

What's Papa going to say?

What guides fathers' decision-making processes on the mediation of their children's use of digital media?

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Abstract

The process by which fathers determine how to mediate their children's use of digital media depends on several aspects. Parental mediation theory is based on studies concerning children's viewing of television and its effects on development and behaviour. Subsequently, the research has encompassed the emergence of the internet, leaving more recent research with the findings of two different groups of strategies, enabling or restrictive mediation. So far much of the research has focused on the accounts of mothers, more so than fathers, leaving the current knowledge on parental mediation skewed. The aim of this thesis is to provide an understanding of the processes behind paternal decisions and practices on how to mediate children's use of digital media. The objective is to place several fathers' narratives in a context that may illuminate gendered mediation practices. In turn, it may inspire further investigations on the topic, such as investigating parental styles relating to mediation practises. This can contribute to the application of results and highlight tendencies in certain directions, making it easier to base policy and educational decisions on those. Across this study, ten different fathers between the age of 38-45 in Norway have been interviewed, with different national backgrounds, about what guides their decision-making processes concerning the mediation of their children's use of digital media. Several overarching themes emerged during the coding process of the project which the analysis and discussion are based on. The findings indicate that decision-making processes are based on several different aspects: perceived responsibilities in decision-making concerning digital parenting, screen time in relation to good parenting, mediation of digital media, and paternal hopes and fears in a digital future. The implications of the outcomes show that fathers are guided by their perceived responsibilities in relation to their mediation practices. They are deemed important because they care for the well-being of their children, and they place significant importance on the development of digital literacy, a balance in screen time and other activities, their own resources, and concerns about the balance between home, school, and digital media.

Preface and Acknowledgements

Leaving my profession as an upper secondary teacher to study Screen cultures for two years was exciting, however, filled with general anxiety about what is going to happen afterwards. In the process of writing this thesis, I have discovered my own challenges as a mother, student, and fellow human being. I am grateful for the elements of such a process because it has made me aware of things in relation to the digital landscape at hand, more so than I have ever been conscious of before. As a result, I find myself more mindful of my own use and especially my daughter's use of digital media. With that in mind, I believe my initial question is only beginning to be answered. However simple it might sound; the fruit of my work will enable me to develop more confidence in why and how screens have an impact on my everyday life, and by extension my daughter's. Much like the overall findings of this investigation, digital parenting and parental mediation practises are complicated, and it is not clear what strategy suits both parent and child, becoming aware of one's own general parenting practises and own use of digital media in relation to digital mediation is however preferable.

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1. Introduction

On the 31st of January this year “Debatten”, a debate show on NRK (Norwegian Broadcasting Corporation) concerning contemporary politics and society hosted Norwegian politicians and parents demanding restrictions and more informative policies on children’s screen use/screen time. The debate started by highlighting one of many “shocking” reports from newspapers in general on children’s/teenagers’ digital media use. One headline, by Aftenposten (Norwegian newspaper), described one upper secondary school teacher’s discovery in that his first-grade students spend on average 6 hours and 29 minutes every day on their smartphones. It was not necessarily explained what the students did while using the phone, but more emphasis was put on the amount of screen time as a whole. Different people from different professions, including politicians and researchers subsequently debated the digital environment children inhabit, with focus on screen time/screen use as well as several applications, and the function of algorithms etc. (Solvang, 2023, 0:01-39:00).

The implications of the public hegemonic discourse on children’s use of digital media and how it affects them, has created a problem for researchers who also aim to protect and optimise digital opportunities for children. Some individuals have made public claims that appear to contravene with the existing body of literature on children’s use of digital media. This has led to researchers, in turn, trying to convey that the digital environment children inhabit and subsequently their behaviours, is much more complex than how it is seemingly understood by the public (Gedde-Dahl, 2023).

During “Debatten”, Professor in Media Science at the University of Oslo, Elisabeth Staksrud, also one of the researchers in the international research fellowship “EU Kids Online”, repeated research findings concerning the perceived happiness in Norwegian children in relation to screen use. These findings are based on self-reported answers by children, and their time spent with screen activities. These findings reveal that Norwegian children who report a higher state of well-being also report a higher amount of screen time than those who report less screen time. The opposition brought forward concerns such as poorer mental health in relation to screen time and social media, yet seemingly clouded by the public discourse, and voiced some claims which have not yet been confirmed in research. Studies by Staksrud and colleagues has

shown that the current research finds that the domestic- and school environment, as well as parents' socio-economic status is more crucial than the time spent with screens (Solvang, 2023, 18:45-38:31). The attempt to nuance the public debate by reporting current research in which children's accounts in relation to parents' diverse socio-economic backgrounds as one of many variables affecting findings, is ostensibly not enough. The public discourse about screen time specifically, both in schools and at home seems to impose parental anxieties concerning children's psychosocial and cognitive development only further, and at the expense of the well-functioning relationship between parents and children.

As the digital environment permeates most areas of life today in the westernised world, children use digital media for different purposes such as education, communication, and entertainment. The way children use digital media is often decontextualised. The introductory example implies that media itself report instances concerning children's digital media use with a lack of user perspective. The objectives of such reports can sometimes resemble that of circus shows in which the goal is to shock the audience (Dunkels, 2007, p. 7). In turn, parents become gatekeepers of their children's use of digital media because of the impact of popular imaginary and discourse (Livingstone & Blum-Ross, 2020, p. 7). As a result, it affects what digital risks and opportunities children encounter, as well as the resilience they may develop. It seems there is a need for parents to be guided and rely less on media accounts and public discourse on how to manage their children's use of digital media. Policymakers and parents therefore need to develop confidence in current and future research within the area of children's use of digital media. This will secure more informed parental practises on digital mediation, and consequently enable a safe digital future for children. Parents especially, will need assistance in order to achieve such appreciation. The aim of this thesis is to contribute to the ongoing discussions on digital parenting and parental mediation of children's use of digital media by focusing on the specific mediation practises of fathers.

Contemporary literature on parenting as a concept describe parenting as more of doing parenting than being a parent, and consequently seems to have a deeper impact on children's futures (Lee et al., 2014). Nevertheless, emerging accounts in research suggests the incorporation of sociological perspectives, such as the socio-economic

circumstances of parents, which can serve to facilitate the relationship between media-research and the sociological considerations of current public concerns about children's use of digital media (Livingstone & Blum-Ross, 2020; Azam, 2023). Concepts such as intensive parenting and good parenting suggest that it is a labour-filled, highly intense project in which parents may well feel the burden of a normative gaze which has recently also become technologized (Clark, 2011; Howell, 2010; Mascheroni et al., 2018; Livingstone & Blum-Ross, 2020). This means that parents may look to other parents' mediation practises. Consequently, they may experience feelings concerning either good or bad parenting, and this can be dependent on the amount of screen time they permit their own children in comparison to what others permit their children. By doing so, little consideration is perhaps taken to the child's individual needs. Also, this simultaneously occurs in a digital world where there are numerous opportunities for parents to monitor their children's whereabouts and/or behaviours by utilising digital media themselves. In turn, that may impose a violation of the child's privacy, as their data may be tracked by commercial stakeholders at the end of the given digital application in use (Zuboff, 2015; Barassi 2020).

So far there is an established tradition in research on parental mediation which has its foundation in mediation of children's television viewing, and what effects that may have brought on behaviour and development (Mascheroni et al., 2018, p. 9). Subsequently, once the internet emerged, those parental practises concerning children's television viewing became adopted to encompass several digital media, both stationary and mobile devices. Much of the contemporary research of parental mediation, especially that which concerns screen time, has used quantitative methods (Kaye et al., 2020). Sometimes it is also combined with interviews and/or observations to situate parents' practises into specific approaches which can be grouped in two different categories, enabling and restrictive mediation (Livingstone et al., 2017). Enabling mediation pertains to parental practises which serve to allow and support children so they may maximise their opportunities and develop resilience when using digital media. Restrictive mediation can minimise risks, yet it can also reduce opportunities and hinder the development of digital literacy (Mascheroni et al., 2018, p. 10). Also, the problem with the concept of screen time is that it appears to compress

children's digital media use into mere minutes or hours, as opposed to highlight the context, content and connection it may involve for children.

The factors that seem to guide parents' mediation strategies, and/or what they are in response to, is the parent's evaluation of their own digital literacy, the child's vulnerability, the risk the child is exposed to by engaging in different online activities and their frequencies (Nichols & Selim, 2022, p. 11). Furthermore, as the current public discourse on screen time/screen use appears to steer parents towards the perception that less screen time for children is favourable, in doing so they may use restricting mediation of digital media use, without the consideration of the digital opportunities nor the risks the children disregard to build resilience and acquire digital literacy as studies suggest. Research however implies that parents in Nordic countries more often apply the type of mediation which is based on discussion with children about their use of digital media (Smahel et al., 2020). Also, more current research shows that there is a significant increase in active mediation in several European countries. Although cross-cultural differences exist, restrictive mediation has declined which implies parents' mediation practises of their children's use of digital media are less about rules and regulations and more about guiding and supporting (Kalmus et al., 2022). This can indicate that perhaps not as many parents let the current screen time/screen use discourse influence their mediation practises per say, they perhaps simply continue in the same way because of their own knowledge, or until they discover more informative policies to adhere to.

There are also gender challenges in research hitherto within parental mediation practises. Previously, research has often depended on mothers' accounts on mediation practises, making the fathers' accounts less relevant, and as a result, the concept of parental mediation is skewed (Symons et al., 2017, p. 97; Symons et al 2020, p. 1571, Warren, 2017, p. 496). Conversely, Azam (2023) investigates parental mediation of children's use of video games in Norway. The study's findings are also based on data with a more gender-equal sample of parents which I will return to in the following chapter on the conceptual framework and previous research concerning the current study.

1.1 Aim and Research Question

Being a parent myself to a nine-year old daughter has naturally led me to situations where I mediate her use of digital media. In relation to much literature on parental mediation as well as the public discourse, I can only concur with most parents, I sometimes feel frustrated. I am not always aware how these occasions may intervene with my parenting style. I nevertheless often negotiate between the digital risks and opportunities my child is exposed to, and my values and opinions as a parent, and what I inevitably deem to be right and wrong. Accordingly, I both measure my daughter's future opportunities, and the risks she might encounter in her daily use of digital media. I tend to be switched on and vigilant, but naturally there are times I lack resources, such as time and energy, and certain principles may go out the window. However, what I have come to discover is that my interest in her digital hobbies serves to facilitate the rest of our relationship. I experience a fusion of parenting and digital parenting practises, and I therefore want to be aware of what strategies I can employ and effectively, how well they will work. I am however still uncertain about screen time, and I may be inclined to be more sceptic, perhaps that may have something to do with me being influenced by the public discourse, and memories of my own childhood which did not involve as many activities relating to digital media.

