about your role as a parent. How many children do you have? How old are they?  
How much time do you spend with them in a given workday? Weekend?

2. How would you describe your parenting style when it comes to rule-setting, discipline, and praise?
3. What elements of parenting do you place the most emphasis on? How would your child describe you?
4. How often do you have in-depth conversations with your child? Can you please describe one of these conversations?
5. How often do you let your child watch TV? On the weekdays...weekends?

**Parental mediation of the news media:**

6. How often is some form of traditional news (television, radio, newspaper) playing or present in your home?
7. What are your general attitudes towards the news media?
8. What news content, if any, do you limit your child's access to?
9. Do you believe your child has an interest in the news and events happening in the world?
10. What are some examples of the ways your child interacts with the news media on a weekly basis? Through television? The internet? The radio? The newspaper? Some other form?
11. Do you discuss the news and current events with your child?
12. Do you feel confident that the decisions you are making around news media are right for your child? Explain why or why/not?

**Violence and Multiculturalism in the news:**

13. Has your child ever expressed negative feelings towards a violent event in the news?
14. When a violent event happens in the world (i.e. car accident, terrorist attack, school shooting, etc.) do you discuss this event with your child?

15. Can you describe a time where your child asked about an instance of violence she/he/they saw on the news? What did she/he/they ask? How did you respond to their questions?
16. How do you address topics relating to other nationalities and cultures in the news with your child?
17. What is your approach to discussing multicultural difference with your children?
18. Can you describe a time where your child asked about a different culture, religion, or race, and how you responded to her/his/their question(s)? Did these questions arise due to a news segment?

**Conclusion: Supplemental Questions:**

19. Is there anything you would like to add about the news and the role it plays in your household and/or family?

Thank you so much for participating in my study. Your feedback will be invaluable in my research process. In a day you will be sent the follow-up survey. Your participation in this last step is imperative for the accurate collection of results. If you have any more questions in the future, please feel free to contact me at \_\_\_\_\_.

**Follow-up Survey**

Thank you for participating in the interview section of the study. Your input is extremely valuable to our research. The purpose of the follow-up survey is to examine specific parenting styles and how they relate to mediation techniques of a child's general media consumption.

**Confidentiality:** Please note that the responses you provide are completely confidential and will only be viewed and analyzed by the research team. The research outcome and report will not include reference to any individuals. The survey results will be destroyed after completion of the study.

Sociodemographic Questions (Vandewater, Park, Huang, & Wartella, 2005):

1. Family Structure:

One Parent or Two

2. Your gender

3. Race

4. Number of children

5. Child Age(s)

6. Child Gender(s)

### General Parenting Style

The Ghent Parental Behavior Scale (Vanager, 2012)

On the following pages are statements about how you interact with your child. Read each statement carefully. For each statement, you are to place an “x” in the box that most accurately reflects how you interact with your child. You can choose from the following answers:

never  rarely  sometimes  often  always

Keep in mind that your answer should always be related to the child in this study.

Your answers should reflect how you interact in reality. There are no good or wrong answers.

1. I make time to listen to my child, when he/she wants to tell me
2. I teach my child to be polite at school.
3. I ask my child how he/she spend his/her pocket money.
4. When my child has done something wrong, I punish him/her by taking away something nice (for instance the child can't watch TV, isn't allowed to go out, has to be home earlier, has to go to bed earlier).
5. I teach my child to adapt to the habits in our family

6. I give my child money or a small present when he/she has done something that I am happy about.
7. I teach my child to handle his/her things with respect.
8. When my child does something that is not allowed, I give him/her an angry look and I ignore him/her afterwards.
9. When my child seems to have a problem, I discuss with him/her what is wrong.
10. When I have punished my child, I let my child out of the punishment early.
11. I spank my child when he/she doesn't obey rules.
12. When my child has gone somewhere on his/her own, I make sure he/she was actually there.
13. When my child and I have a disagreement, we talk it over and look for a solution together.
14. I ask my child about his/her hobbies and interests.
15. My child and I go places together.
16. I teach my child that it is important to behave properly.
17. When my child has a problem, we look together for possible solutions.
18. When my child has been misbehaving, I give him/her a chore for punishment
19. I punish my child when he/she makes a nuisance of him/herself (for instance because he/she nags, contradicts me, lies, argues).
20. I compliment my child when he/she spontaneously helps me out (for instance with setting the table).
21. I do activities together with my child, because I know that my child likes it (for instance, playing a game, shopping together).