The process by which I have come to some personal conclusions about mediation practises have all been facilitated by working my way through the body of literature on parenting, digital parenting, and parental mediation practises. Yet, because of the research gap regarding gender-equal samples of data on parental mediation, where mothers' accounts dominate the bigger part of the literature so far, I am therefore interested in investigating fathers' accounts on the matter. As a woman and a mother, I may unconsciously be driven by my presumptions of what fathers do and do not in the mutual responsibilities of child-rearing. I therefore set out to challenge previous research relating to parents' mediation practises, as well as my own assumptions, that fathers for example may worry less than mothers, or that they are perhaps less concerned than mothers about how much screen time they permit and what it means by doing so in the perspective of the family. In effect, it can facilitate a more nuanced picture of gendered parental mediation practises as well as serve to inform future parents on what to be aware of in relation to mediation practises of their children's use of digital media.

The aim of this thesis is thus to provide an understanding of the processes behind paternal decisions and practices on how to mediate children's use of digital media. The objective is to place the accounts of several fathers in a context which may further illuminate gendered parental mediation practices. In turn it can inspire additional investigations on the topic pertaining to parental styles in relation to mediation practices. This can contribute to the application of findings which may show tendencies in certain directions, and so serving to base policy and educational decisions accordingly. One way of achieving this is to maintain a discussion which points parents towards recognising their own reasons behind, also becoming aware of possible parenting styles they employ while doing so. As a result, it may influence policy solutions to more informed decisions on how to mediate children's use of digital media. The current investigation attempts to illustrate fathers' decision-making processes concerning their mediation practices, and by that offer ways of understanding them and with the hope to hold such investigations alive.

RQ: What guides fathers' decision-making processes concerning the mediation of their children's use of digital media?

1.2 Important Definitions

There are several concepts concerning the use of digital technologies and parental mediation in literature on such research. It involves the ways in which parents decide to manage their children's use of the internet, digital technology, digital tools, digital media, and screens in general, as well as how they incorporate their own use of digital devices when mediating their children's use of digital media (Mascheroni, Ponte & Jorge, 2018). As a result, new parenting practices emerge. For the purpose of this thesis, which seeks to highlight the decision-making processes behind fathers' mediation practices of children's digital media, I have decided to use digital media as a concept in relation to what parents attempt to mediate. Digital media refers to a plethora of screen occasions, but also media content which smart phones, iPads, computers, laptops, and television serve to facilitate through the means of internet access. Previous literature however suggests that there are different mediation practices depending on the context and content of the child's digital media use. Therefore, it may serve better to specify which type of digital media activity the child engages in, to discover those mediation practices

concerning which type of digital activity that works best. In turn, one avoids the homogenisation of children's digital media use (Jiow et al., 2017; Azam, 2023). I have yet decided to generalise it and call it digital media. I will, nonetheless, specify children's diverse digital media activities in the accounts given by the participants of this study to illustrate possible differences in the following analysis and discussion chapters.

I will use the words child/children and teenagers/adolescence, unless they are described or referred to differently in the original literature. Sometimes the literature referred to may include older children, generally described as teenagers or adolescents. I will use the word teenager as it concerns the age between 13-19. Adolescence is generally described to mark the transition from childhood to adulthood, the condition or state being adolescent (OED, 2023). Research suggests that younger children's use of digital media, more specifically gaming and general internet use, is more mediated by parents as opposed to when the children grow older and become more autonomous in the beginning of adolescence (Shin & Huh, 2011; Eklund & Bergmark, 2013; Livingstone et al., 2017). Thus, the current investigation will focus on children who attend primary school in Norway in which the age range is generally between six and twelve years of age.

1.3 The Organisation of the Thesis and a Summary of Findings

The body of this thesis opens with a conceptual framework and presentation of previous literature on contemporary parenting, digital parenting and more precisely, parental mediation theory. The method chapter describes and justifies the collection of data method and the coding process of emerging themes in the method of analysis and finishes with ethical considerations in relation to the gathering of data. The following chapter includes a discussion of the analysis and places it in a wider context of digital parenting and parental mediation practises. The final chapter concludes the premise of the investigation, which is based on the themes of the analysis. The findings indicate that fathers tend to rely on common sense when making decisions about how to mediate their children's use of digital media. Nevertheless, they still feel pressure to be good parents and worry about screen time. The participants also reflect on themselves as fathers when considering their children's use of digital media. Different conditions, such as resources and the gender of the child, also affect their decision-making. Ultimately, understanding

of the relationship between mediation practises and parental style is important for providing guidance to parents. Reflective thoughts on possible limitations of the study, and suggestions for future research are included, and is followed by references and appendices.

2. Conceptual framework and Previous literature

To place my project in relation to what previous research says on parental mediation practises of children's use of digital media, I will present earlier research on contemporary aspects of parenting, digital parenting, and more explicitly parental mediation of digital media. Some concepts will be explained more in detail as they will also serve to facilitate in answering my research question: What guides fathers' decision-making processes concerning the mediation of their children's use of digital media?

2.1 To parent – Being – Doing

The terminology “parenting” has a historical perspective, “placing a particular significance on the role and contribution of *the parent*, using their “skills” to ensure a child's “successful life” (Lee et al., 2014, p. 7). The authors of “Parenting culture studies”, Lee, Bristow, Faircloth and Macvarish introduce their research by quoting Furedi's work from 2002; “until recently, the term *to parent* referred exclusively to the act of begetting a child. Today it is deployed to describe the behaviours of mothers and fathers” (Furedi, 2002, p. 197).

The central points are that parenting has been deemed as both the root of and the solution to societal problems. The authors argue that parenting behaviour is now seen as being the contributing factor to how children will behave and feel in the future, meaning that there is an intensified realisation of the risk of dangerous outcomes attached to the carrying and raising of children. This anxiety is individualised – focusing on the risks that parental actions in the present take and pose to their children's behaviour and outcomes in the future. Thus, the omniscient landscape of digital parenting poses yet another layer to the project of parenting, such as maximising digital opportunities while minimising potential

risks. Essentially, the reasoning is that the social construct of parenting becomes too intricate and crucial to be left to parents themselves unless they have access to guidance and assistance from experts informed by scientific knowledge (Edwards, 2017, p. 665).

The area of digital parenting is relatively new, parents may speak to each other, seek advice through online parental forums, and consider what research so far has to say on the topic. However, the digitalisation of society, seems to only put parents in constant risk assessment how almost all types of screen activity may potentially inflict harm on their children, and this can be difficult to manage. The authors further argue that the ideas of parental determinism and risk consciousness are a result of a breakdown of value systems in society (demoralisation) which leaves parents' behaviour vulnerable to a voracious risk realisation and therefore requires monitoring by experts (Edwards, 2017, p. 666).

There are some chapters which require attention in relation to my overall research topic, digital parenting. Part I of the book entitled "Intensive Parenting and the expansion of Parenting" by Charlotte Faircloth, where she defines the "intensification" of parenting as a recent process by which bringing up children has become a more time-consuming and "labour-intensive" project for today's parents. This is preceded by the acceptance of the "infant determinism" perspective, which puts emphasis on lifelong consequences to infant experience, underlining the vulnerability of children and so increasing the significance of parental responsibility. Intensive parenting remains an idealised standard against which parents measure themselves. Nevertheless, it has not been equally experienced by all parents in relation to gender, race, class, and geography. Generally, society may experience negative effects in the increase of parenting responsibility in the way of promoting a too intensified involvement in children's lives. The intensification wears down the relationships between parents themselves, and results in the development of different groups which are essentially pit against each other (2014, p. 48-49). Also, in a digital parental universe, where some parents may let their children have unlimited access and time to digital media, and other parents restrict their children's use to the opposite end of the spectrum, may result in increased opportunities to voice concerns either way. In turn it ultimately leads to potential disagreements as opposed to solutions.

In Part II, by Faircloth, a chapter of interest is “The problem of “Attachment”: The detached parent”. Faircloth briefly explains the history behind Attachment theory which is at the base of the growing popularity and cultural presence of attachment parenting which give wings to a wider cultural concern with parent-child “detachment”. The main idea is that parenting determines the child’s development and future, but also society resonates with intensive parenting and more specifically intensive mothering. Faircloth further argues that the portrayal of motherhood being the reason behind social breakdown is a profoundly ironic one because it tribalizes groups of women. One of the examples are the women who chose to breastfeed their children and those who do not. The climate of intensive parenting has created a situation in which mothers doubt their abilities but do not turn to each other for support on child rearing, instead, the group that “does it right” is pushed further away and identified as in need of further education on the subject (2014, p. 163-164).

The idea of different groups of parents being pit against each other echoes the concept of parent shaming. Parent shaming is touched upon by Livingstone and Blum-Ross (2020) and can be described in conjunction with different parenting practises which are judged as “being in advance of, lagging behind or what appears to be the emerging norm” (p. 13). They encapsulate a “normative gaze” (p. 13), which can make parents feel isolated from one another since they watch and appraise others before or while making up their mind about their own approach in relation to, for example, their child’s use of digital media. Parent shaming may therefore arise in deviating from the given norm, and as the area of children’s use of digital media is a young research area, parents may often evaluate and decide actions to take from little previous experience (2020, p. 13). The risk of being shamed because of how one mediates one’s children’s use of digital media can therefore be more prevalent.

The chapter on “Intensive fatherhood? The (un)involved Dad” by Faircloth involves the discussion about fathers in today’s parenting culture, and it suggests that the model of intensive mothering can be extended to men. Further, the author argues that men can prove to be a valuable case study in the “expertise” culture on parenting since they are not considered to be “naturally” organised for parenting. It is also understood that expectations of what being a good parent is, have affected men differently than women. Men are less influenced by a culture of expertise around parenthood and are happier to

rely on their “common sense” as opposed to mothers who feel the weight of moral responsibility, and worried about doing the right thing (Shirani, Henwood & Coltart, 2012; Lee et al., 2014, p. 197). Moreover, it is an externally generated idea by policymakers and experts, what a good father looks like, and it does not necessarily echo with fathers themselves (Lee et al., 2014, p. 184-185).

My dataset of interviews with fathers does not answer the question of what a good father looks like but can shed light on what guides their mediation practises of their children’s use of digital media and the underlying reasons that come with the task at hand.

2.2 Intensive Parenting

In the first two decades of the 21st century, countries belonging to the OECD organisation (these countries make up most countries and large economies in the developed world), have witnessed decreasing fertility rates, reduced rates of marriage and an increase in divorce rates, resulting in growing numbers of single-parent families. Cumulative female labour market contribution and educational achievement have also principally corresponded with parents being older when deciding to have children, and they may also have fewer children than before (Burns, & Gottschalk, 2019; Meeussen, Van Laar, & Verbruggen, 2019).

Current understandings of good parenting and children’s needs are influenced by intensive and child-centred parenting beliefs (Wall, 2022, p. 341). The concept of intensive parenting stems from Hays’s investigation into the cultural contradictions of intensive mothering in the U.S. (1996), which later has also come to include fathers (Lee et al., 2014; Klimor, Kaplan & Offer, 2023). This parenting culture is characterised by high involvement in several aspects of children’s lives which is both time and money-consuming, demands close monitoring as well putting in extensive emotional work. Contemporary parenting has seemingly come to resemble the stock market. Children are a product to invest in, monitoring risks and opportunities to maximize the result of their future conditions. There appears to be a neoliberal echo in parenting. However, scholars suggest that the ostensibly usual descriptions of “good parenting” are frequently based on middle class representations of the parents’ rigorous involvement, which in turn is seen

to represent all types of parents (Hochschild, 1997; Hayes, 2004; Livingstone & Blum-Ross 2020).

Conversely, parents appear to demonstrate contradicting use of technology. This means that parents are aware of the time their children spend engaged with a screen and the possibility that their children's data may be tracked by large corporations for marketing purposes (Zuboff, 2015; Barassi, 2020). At the same time, parents equip their children with mobile digital devices to be able to keep track of their use of the device, the actions on the device, or the children themselves (Burns, & Gottschalk, 2019, p. 103; Barassi, 2020, p. 147). In effect, as Leaver notes, we have come to a point in society where disconnected parenting (not connected via digital devices) will come to be both reckless and abnormal (2017, p. 8). Consequently, parents may experience social expectations to use digital devices and applications to constantly be in contact with their children to be perceived as "good parents". In contrast to former decades the "parental gaze has become technologized" (Howell, 2010, p. 1).

The notion of parenting 24/7 and being connected via digital devices goes hand in hand with digital parenting which is further investigated in Livingstone and Blum-Ross's study in London 2017. In this study it was found that parents oscillate between embracing, balancing, and resisting technology. This has to do with both their attitude towards technology and how they attempt to mediate their children's use of digital media in everyday life. I will further explain these concepts in relation to the upcoming section on digital parenting.

Studies have shown that the ever-increasing expectations in child-rearing put an immense physical and mental toll on middle-class parents, especially mothers. Poor and marginalized mothers are also progressively put under examination and control, and in turn, they do not have the social and cultural means necessary to meet the given standards of intensive parenting (Rizzo et al., 2013; Meeussen and Van Laar, 2018).

Dermott (2009, 2008) has investigated increasing father involvement in childcare and to what extent the same demands of intensity mothers experience, are experienced by men. The investigation suggests that modern-day fatherhood is not necessarily intensive, more so intimate, which is due to fathers' arrangement of building an emotional bond with the child rather than the amount of time they spend with them. These discoveries have led to

the assumption that child-rearing is less demanding for men than for women (Hays, 1996; Dermott, 2009).

2.3 “The good parent” and digital media

Current research suggests that many parents are experiencing a growing concern for both the well-being and protection of their children and for their capabilities to take up the role of a “good” and “responsible” parent (Burns, & Gottschalk, 2019, p.103). Clarke suggests that the debate on the “good parent” has changed over time and shifted from being stricter to more nurturing in the relationship with one’s children. Furthermore, she also describes parents, as well as parent experts, and psychologists as being part of the driving force behind the “good parent” discourse. The good parent as described by Clark (2011, p. 330):

A “good parent” to the younger child is consistent, involved and focused on the well-being of the child, whereas the “good parent” of the older child is the one who is flexible, available, and focused on allowing the child freedom and the opportunity to take risks and the responsibility for dealing with the consequences of her mistakes.

Moreover, Clarke points out that fun and play (in Western countries) is increasingly more a parent and child activity which has the parent navigating in a more commercialised technological environment. The notion of the “good parent” therefore involves more child-centred activities. Here lies the opportunity for the parent to step down from the role of authority and rule of hierarchy, and the relationship so becomes more equal. Parent and child learn together, or even the parent from the child when using digital media, engaging in gaming as well as mobile phone application activities (2011, p. 334), which is also referred to as participatory learning (Clark, 2011). Depending on family conditions, such as single-parent households, time, and interest etc, can produce feelings of guilt with the parent when he/she does not engage in such activities with the child.

It may seem challenging when there is yet another dimension of parenting to be conscious about, that of digital parenting. Historically, ever since new technological inventions have been introduced to society, there has always been an increasing concern with the effects of digital media, which reaches its peak in digital parenting. It can be related to previous

as well as current moral panics which may be displaced symptoms of more embedded structural problems which parents are trying to solve without even realising it. According to Buckingham and Jensen, panics are seen as indicators of fundamental structural tendencies, rather than deliberate objectives (2012, p. 418, Stensland, 2022d, p. 8). In relation to children and the use of digital media, the panic is not ultimately about children or about digital media at all, it is in fact placed within wider and more ambiguous concerns about “social change.” What is at risk is usually explained as a fear of technological and commercial innovation, or simply as a fear of modern society (Drotner, 1992; Buckingham & Jensen, 2012, p. 417). Therefore, it appears reasonable to believe that the immense pressure perceived by parents regarding how to mediate their children’s use of digital media, in which they assess risks as well as opportunities, is a matter of society’s current normative values. In turn, this can be placed under “media panics”, debates which the new medium brings about, and so changes into intense emotional reactions by adults as it is seen to also challenge established institutions for the education of children (Drotner, 1999, p. 2). The public debate on screen time today, in which the overall opinion is that screen time poses potential damage to the current generation of children, is ironically directed by people who were seen to be similarly affected by the media of television in the past.

2.4 Parenting styles and possible impact on parents’ mediation practises

The ways in which parents decide how to mediate their children’s use of digital media occur “in a larger normative context of their general dispositions towards raising children” (Oosting et al., 2012, p. 142). Mediation of digital media, as described earlier, is the way in which parents decide to regulate their children’s media, and at the same time incorporate their own use of digital media in their daily routines and parenting practises. Typical parenting has two dimensions: demandingness and responsiveness (Baumrind, 1966, 1991). Demandingness refers to high expectations for the child to behave and obey the parent (or parent substitute), as well as follow the effective implementation of family rules. Responsiveness refers to what extent the parent conveys affection, recognition, and respect for the child’s changing needs (Burns, & Gottschalk, 2019).

Recent literature also stresses the significance of the dynamics in the relationship between child and parent, like the socialisation process, it is an arrangement in which both parent and child play their parts. Diana Baumrind (1966) originally developed a classification system of three parenting styles, authoritative, authoritarian, and permissive, which has been the basis of the general theoretical framework concerning studies within the field. A fourth style was later developed. According to Baumrind, the parenting style is a set of attitudes parents have and the following conduct employed when parenting. It measures how parents manage authority over their children using demandingness and responsiveness.

Baumrind defines *Authoritative* parents to exhibit both demandingness and responsiveness. They assist verbal communication and the child's initiative, and they reach conclusions together. They use power, yet common sense to succeed in their goals. It proves to be effective communication between the child and the parent. Authoritative parenting is correlated with children's higher levels of self-esteem, higher levels of academic accomplishment, and greater perceived capabilities for learning and performing at designated levels (Burns & Gottschalk, 2019, p. 78), and children with authoritative parents are less at risk to bully or be bullied (Georgiou et al., 2017). In relation to mediation practises of children's digital media use, parents in Nordic countries more often apply the type of mediation which is based on discussion with children about their use of digital media (Smahel et al., 2020). Therefore, one can perhaps presume that this can be partly an indication of an authoritative parenting style, however, it may be difficult to determine depending on the research design and needs further investigation in the given context.

Authoritarian parents, on the other hand, are more demanding but not responsive. These parents tend to exert power, reprimand, and prohibit maintaining and accomplishing compliance. Literature has shown that authoritarian parenting can lead to negative effects on a child's mental health (Burns & Gottschalk, 2019, p. 78). Because Nordic countries may more often have parents who partake in discussing children's digital media use with the children themselves, can, as previously noted, be an indication of a less authoritarian parenting style. Those parents who may employ a more authoritarian parenting style may be more hierarchical in their child-rearing approaches, where they expect obedience as opposed to offer explanations as to why they make decisions in a certain manner. Thus,

they perhaps employ more restrictive mediating strategies towards their children's digital media use.

Permissive parents are especially responsive but not demanding. These parents are typically described as affectionate, accepting, and non-disciplinarians; instead of establishing strict rules, they favour freedom as opposed to accountability (Burns & Gottschalk 2019, p. 78). Studies show that permissive parents are more likely to have children who are involved in bullying others. (Dehue et al., 2012, p. 27). Studies suggest that children as they grow older are not as intensely mediated by their parents in their use of digital media (Eklund & Bergmark, 2013). However, when children are younger it may be more favourable to be vigilant regarding their use. This does not endorse intensive parenting per se, nor judge the permissive parenting style, but being attentive to children's use of digital media can perhaps render children more resilient once they encounter risks online.

Neglectful parents, which is a fourth developed style, exhibit neither demandingness nor responsiveness. These parents do not exert enough supervision, they show little to no warmth and support and have no anticipation for manners. Children of neglectful parents are more prone to aggression, they typically exhibit disruptive behaviour and are non-collaborative, and experience mental health issues (Burns & Gottschalk, 2019, p. 78). Regarding mediation practises in the light of the neglectful parenting style may be caused to be concerned, and it also emphasises children's different conditions while navigating a digital environment.