22. I teach my child to obey rules.
23. When my child doesn't obey a rule (for instance: he/she comes home late without a valid reason; he/she has not completed a chore), then I punish him/her.
24. When my child comes home from school, I make sure I spend time with him/her.
25. When my child does something that I don't want him/her to do, I punish him/her.
26. I spank my child when he/she is disobedient or naughty.
27. I give my child a compliment, hug, or a tap on the shoulder as a reward for good behavior.
28. When my child doesn't obey a rule, I threaten with a punishment, but don't actually end up carrying it out.
29. When my child has done his/her best, I allow something extra (for instance staying up later or extra iPad time).
30. When my child does something that is not allowed. I don't talk to him/her until he/she says sorry.
31. I teach my child that it is important to behave properly.
32. I don't punish my child after he/she has done something that is not allowed.
33. I have warned my child many times before I eventually punish his/her behavior.
34. When my child does something that is not allowed, I give him/her an angry look and pretend he/she is not there.
35. I let my child buy something when he/she has done something well.
36. I teach my child that he/she is responsible for his/her own behavior.
37. In the evening, I talk with my child about today and the next day.
38. I keep track of my children's friends.



- 39. I shake my child when we argue.
- 40. I teach my child to solve his/her own problems
- 41. I teach my child to adapt to rules at school.
- 42. I teach my child to respect authority.

### **General TV Media Consumption**

These questions pertaining to children's news media consumption are adapted from Valkenburg's (1999) research on television mediation. These will be answered in multiple choice format.

- (a) How many days does your child usually watch TV on weekdays? (Monday through Friday)
- (b) On the weekdays your child watches TV, how long does s/he usually watch?
- (c) On the weekdays your child watches TV, how much of it is news?
- (d) How many days does your child usually watch TV on a weekend? (Saturday and Sunday)
- (e) On weekends that your child watches TV, how long does s/he usually watch per day?
- (f) On the weekends your child watches TV, how much of it is news?

A child's viewing time per week will be calculated by multiplying the number of days per week that s/he watched by the number of hours that s/he watched on each day. (Valkenburg, Krcmar, Peeters, & Marseille, 1999)

### **Parental Engagement and Mediation**

These questions follow the typology used by Valkenburg et al. (1999) and Warren (2001). They will be asked on a similar Likert scale as the GPBS, ranging from never to always.

Parental Mediation:

Coviewing: How often do you watch TV with child because you both like show?

watch TV with child because of common interest in a show?

watch TV with this child just for the fun of it?

watch your favorite program with this child?

laugh with this child about things you see on TV?

Rulemaking: How often do you tell child to turn off TV when he or she watches unsuitable program?

set specific viewing hours for this child?

forbid this child to watch certain shows?

limit the amount of TV this child may watch?

specify in advance shows child may watch?

Discussion: How often do you help child understand what he or she sees on TV?

point out why some things actors do are good?

point out why some things actors do are bad?

explain why TV characters do what they do?

explain what something on TV really means?

## **Discussion**

The interview and survey in this study are designed to work together to assess a participant's parenting style affects the type of news mediation they enact on a daily basis. The interview follows a semi-structured format to allow for researchers to gain as much personal insight into each family as possible. Analyzing the design of the research study requires the interview to be broken down into sections: Parental experience, parental mediation of the news

media, and Violence and multiculturalism in the news.

It is important to ask questions that will help the researcher determine each parents' style. The opening questions in the interview process are meant to set the participant at ease by being easy and non-threatening, but also allowing the researcher to match each parents' answer with a style during the analysis of the interview transcript. These broad, open-ended questions will be important for setting up the rest of the interview.

The second section of the interview will focus specifically on a parent's decisions and rulemaking regarding television news. The semi-structured nature of this interview is important in this section. For example, though each question was designed as an open-ended prompt, parents might answer briefly if they believe their child doesn't ever interact with the news media and therefore, they don't have specific techniques. There is still valuable insight to be gained from the participant, and the researcher, preferably an experienced interviewer, will be able to navigate through the rest of the interview.