Furthermore, research shows that mothers more often adopt an authoritative parenting style, whereas fathers more frequently adopt an authoritarian parenting style (McKinney & Renck, 2008, p. 825). Research findings also suggest that parents assume different parenting styles depending on the gender of the child (2008, p. 806). This can perhaps explain why some mothers experience child-rearing differently from fathers, as authoritative parenting can involve being attentive towards the child's needs to a greater degree than the authoritarian parenting style does.

The idea of parenting styles has been extended to the internet by Valcke and colleagues (2010). The study, with the perspective of internet parenting styles, involved children in primary schools, and their internet usage. The findings indicate a dominance of the

authoritative parenting style. When adjusting for the gender of the parent, educational background, and age, the styles differ. The parenting styles are also correlated to the level of parental internet use, the parent's attitude towards and experience of the internet. Furthermore, the different parenting styles considerably affect the child's internet use. When parents employ a permissive parenting style, the highest level of internet use by the child is observed. The lowest level is registered if parents employ an authoritarian internet parenting style. This can indicate that an authoritarian internet parenting style involves rules and restrictions similar to restrictive mediation practises. As previously noted, research suggests that parents are led by their already-established parenting styles and values concerning the family. These are in turn extended to mediate children's digital media use (Oosting et al., 2012; Livingstone et al., 2015). Interestingly, the relationship between parenting style and mediation practises are dependent on parents' experience with digital media. Parents who perhaps work or have an interest in technology, may also be more confident users themselves, as well as engaged in their children's digital media use (Livingstone et al., 2015, p. 6). Furthermore, Livingstone and colleagues suggest that Baumrind's authoritative parenting strategies may afford the basis for advancing helpful information concerning the relationship between parenting styles and mediation practises (2015, p. 22).

Figure 2. Parenting styles (Baumrind, 1966, 1991) in relation to internet parenting styles as described by Valcke and colleagues (2010).

Parenting styles (Baumrind, 1966, 1991)

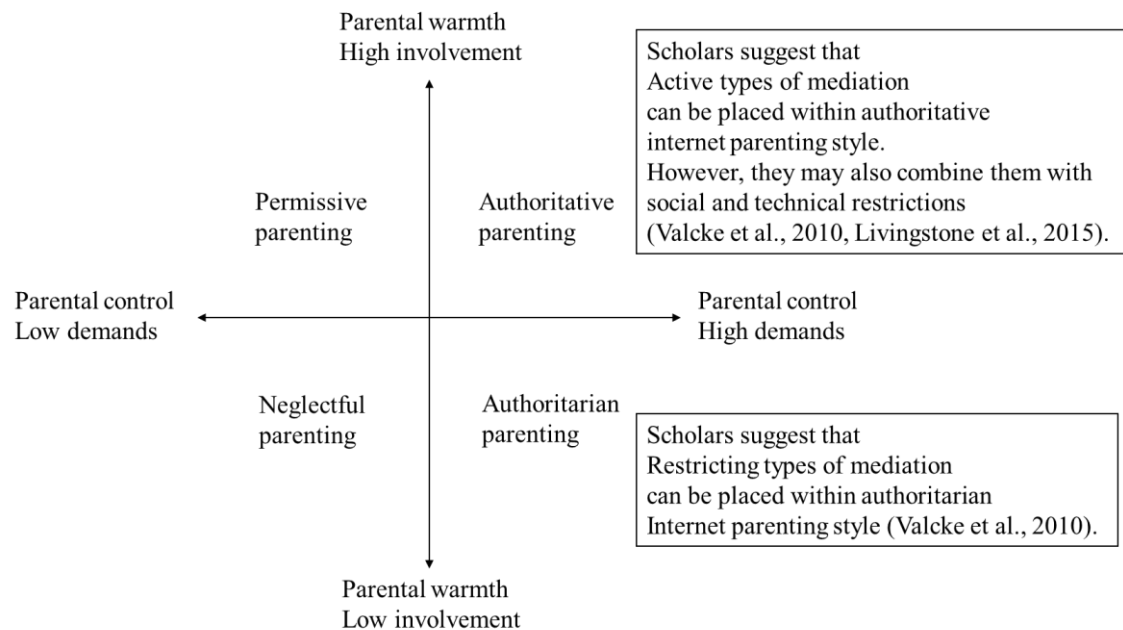


Figure 2 is partly adopted from Livingstone and colleagues (2015). It depicts previous research about parenting styles (Baumrind, 1966, 1991) and how active and restrictive type of parental mediation practises of children’s digital media use may apply.

In relation to parental styles, ideas of child-rearing and their potential impact on children, new concepts within digital media use have emerged: phubbing and sharenting. In the context of digital parenting, these concepts describe parents’ use of digital devices, which can decrease their responsiveness to their children by diverting their attention towards digital devices instead of their children (Aagaard et al., 2021). The contemporary digital culture allows parents to reach larger audiences through social media where they may carefully arrange images of themselves and/or their children. As a result, new parental behaviours are evolving, such as the concepts of phubbing and sharenting, which in turn may have negative effects on children’s well-being, as well as their right to privacy (Robiatul & Rachmawati, 2021). Despite these new parental behaviours, the notions of “good parenting” and “intensive parenting” suggest that parents are overly involved in their children’s lives and whereabouts, indicating a child-centred approach.

According to Livingstone and Blum-Ross, traditional research literature on parental mediation shows little interest in parenting as a concept (2020). This may be because those types of investigations draw on universalising reports of child psychology development more so than on a more historically sensitive account of the sociology of the family, which may also be related to parenting styles. It has focused on the effect of parenting on the digital experiences of children, instead of looking at the evolution of parenting about parents' apprehension and expectations of technology along with the realities of family life (Livingstone & Blum-Ross, 2020, p. 44).

To put the current inquiry of fathers' mediation practises in Norwegian society in context, Aarseth (2011) suggests that the Nordic perspective of the family as an institution is changing, the relationship between children and parents is in transition. Like Anthony Giddens proposed in 1992, post-war westernised countries have experienced a "democratisation of the private sphere" (p. 184), there is a new focus on "new intimacy" in relation to sociology studies of the family. On the one hand, the family can no longer be understood as an institution based on complementary roles and mutual obligations, it is rather based on pure emotional bonds (2011, p. 84, Stensland, 2022d). On the other hand, there are those who oppose this statement and argue that tradition, obligation, and material necessity still play a pivotal part in what is defined as the foundation of close relationships today (2011, p. 84, Stensland, 2022d).

These new perspectives on relationships are closely linked to the history and traditions of the Nordic countries in which emphasis is put on social democratic values such as solidarity. There are relatively small differences between groups and individuals which are enabled by policies regulating both family and work life, and by extension, policies that promote gender-equal parenting (Windwehr et al., 2022, p. 197). Besides, research indicates that Nordic welfare states afford parents with access to both economic and cultural resources, indicating a preference to intensive parenting. However, differences in adaptations among separate social classes may occur (Ellingsæter, 2022, p. 154). These matters are currently threatened because of neoliberal tendencies, higher financial, as well as social competitive tension, rising inequality, and a weaker social welfare state (Aarseth, 2018, p. 84; Stensland, 2022d). Parental styles as well as mediation practises in the context of society may therefore be affected as they are intimately connected (Livingstone & Byrne, 2018, Livingstone & Blum-Ross, 2020). Thus, the "normative gaze" on parental

practises, in the form of parent shaming, where parents look at each other's practises and judge them according to the given norm, can herein appear prevalent. Kalmus and colleagues suggest that when developing more thorough strategies for effective parenting concerning children's use of digital media, it is essential that parents can be guided through the understanding and practise of the relationship between mediation practises and parental style (2015, p. 131).

2.5 Digital Parenting

Digital parenting is defined as how parents relate to and regulate digital media in the context of the upbringing of their children (Mascheroni, Ponte & Jorge, 2018, p. 9). The concept covers the diverse ways parents employ when managing and mediating their children's interactions with digital media, such as active mediation and restrictive mediation (Livingstone, Blum-Ross, 2020), which I will return to. In addition, digital parenting also implies practices in which "parents themselves incorporate digital media in their daily activities and parenting practices, and, in so doing, develop emergent forms of parenting" (Mascheroni, Ponte, and Jorge, 2018, p. 9). As mentioned earlier, the concepts of phubbing and sharenting are evolving behaviours within digital parenting, which in turn affects the different strategies they employ to mediate their children's use of digital media.

Livingstone and Blum-Ross carried out a study on digital parenting in London in 2017. They recognised types of digital parenting, and these are practices made meaningful by certain social and digital values, attitudes, and prospects of the future, which are not always conscious, nor coherent (Stensland, 2022a). As previously mentioned, there are parents who either embrace, balance, or resist technology, however, these areas appear to be dynamic, what families are facing in an ever-ongoing development within both technology and the sets of attitudes towards it (Livingstone, Blum-Ross, 2020, p. 11). This has to do with social norms and values, parents may therefore waver within these genres. Parents who are understood as embracing at one point, generally seek out digital media, either for themselves or their children to make family life easier or to gain valued skills, or for some, to keep up with the forecast of a digital future. Balancing parents try to succeed by maintaining some digital practices and not others, this is often devised by

assessing risks and opportunities in the present or the future. Parents who resist, have expressed attempted efforts, occasionally, to manage the presumably inevitable penetration of digital technology into family life (Livingstone & Blum-Ross, 2020, p. 11; Stensland, 2022a).

The authors emphasise the significance to recognise and find ways to regulate and communicate with children what the context, the content, and the connections digital media facilitates, instead of adhering to the public discourse on screen time. The *context* to think about is where, how and with what effects children gain access to digital media, the *content* to consider is what they are watching and using, and the *connections* to reflect upon, how digital media are allowing or destabilising relationships (Livingstone, Blum-Ross, 2020; Stensland, 2022a).

As previously mentioned, in both notions of being a good parent and intensive parenting, it appears that parents experience social expectations of always being digitally connected and keeping their children under close supervision to monitor and take care of them simultaneously. Therefore, the task of mediating children's use of digital media may be perceived, as well as experienced, as overwhelming.

2.6 Parental Mediation Theory

The motive behind the mediation of television was recognised in research to be because parents took an active part in controlling and regulating their children's use of the television, and so the term "mediation" was later established among scholars (Clarke, 2011, p. 323). Studies have also shown that some of the logistics and planning of family life surrounded what was shown on television, a sort of assimilation of television use in everyday family life (Robins, 1995), much like how digital media infiltrates family life today (Livingstone, Blum-Ross, 2020).

Furthermore, as previously remarked, the concept of screen time is problematic, both within parents' mediation practises of children's use of digital media, and especially on its own. Scholars have yet to find and agree on a collective concept that encapsulates screen time for the variety of purposes it affords; goal-oriented behaviours such as communication, information seeking and entertainment (Kaye et al., 2020, p. 2). Previous

research on screen time has largely assumed unidimensional measure, such as numerical quantities of minutes/hours spent in front of a screen, even though technology affords people to be mobile, yet with the screen. This may only fuel the societal debate about the negative effects on younger people's psycho-social functioning and health, especially as it is consistently stated, not only in policy and media circles, but sometimes also in academia. However, surprisingly little evidence-based research can confirm that screen time only has negative effects, and this is because of the limitations of self-reported data, challenges for measuring screen time both overtime and in different contexts (Kaye et al., 2020, p. 9).

Parental internet mediation explores how parents interact, control, and regulate the use of their children's way of consuming digital media. The aim is to lessen potential harmful effects on normal development within the physical, psychological, and emotional health and sociability of children/teenagers (Kirwil, 2009; Iqbal et al., 2021, p. 2). Parental internet mediation is primarily placed within the concept of media effects and stems mainly from communication which deals with the social, psychological, and developmental perspectives of an individual, but also indirectly puts emphasis on the importance of interpersonal communication between parents and their children (Clarke, 2011, p. 324).

In everyday family life mediation practices can involve agreements or disagreements between parents and children, for example, concerning adhering to age ratings of video games, the amount of screen time, and what type of social media applications to have on one's smartphone. Sometimes arguments can involve what peers may be permitted and not oneself. Hence, parental mediation of children's use of digital media concerns different upbringing strategies which lean on the values that are important to parents that they want to transfer to their children. Some variables which might affect parental internet mediation are the age, gender, and digital literacy of the child as well as how often the child uses and wants to use digital media (Nichols & Selim, 2022, p. 11). The parents' socio-economic status, education, digital literacy, own internet use, and knowledge of online risks and opportunities in relation to child development, parenting style, if the parents feel that the internet poses a significant threat to their fundamental values, and their general attitude towards the internet (Kirwil et al., 2009). Scholars have suggested many different types of mediation practises, however, the most widely adopted originate

in the early research on television (Clark, 2011), and they are Active mediation: discussing media content and what behaviour that follows; Restrictive mediation: setting rules; Co-viewing: watching television together (Azam, 2023, p. 27).

Furthermore, there are several aspects which makes parental mediation practises in Norway appealing, and more specifically paternal mediation practises. Firstly, Norway has a high level of internet access among both parents and children (Elvestad et al., 2021). Secondly, the digital implementation in schools is wide which means that many children have access to digital technology, if not in their own home, certainly in school (Becker Aarseth, 2023). Thirdly, according to The World Economic Forum, Norway is one of the most gender equal countries in the world which serves policies that promote gender-equal parenting (Windwehr et al., 2022, p. 197). There are nonetheless gender challenges in research hitherto on parental mediation practises. Earlier, research has found that mothers, more informed parents, parents of younger children, and higher-income parents are involved in more parental mediation strategies than fathers, less informed parents, parents of older children, and lower-income parents (Eastin et al., 2006; Warren, 2005). Prior research has often depended on mothers' accounts on mediation practises, making the fathers' accounts less relevant, and as a result, the concept of parental mediation is skewed (Symons et al., 2017, p. 97; Symons et al 2020, p. 1571, Warren, 2017, p. 496).

A study conducted in Switzerland found that one of the reasons behind a mother's greater concern about mediation practises has to do with them "confronting fears and guilt in the face of social norms that a 'good' mother should regulate screens 'well' within her household (Balleys, 2022, p. 1559). The study concluded that parental digital mediation is entrenched in a gendered social and interactive environment, "where fathers and mothers do not adopt the same roles, the same duties, nor the same mental burden" (Balleys, 2022, p. 1559). Conversely, more recent research shows that fathers are more likely than mothers to worry about the time spent with video game activities particularly. Mothers in turn are more restrictive than fathers concerning remaining within the recommended age ratings of video games (Azam 2023, p. 96).

Parents can apply diverse or combined dimensions of mediation, i.e., active co-use, restrictive, monitoring, technical, internet safety mediation, or no mediation (Iqbal et al., 2021, p. 2; Paus-Hasebrink, 2018, p. 54). The reason behind parents selecting multiple

dimensions of mediation or no mediation is, as previously noted, a question of socio-economic conditions, own use of the internet, digital skills, level of communication with children/teenagers, the vulnerability of the child, and the perceived risk the child is exposed to by engaging in different online activities and their frequencies (Iqbal et al., 2021, p. 8; Nichols & Selim., 2022, p. 11).

However, as previous research suggests, parental mediation of children's use of digital media is also seemingly embedded in a gendered social and interactional environment where mothers and fathers assume different roles in relation to child-rearing (Balleys, 2022). Iqbal and colleagues argue that parental internet mediation helps develop critical thinking and cultivate resilience among children and teenagers to cope with online risks and confirm online safety. The study also suggests predictors when considering the contextual factors of parental internet mediation, e.g., values, customs, beliefs, socio-economic conditions of families, and place of residence (2021, p. 8). The authors also argue, like Livingstone and Blum-Ross (2020), that parental mediation of children's use of digital media is a constant process. Parents review and accommodate their way of mediating based on the response and reaction of children and teenagers, with a final wish to shape and build resilience in them (2021, p. 9). This is also similar to that of different parental styles which are based on the parent's responsiveness and demandingness towards the child.

As previously remarked, parental mediation theory still has its basis in research on television viewing from the 1980s, therefore scholars argue that there is a gap which needs further investigation (Livingstone & Helsper, 2008; Clark, 2011; Jiow, Lim and Lin, 2017). The internet offers many more activities as opposed to just watching television, for example, surfing the internet, social media use and interactive video games. Therefore, there is need to theorise further and, most importantly, in relation to what type of medium Jiow et al., 2017; Azam, 2023). Jiow and colleagues (2017) conducted a study with the aim to enhance the descriptive ability and explanatory power of parental mediation theory by identifying and outlining the specific strategies parents undertake when mediating their children's use of the Internet. They explain how restrictive, co-active (co-viewing), and active mediation are comprised of gatekeeping, discursive, investigative, and diversionary activities.

The authors used a dyadic study to determine further explanatory concepts which are underlying strategies to maintain the overarching types of restrictive, co-use and active mediation, specifically in mediating activities within the realm of video games. The results imply that parents' strategies do not fall into the clearly marked categories of restrictive, co-use, and active mediation. Instead, they employ a range of mediation practises over a fluid combination depending on several factors which included the child's behaviour and personality, gaming activity and preferences, as well as the parent's parental approach, lifestyle constraints and their knowledge of video games. The four activities that were identified were: Gatekeeping, which refers to parents' rules and regulations regarding the child's exposure to video games; Discursive, meaning parents focus on discussing video game use with their children; Investigative referring to parents' information seeking and skill acquisition in order to better mediate their children's use of video games; and lastly, Diversionary activities which refer to parents active efforts to steer their children away from video game activities to alternative activities such as sports or other.

The study sheds light on mediation strategies as not necessarily set to involve certain practices, but in fact many. It may therefore be sufficient to suggest that other areas of children's digital media use and how parents mediate are dependent on the context, content, and connection the use itself facilitates.

2.6.1 Digital literacy and digital inequalities placed within the Realm of parental mediation practises

As stated before, one of the many reasons behind parents' strategies when mediating their children's use of digital media, may stem from the level of economic resources, education, access, digital literacy, and other socio-culture causes. To be able to make use of all the opportunities embedded in digital technology, one needs, not only technical competence, but social, creative, and critical competence (Staksrud, 2017). Digital literacy or to be media literate according to the Norwegian Media Authority is the ability and knowledge to make informed decisions about the media content one consumes, saves and shares (2022, Stensland 2022c). Moreover, digital inequalities, as defined by Helsper (2021) are systematic differences in economic, social, cultural, and well-being

opportunities and resources between people from different backgrounds. The author's aim is to go beyond describing inequalities in order to establish public awareness of why they matter. General inequalities can be objective, subjective, absolute, and relative. Inequalities consist of well-being and resources, as well as resulting in opportunities and outcomes (Helsper, 2021, p.8). Therefore, it seems sensible to suggest that children experience different parental mediation practices depending on their parents' diverse backgrounds and general living conditions, which may result in what digital skills and understanding the children will acquire and how they will be able to employ them.

A way of exemplifying some aspects of digital inequalities is through Paus-Hasebrink's long-term qualitative panel study in Austria, between 2005 and 2017, on the significance of media within the socialisation of socially disadvantaged families (Mascheroni, Ponte, Jorge, 2018). Observations and in-depth interviews with children and their parents were employed, however, there were more mothers involved than fathers. It highlights how the parents of the study dealt with mediation practices over 12 years with respect to both children's age and the changing media over time. The theoretical framework of the study was based on concepts that would help to determine the interplay between socio-economic and socio-emotional properties within the everyday life of these families. The results showed a correlation between parents' socio-structural background and their ways of sustaining and relating to their children's use of digital media. Thus, parents' resources shape their ability to support their children (Mascheroni, Ponte, Jorge, 2018, p. 57-58).

This concludes previous studies, as well as the concepts presented, and will in turn enable me in finding the answer to what guides fathers' decision-making processes concerning the mediation of their children's use of digital media accordingly.

2.6.2 Research Gaps

- Different contemporary parenting philosophies may not be experienced equally across gender, race, class, and geography, which in turn may lead to skewed accounts of parenting.
- Typically, research on parental digital mediation has an overrepresentation of the reports from mothers as opposed to fathers.
- Scholars suggest further investigations on the homogenised concept of digital media concerning parental digital mediation. There is a need for research on children's different digital media activities and how that affects parental mediation practises.