To analyze how parents, respond to specific news events regarding violence and multiculturalism participants will be asked to remember specific instances that happened with their kids. It is important that the researcher encourages the participant to use specific examples in their storytelling. These details may lead to possible connections and common themes later during analysis.

The follow up survey will be an important step in the research collection process. It will allow the researcher to use more verified analytical techniques to determine parenting style and process of mediation. To increase survey completion, it is imperative the researcher tell the participant that a post-interview survey will be sent out and is a required step of the research collection. If the survey is not filled out the participants answers to the in-depth interview portion of the

research will not be able to be included.

### **Limitations**

The declining popularity in American families that watch or even turn on traditional news broadcasts may have a significant effect on this research. If a household doesn't watch traditional news it, there may be opportunity to explore the other mediums they get their news, and if their kids interact or have access to these.

Differing family dynamics outside of 'mother and father' may also be a potential limitation.

### **Future Research**

Children's media interactions are only structured in part by parental control (Vered 2008). A lot of the information they acquire comes from informal learning experienced during playtime. This informal learning contributes to their overall acquisition of media competency. Children's media play during this informal learning is collaborative, creative, and integrated into traditional forms of playing. There are also complex and contradictory values that regulate children's access to the media inside and outside of the home. While parents can develop rules to restrict or actively mediate media and news consumption inside the home, they cannot restrict media play outside of the home (Vered 2008).

Therefore, it becomes increasingly important to develop systems in schools. Pereira (2012) looks at the current structure of media education, and where it is lacking. Though the focus on children's media literacy is increasing internationally, Pereira argues educators don't have the proper tools to properly promote media literacy. Media education is very complex, and it extends far past simply teaching the different types of media and methods. Pereira (2012) argues that teaching children the critical role of media in society is key. They developed and distributed three booklets: the first deals with the mediation of TV at school and at home, the

second describes videogames, ways of playing, benefits, dangers, creativity and interculturality, and the third is about the Internet and social networks. The booklets aimed to provide materials to help parents and teachers mediate young people's experiences with media, and to empower both educational agents and children to become critical and demanding media consumers.

This is a good example of the type of media education that aims to promote media literacy, especially in children. Pereira (2012) understood media literacy “in a context of empowerment and human rights”, so their aim was to “provide resources that empower citizens, young people and adults to deal critically with media, either traditional or new”. This program was implemented and tested in Portugal but has a very good structure to be used in many different areas around the world.

It is also important that media education is being updated frequently to keep up with the current events and recent trends (Supsáková 2016). Supsáková states that media education creates an environment where young people feel free to express themselves and exercise their right to obtain information, but also engage with it. Proper media education acts as the base for children to be actionable citizens in the future and leads to personal and political development (Thomas 2004).

The landscape of what we address as media is changing. Though this project focuses on traditional forms of news, it is important to address that it is not the only source of information for children. Videos, social media, video games, and all types of new digital media are changing the way children interact with and obtain new information. These newer forms of media tend to be more engaging, and the time children spend interacting with these forms of media is increasing. This can have both negative and positive consequences, and it will be necessary to observe how the changing media landscape could affect the type and the frequency of parental

mediation.

Further research on which types of parental mediation are most beneficial when dealing with other subtopics like politics may also lead to key insights on how parental mediation might influence a child's political development. In addition, how political news is addressed in an educational setting amongst young children, both when the teacher initiates conversation and when the child does, would be interesting to explore.

### **Conclusion**

Parenting is complex activity that involves the culmination of many specific behaviors and the choices a parent makes each day regarding the news media can be just as complex and qualitative. It can be difficult to make sense of the varying answers participants have about parental mediation, and the outlines interview process addresses this and is designed to give measurable results. Finding potential connections between parenting style and parental mediation technique will help add to the growing literature and research regarding the decisions we can make to help parents make wise, well-thought put decisions in regard to their children.

The way that children interact with the news media can have many effects on different areas of their development and the method that a parent chooses can have a direct effect on these subjects. The news media today seems to be overrun with stories and images of violence. The nature of violence in our society lends to the tendency of news stories to be about people of different ethnicities and cultures. Terrorism, police violence, and racially charged shootings are just three examples of the types of news seen daily. Research like the study outlined will be important tools in determining the most beneficial ways to help children develop into future citizens of the world.

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