3 Methodology

3.1 Research design

In this master's thesis I will explore how fathers mediate their children's use of digital media. The goal is to understand guides fathers' decision-making processes concerning the mediation of their children's use of digital media. To ensure this investigation, I have conducted interviews. This chapter starts with an introduction to the qualitative approach, the research design of this thesis, and how this method helps to answer the research question. Further, I will conclude this chapter by reflecting on research ethics.

3.2 Qualitative approach

This study follows a qualitative research approach. The qualitative approach implies an inductive method to both theory and research, a bottom-up perspective which relies on the individual's *interpretation* of the social world, her epistemological position, but also her ontological position, which is how she *perceives* social reality, as it is socially constructed (Bryman, 2008, p. 22). Therefore, I decided to interview my subjects to get a conversational account on how they perceive their practise of mediating their children's use of digital media in relation to their interpretation of a digital reality in Norway. To repeat the research question:

RQ: What guides fathers' decision-making processes concerning the mediation of their children's use of digital media.

3.2.1 Recruitment and Informants

I approached a primary school to get in contact with potential informants. The first two participants contacted me by e-mail, after that the remaining participants were recruited through the snowball-method. I asked whether the first two informants knew any fathers who would want to take part in the study. Once I had new informants, they were also asked if they knew anyone who would be interested to take part in the study, and subsequently the rest of the sample of qualitative data was gathered. The informants are fathers, between the ages of 38 and 45, with different national identities, 70% of the informants have Norwegian national identities, and 30% have other European national identities. The informants have between one and three children. The study concentrates on fathers with children in primary school, who are between 6 and 12 years of age.

3.2.2 Semi-structured interviews

The purpose of choosing semi-structured interviews, which is a combination of a structured and unstructured interview methodology where the questions are both predetermined and spontaneous, is to achieve an open and profound understanding of how fathers mediate their children's use of digital media. Kvale and Brinkmann suggest that it gives the investigator the opportunity to notice perspectives and answers from the informants (2009, p.130). A questionnaire could have given me a yes/no answer to their possible habits and general experience in relation to the mediation of digital media, but it does not give any deeper understanding of why. Furthermore, keeping the conversation relevant, and finding a balance between what and how many questions to ask the participant are some of the challenges of semi-structured interviews (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009, p. 131).

Firstly, before conducting the interviews, a semi-structured interview guide was created based on (see Appendix 1) themes relating to the theoretical conceptions of the research topic, as well as relevant dynamic questions to stimulate the informants to talk about their experiences and feelings. The interview guide was split into two sections. The first section

is an introduction to find out variables of gender, age, and if the child/children live/s with both of his/her parents. These questions were “How old are you?” and “How old are your child/children and what gender are they? “What does the child’s everyday look like, does he/she live with both parents?”. The following section of the interview guide depends on questions related to theoretical conceptions, such as how the informants chose to decide when mediating their children’s use of digital media in the light of perceived risks and opportunities and the reasons behind their choices. The final part consists of a concluding question in which the informant is free to add thoughts in relation to the previous conversation.

I used a recording device application “Diktafon” on my smartphone which was provided by the University of Oslo. The recorded interviews were transferred to a software program “Nettskjema” to be stored prior to transcription. The interviews were conducted between the 20th of December 2022 to 26th of January 2023. Depending on how much information the participants were sharing, the interviews lasted on average between 30-45 minutes. The first interview was given in a café, since parts of the uptake were slightly compromised because of noise, the rest of the interviews took place over Teams/Zoom. The interviews were then transcribed by listening to the recorded files of interviews stored in “Nettskjema”. The languages used by the informants were primarily Norwegian, but also Swedish and English, the transcription is written in the original spoken language. Because of my research purpose within digital parenting and what guides the informants’ decision-making processes when mediating their children’s use of digital media, I decided that emotional expressions such as laughing and/or sounds like “um” should be transcribed in the interview, however not word-by-word, only when the informant noticeably laughed after saying something, paused for a longer duration, or gave the impression of being uncomfortable or uncertain.

3.2.3 Approach for analysing interviews

According to Kvale and Brinkmann, there is not a standard way to analyse interviews, it rests on the goal the researcher has with her investigation (2009, p. 192). The development of the analysis has already started from the moment of establishing the interview guide to the moment of transcribing the interviews (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009, p. 190). Deciding

who and what I had in mind for the study and the conceptual framework to use, an image of common characteristics/themes and questions that seemed suitable for the interview guide slowly started to take form. The interview guide (see Appendix 1) specifies the objective of the analysis and themes that can be investigated.

I performed initial coding during the month of February 2023. The process of coding was experienced as quite straining at first. With a lot of data transcribed, there was a need for organising both thoughts and material accurately. I started by reading over the transcripts several times and marked similar areas, which also became more and more familiar. Next, I started to remember other parts of the interviews which had examples and further elaborations within a theme or concept. The first areas to evolve were: “Responsibilities as a parent”. “Guilty conscience”. “Thoughts on both general and children’s technology use”. “Screen time”. “Opportunities in relation to the digital media”. “Risks concerning the use of digital media”.

The second step involved selecting core categories that identify larger concepts common in the data, for example, perceived parental responsibilities in mediation of digital media, perceived opportunities, perceived risks, and what wish lies behind how fathers decide to mediate their children’s use of digital media.

Thirdly, I proceeded with yet another stage of coding, searching for overarching themes that form a “storyline” in the data sample, creating a comprehensive description. Distinct themes emerged when working on the coding process several times. These themes were subsequently organised into overarching categories: “Perceived responsibilities and decision-making concerning digital parenting”, “Screen time in relation to the notion of good parenting”, “Mediation of children’s digital media”, “Hopes”, and “Fears”. By analysing the sequential coding patterns in the transcription of the interviews, it increased the possibility of summarising potential underlying strategies such as common sense, which fathers employ when deciding how to mediate their children’s use of digital media/internet. In turn, it has shed further light on potential gendered parental mediation strategies. Also, during the analyses of the interviews, I discovered that follow-up questions could further have specified the findings relating to the encompassing themes that had emerged. It did however facilitate the opportunity to discuss theory and previous research which may have brought a different perspective on the findings.

In addition, there is a need to contextualise the use of specific words. Based on digital parenting and the mediation practises that parents employ to guide and help their children to minimise risks and embrace opportunities in a digital landscape, words such as fear, anxiety, worry and concern, and at the opposite end, words such as hope, are frequently used. To differentiate between words such as fear, anxiety, worry and concern, an explanation is necessary.

The noun fear as described by the Oxford English Dictionary online provided by Oria, University of Oslo's database (hereafter OED), is "the emotion of pain or uneasiness caused by the sense of impending danger, or by the prospect of some possible evil" (2023). When describing fathers' fears, it is illustrated by the participants as a feeling of uneasiness of what the prospect of a digital future may render.

Anxiety, according to the OED, is the "Worry over the future or about something with an uncertain outcome; uneasy concern about a person, situation, etc.; a troubled state of mind arising from such worry or concern" (2023). Seemingly the word anxiety is close to fear, however, fear appears to pertain to an emotional state, whereas anxiety seems to be of a cognitive kind, thinking about something one cannot control to the extent it becomes troublesome. The participants have so described general anxieties because they may not be able to control what their children at some point may be exposed to, being bullied by others, groomed by strangers etc.

To worry is described as "A troubled state of mind arising from the frets and cares of life" (OED, 2023). Some of the fathers explain that they for example worry about their children becoming too passive because of digital media. They also worry about allowing them too much screen time due to lack of time and/or energy because of the logistics of life.

Concern pertains to being anxious to do something; to consider it important to do something; to be preoccupied with doing something (OED, 2023). Some of the participants describe, for example, that they are concerned about the implementation of digital media in school, because in turn they feel as if the digitalisation permeates too much of family life, and therefore they wish for a framework which serves to facilitate a balance of digital media between home and school.

On the other side of the scale, the noun hope means to have an “Expectation of something desired; desire combined with expectation” (OED, 2023). Some of the participants for example express hope for their children’s development of sufficient digital literacy to be able to thrive in a digital future.

3.2.4 Literature Research Process

In my reading of literature which concerns the context of my thesis, I found it to be quite overwhelming at the start. There is an abundance of literature. However, I soon discovered that many of the same names are often repeated within the theoretical frameworks of digital parenting and parental mediation practises. What came with less effort was reading the book “Parenting for a digital future How Hopes and Fears about Technology Shape Children's Lives” (2020) by Professor Sonia Livingstone, the Department of Media and Communications at the London School of Economics and Political Science, and Alicia Blum-Ross, the Public Policy Lead for Kids and Families at Google. The book highlights polarised debates on screen time as well as how digital media meets aspects of everyday life of various families. Thus, I realised that many of things the book describes are similar to my own attempts navigating digital parenthood.

The report on Norwegian digital parenting (2021) by Professors Eiri Elvestad, Elisabeth Staksrud and Kjartan Ólafsson, the Department of Media and Communications at the University of Oslo, has been very helpful in placing my investigation within a Norwegian context. Furthermore, the most recent survey, by the EU Kids Online network of researchers, with reports from over 25,000 children from 19 different countries, plots children’s use, access, skills, online risks, and opportunities. It has served to facilitate the comparison to the accounts of parents of the Norwegian digital parenting report.

Beyond numerical data, I have followed cited references and tables of content in books as well as academic journal articles. Subsequently, this has led me to find several scholars and their allegiances within the universe of digital parenting as well as the area on the effects of digital media use on children. I have utilised databases such as google scholar and Oria to obtain articles in the context of parental mediation practises on children’s use of digital media. I found it challenging to locate literature which specifically highlights paternal mediation practises. As previously stated, there is an overrepresentation of the

accounts on mothers' mediation practises of their children's use of digital media. All the same, this is what has kept me alert to find the most recent literature which may include more gender-equal samples of data on parenting mediation practises. Besides more current research, I have included previous research on digital parenting and mediation practises to explain the trajectory from that of parental mediation practises of children's television viewing which digital mediation theory is ultimately based on.

3.2.5 Reliability and Validity

Reliability concerns the question of whether the research is repeatable or not (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009, p. 245). Reliability also has to do with whether the information given to the researcher by her subjects is trustworthy and consistent. Would they offer the same reply to other researchers as they have given me? (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009, p. 245). Furthermore, when setting out on a qualitative study journey, there is need for reflection on what decisions regarding expectations one might have in relation to the chosen topic of investigation. Thus, if not reflected upon and structured, it may restrict the level of acceptance of the subjects' perspective and view of the world, which is fundamentally the aim of qualitative research, to see the world from my subjects' eyes (Bryman, 2008, p. 389). Likewise, it may also become problematic in relation to a "biased subjectivity" I may have of fathers' mediation of their children's digital media (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009, p. 213), as a woman and a mother. First, and foremost, it is beneficial to challenge oneself and become aware of any biases. To do so, I need to be aware of my own knowledge as well as put my own perspective aside to accomplish objectivity. My background, gender, and ethnicity add layers to what may influence my interpretation when analysing the material. Thus, I have carefully observed my own prejudices in relation to what the fathers report, to interpret and analyse the answers correspondingly. Like Kvale and Brinkman suggests on the notion of reflexive objectivity, it is important, as a researcher, to be conscious of inevitable prejudices and write about them whenever one sees fit in relation to the investigation at hand (2009, p. 242).

Moreover, the interview guide has supported me to remain relevant to the topic of my research. As previously mentioned on semi-structured interviews, they can also offer the researcher flexibility in the possibility to modify topics and/or questions during the

interview which leaves the informant free to share their own experiences and views spontaneously. I would use the interview guide to make sure that the discussion stayed as much in the vicinity of the topic, while presenting a new topic, and if the conversation deviated from the topic of origin.

The word validity refers to “the truth, the correctness, and the strength of a statement” (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009, p. 246). Qualitative research pertains to whether the data accurately reflects the phenomena I have set out to study (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009, p. 246). In other words, is the data that I present in my master’s thesis accurate/valid. In contrast to more quantitative methods, the semi-structured interview affords me flexibility and depth in my pursuit to collect answers from my subjects as I am free to confirm what they have already said or ask them to elaborate on within a given topic. In turn it can reinforce the validity of the data. Moreover, as the subjects are anonymous and the study should so not pose any negative effects on them, they might in turn feel that it is comfortable to be open and honest about the topics of the interview.

3.3 Research and Ethics considerations

The study has been guided in accordance with the directions for research ethics specified by The National Committee for Research Ethics in the Social Sciences and the Humanities (NESH). These directions specify and give advice how to conduct research with ethical responsibility and reflection. They offer good research conduct, as well as clarify potential ethical problems. Firstly, the researcher needs to consider her responsibility to conduct research properly. It is important to act truthfully, recognise other’s work as well as treat each other with respect in the field of research. When choosing to challenge and discuss claims made by others, the previous research ought to be respected and not misquoted, and any arguments taken or inspired from publications should be referenced to their rightful source (NESH, 2021). The claims that are made and inspired in my master’s thesis, will therefore be referenced to the source to respect and honour previous research.

As a student researcher at the University of Oslo (UiO), I am also required to follow the procedures and responsibilities set by the university. In the thesis supervision sessions, both myself as well as my supervisor share the overall responsibility to follow the

research ethics procedures from both NESH and UiO. The supervisor's position is to guide the student, who in turn is responsible to accomplish the steps of the thesis (NESH, 2021). It is vital to take ethical matters into consideration throughout the whole process of the research project (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009, p. 63). Issues to consider are that my research data should be transparent for future research to replicate. It is essential that the data I gather is not fabricated or deployed, because that can create consequences for the people participating in the research, as well as myself. It is necessary to be aware of one's own assumptions to closely observe the reality of the phenomena one intends to study. The narratives I want to highlight should thus be taken seriously by awarding them with transparency and honesty.

3.3.1 Research Ethics considerations of the Interview study

Before the interview process started, a notification form to NSD was sent, The Norwegian Centre for Research Data (Norsk Senter for Forskningsdata) to receive approval for the investigation. Kvale and Brinkman describe the ethical considerations of an interview process as encompassing at least three different elements: The role of the researcher, informed consent, and confidentiality (2009, pp. 70-74). I therefore filled in general information about the study, the intended population for the study, necessary documentation on informed consent, the interview guide as well as how the information was intended to be safely stored. Approximately a month after submission, I received approval, and the interviews could begin.

Participants were prior to the interview sent an information letter about the objective of the investigation and the methods of the research (see Appendix 3). This step of the process is central for the participants to be aware of their rights and access to their answers and how they would be safely stored and later deleted at the end of the study. They were also informed that if they wish to, for whatever reason, could decide to pull out from the study at any time (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009, p. 71). Because the participants of the study were adults, there was no ethical issue to consider as to who could give consent, compared to studies with children, where there is a need for a careful process in parents as well as children giving their consent to be studied. The goal of the interviews was to create narratives (Miller & Crabtree, 1999, p. 93). However, consideration was given to the

ethical issue of how much information to be specified and when, as opposed to leaving out certain features of the design (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009, p. 71). Therefore, the interview guide was not sent prior to the interviews, as I wished the participants to answer as spontaneously as possible. However, a short summary of the study was given in the information letter in which it is also mentioned that I was the only one to have access to the recordings and the transcriptions of the interview.

In the master's thesis, the participants' names, and the area they reside in has been removed and replaced with informant number, "Informant 1", to keep track of statements during the analysis as the informant may be quoted several times. The age and nationality of the participants with another national identity than Norwegian, are specified in the analysis. The ages of the participants' children as well as their domestic situation, if they live with both parents or have other living arrangements, are also given and specified in the analysis. I decided that this was sufficient to maintain the participants' confidentiality, so they are not recognisable to others.

4. Analysis

To answer my research question: What guides fathers' decision-making processes concerning the mediation of their children's use of digital media, I have conducted an analysis. It is based on the replies from 10 male informants who are recruited in a predominantly middle-class area in Norway, fathers to young children and teenagers. The fathers' ages range between 38-45. I have focused on the informant's replies which concern children in primary school, and how the fathers describe their mediation of their children's use of digital media. Two of the informants are single parents with shared parental responsibility, meaning that the child/children live/s 50% of the time with their mother and 50% with their father. I have given each participant a number between 1-10. Table 1 beneath illustrates the participants' ages, nationalities, their children's ages, genders as well as their domestic situation, if they live with both parents, or if they have other living arrangements.

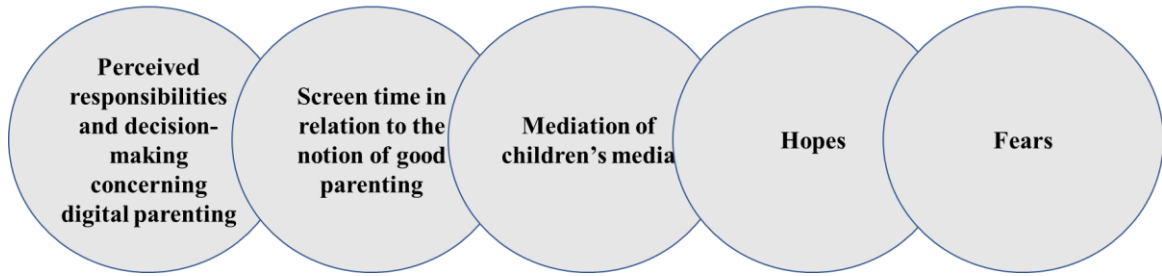
Table 1: General information about the participants and their children

Participant	Father's age	National identity	Children's gender & age	Children living situation – Do they live with both biological parents?
1	43	Norwegian	Girl 11, Boy 9	No. 50/50
2	40	Norwegian	Girl 9	Yes
3	39	Norwegian	Boys, 9 and 6	Yes
4	41	Norwegian	Girl 9	Yes
5	41	Norwegian	Boy 11, Girl 9, Girl 3	Yes
6	45	German	Girl 9	Yes
7	42	Swedish	Boy 12	No. 50/50
8	41	Norwegian	Boy 16, Girl 13, Boy 8	Yes
9	43	Swedish	Girl 9 & 8	No. 50/50
10	38	Norwegian	Girl 9 & 12	Yes

The different overarching themes are “Perceived responsibilities and decision-making concerning digital parenting”, “Screen time in relation to the notion of good parenting”, “Mediation of children’s digital media”, “Hopes”, and “Fears”. The themes respectively highlight trends which were discovered during the project, which may in turn imply that some fathers think similarly around areas within digital parenting and the act of meditating their children’s use of digital media. Figure 1 below illustrates the different themes.

Figure 1:

Overarching themes of the analysis



4.1 Perceived responsibilities and decision-making concerning digital parenting

In the current theme, I discovered that many of the informants talk about their responsibility as a digital parent, and in some cases, some of them also include their partner. These participants include their partners when explaining what decisions and behaviours that lie behind the regulation of the children's use of digital media. It seems that several fathers feel responsible for their children's social and emotional well-being when they use digital media. Also, the mention of online safety and the need for an explanation behind their decisions to their children is stressed as something they feel is important. As informant 9 explains "I want to keep them safe from harm. I need to control their use by setting up certain rules and explain why".

The way some of the fathers describe how they control the safety of their children indicates that teaching children to recognise certain risks in relation to their use is essential to them as fathers. Furthermore, it is also conveyed from informant 5 that he and his wife use strategies such as taking samples of their children's use to control safety, and he also explains why:

We don't overlook content much; we take samples every now and then and feel that this is how we manage their use. I try to make them aware of a choice and instead of deciding for them, I rather tell them why I would not make that choice and then trust their choice. The aim is to make them develop an understanding.

The statement may also imply that there is a need to express mutual decision-making, in a household where both parents live together as a couple when discussing safety or potential risks in relation to children's use of the Internet. The presumed rationality behind this statement is led by the father using the pronoun *I*, as he subsequently describes why he and his partner do not monitor digital content because *he* tries to educate them to become aware of what choices they make as opposed to forbidding them acting or taking certain choices when using the internet. In fairness the question was addressed to him and not his partner. However, the use of the pronoun *We* stands out after having transcribed the interviews, and therefore noticing when *We* is used and in what context is interesting. *We* being used more prominently as opposed to *I* in decision-making, but the pronoun *I* is seemingly more used when giving reasons behind the decision.

The next example illustrates features of perceived responsibility of digital parenting as well as mutual decision-making concerning the children's safety using digital media, however in this case it seems that both parents share a mutual understanding behind the decision-making when mediating the use of digital media. Informant 10 explains:

With the first iPads they had when they were younger, they started watching YouTube. *Me and my wife* quickly realised that the more they watched the less relevant the content became, so *we* just decided that *we* don't use YouTube. The oldest daughter still does not use it but the youngest is now allowed to do so. *We* followed the recommendations sent by the school. We think those are good. *I* don't think *we* have that many rules, however, *my wife* is very strict on age limits.

The father's perceived responsibilities in mediating digital content, appear to be one that is a shared responsibility, as he mentions his wife's wishes too. The example calls attention to the algorithmic trajectory of YouTube, which him and his wife think leads to

less relevant viewing than chosen in the first place. Furthermore, the father expresses that him and his wife mutually followed the recommendations from school. This draws attention to a third party in relation to accountability, namely educational institutions. The father conveys a willingness to follow those recommendations.

In another reply which concerns perceived responsibilities and what governs one's wishes to regulate; the father explained the rationale in why him and his wife made the decision to expose their children early and let them have a mobile phone. The father does not necessarily talk about his responsibilities, again the shared responsibilities between him and his wife as the pronoun *we* is frequently used and the expression "our approach". On the one hand, it may perhaps imply that some couples are more in tune with each other's values and opinions than other couples, resulting in more successful mediation of digital media, as it may be less of a conflict in decision-making around regulating children's use of digital media. On the other hand, it may not always be as clear as to who is responsible for what when one co-parents, in the case of a 50/50 divide. Albeit the subjective perception of one's responsibilities as a parent may be clear, however, if there are different rules in different homes, it can perhaps lead to conflicts around decision-making concerning the children's safety when using digital media. Most importantly, it can be confusing for the child to know how he/she is supposed to use digital media. As informant 9 puts it: "Their mother has control (of their digital use), it was also she, who absolutely insisted that they ought to have iPads".

The single father describes that the mother insisted on giving the children iPads, this being because of financial reasons or giving the children digital access/opportunities is unclear, however, the pronoun *We* is never mentioned, also adding to the interpretation that the decision was perhaps not a mutual one. This might imply that the father did not have the financial means to buy iPads for his children, but the mother did, and therefore she has control, on the other hand, it may be a question of general accountability of their mutual children's use of the internet, she bought the digital media and therefore she carries more responsibility than him.

The general tendencies of perceived responsibilities and decision-making that motivate how fathers think and act around digital parenting seems evident in the way informant 4 describes his parental role: "Teaching her about how to safely use digital spaces, to

understand their functions and what they enable, and being aware of digital risks, cyber criminality as well as misinformation”.

The example also describes someone who may consider himself as digital literate or is at least aware of the importance of digital literacy for his child to be granted opportunities in a digital environment. As children inhabit different digital environments because of their parents’ knowledge, socio-economic and cultural backgrounds, they are therefore left with possibly different future outcomes in how to handle both risks and opportunities in a digital world (Helsper, 2021). Similar to the thinking around perceived responsibilities in relation to one’s child’s use of digital media may mean the dividing of certain responsibilities within a household, where one perceives the other, or oneself as being more capable of a distinct area. The following statement implies that one of the fathers seems likely to recognise the need for such a divide to keep up with his digital responsibilities in relation to his daughter. It can also indicate, like previously, that there are joint decisions made concerning digital parenting. The rationale behind it, is however determined by the father himself. He points towards the mother’s lack of knowledge and background within technology, as opposed to his own, and because of that, it is an area which he then finds more as his responsibility. Informant 6 explains:

My daughter’s mother does not think about it as much as me, but she doesn’t have the technical background and knowledge as myself which might be why, in a relation to sharing different parental tasks, this is my area, and my partner has others.

4.1.1 Main takeaways from the overarching theme “Perceived responsibilities and decision-making concerning digital parenting”:

- Fathers typically emphasise that their children’s emotional and social well-being is important.
- There seems to be a difference in how several fathers in this sample describe the act of deciding how to regulate their children’s use of digital media. They typically, if living together with a partner, decide together, however the rationale behind is usually described as their own.
- Several fathers stress the importance of teaching their children digital literacy as an area of perceived responsibility.

4.2 Screen time in relation to the notion of good parenting

The theme “Screen time in relation to the notion of good parenting” is based on both what screen time means to the fathers as well as an appreciation of what the general norm of behaviour is amongst parents on how to mediate their children’s screen time. It seems that several informants’ way of thinking around their way of mediating their children’s use is that it is a difficult area of general digital parenting. I also interpreted a feeling of uneasiness when some of the fathers disclosed how much screen time, they permit their child/children. Some of the parents give reasons to why they allow a certain amount of time, some do not, and some give the reasons of a personal busy schedule or the need to unwind. It seems to confirm what the general literature on the area of screen time says, that parents, in general, feel anxious about how many hours their children spend with digital media versus how many hours is preferable. This matter adheres to what may be perceived as the right way, and that being based on general norms, as well as ongoing public debates, which are dependent on the social and cultural context (Livingstone & Blum-Ross, 2020).

The area also resonates with the notion of “good parenting” or the “good parent” which involves a more child-centred focus. Good parenting to the younger child is to constantly

be involved and focused on the welfare of the child, whereas the “good parent” of the older child is one who is “flexible, available, and focused on permitting the child freedom and the opportunity to take risks, and the responsibility for dealing with the consequences of her mistakes” (Clarke, 2011, p.330). Herein, lies a dilemma which is noticed in several of the interviews.

The following example may illuminate the link between screen time and the notion of good parenting. Informant 5 describes how he experiences other parents speaking to each other about their children’s use of digital media. He, in such a situation, feels that it also reflects upon him as a parent:

It can also be difficult to speak with other parents, mostly in bigger groups such as parent meetings at school. Discussing content, amount of time spent gaming, language use and when one should permit a certain type of videogame; everyone has different point of views. Some parents do not dare to comment, and then there are those who get to gatekeep the discussion, and usually those parents do not know too much about it. These are value choices one makes as a parent, your own values in relation to child rearing is mirrored and you are then criticised indirectly for those in these types of forums.

The father seems transparent in the way he describes a situation in which he finds it difficult to perhaps defend his choices in relation to permitting his children to certain content, screen time and use of video games at what age. It also appears that discussions among parents on the topic of mediating one’s child’s use of digital media can be detrimental and herein be linked to the concept of parent shaming. The participant experienced that he might be at the receiving end of it as he may allow more of both content and screen time. I interpret a tone of frustration at the same time, which can imply that he might not feel as confident that his choices are at the end of the day “good” ones, which draws on the notion of “good parenting”. He feels that other parents appoint themselves as experts, when many may not be just that, and this seemingly leads to frustration. This indicates that it is experienced as difficult to feel confident about one’s choices concerning the amount of screen time and/or what content one permits.

As previously mentioned, children's future digital literacy outcomes are dependent on parents' education, and socio-economic and cultural backgrounds. Thus, the amount of screen time permitted, or access to digital resources may differ, and for different reasons. This example describes how much screen time a son may or may not be granted, depending on the number of resources he as a father may have at his disposal, and perhaps not as much from the information he has received around the topic. As informant 7 puts it:

We have spoken about screen time in school, I think it sounds reasonable. We have never employed it. However, sometimes I realise that the amount of his screen time depends on my time and energy, when I lack those, as a result, he gets more screen time, which in a way becomes a bit like a babysitter. We live in a small space so sometimes it is good that he does things on his own.

It seems that many of the informants become mindful when discussing the regulation of digital media concerning screen time. It might be because there are so many factors depending on how much, or how little one parent grants his/her child. This single father gives reasons for the amount of screen time which is dependent on his time and energy as well as the size of their shared living space. Perhaps one of the reasons behind the notion of parent shaming is when people are afraid to admit to underlying reasons for granting a certain amount of screen time, thinking that one is admitting to not being a good parent according to the norm. It may therefore lead to the opposite of solidarity between parents. However, like informant 5 suggested, there are those parents who perhaps claim more space on the subject and appoint themselves as experts, which can make other parents self-aware and uncertain about their choices, so instead they stay silent.

The use of discourse concerning feeling like a "bad parent" in the context of screen time appears to inhabit many parents' vocabulary. However, previous research suggest that mothers cross-culturally are more involved in the mediation practises of their children's use of digital media (Livingstone et al., 2011). In turn it seems to be the function of an overall normative assumption "throughout the European culture and geographical area and beyond", in which women are more inclined to manage most of the caregiving

responsibilities in families (Kalmus and Roosalu 2012, p. 237). Thus, it may be reasonable to believe that discourse such as “bad parent” is more commonly used by mothers about themselves, as opposed to fathers. Investigating what guides fathers’ mediation of their children’s digital media is therefore important. The meaning of good parenting in relation to digital parenting is to have constant control and be able to regulate without problems, and additionally succeed as a parent in all other areas of one’s children’s lives, some scholars refer to it as intensive parenting. It appears that physically active children are a sign of good parenting. Thus, children’s leisure activities are important to many parents (Stefanson, Smette & Strandbu, 2018). Many parents appear to weigh their worth as good parents in measures of both their children’s active play, and in them taking part in the given activity (Clark, 2011). As informant 9 explains:

Sometimes I feel like a bad parent when I do certain chores during the weekend, and I realise that my oldest daughter hasn’t moved from one spot for a few hours and I, in frustration, might tell her off and say, “You should do something else!”. That is not fair at all. We haven’t established any rules so I shouldn’t get frustrated with her.

It appears that the father has thought about not having set up specific rules for screen time and so becomes despondent as he realises that his treatment of his daughter is simply unfair. However, it may seem like he rationalises his daughter’s screen use because of him being a single father as there are many areas to take care of, like informant seven who is a single father and expresses a lack of time and energy, however more generally the example may give an idea of what single parenthood looks like in the context of digital parenting. There are, as earlier stated, many factors contributing to a child’s amount of screen time.

There is a trend of being anxious around screen time in the current sample of fathers. One participant describes his granting of screen time while laughing tentatively. On the one hand, it can suggest that the father experiences a guilty conscience because his son not being physically active at some point during the weekend. On the other hand, he may perhaps feel that he should activate his son by finding something he can do, or they can do together. Some parents appoint themselves as project managers of their children’s spare time activities and put a lot of emphasis on being physically active (Clark, 2011).

Referring to the previous discussion on being perceived as a good parent in relation to digital parenting, the notion of good parenting appears to be tied together with activities beyond screen use, such as children's participation in sports/leisure activities. Furthermore, having children taking part in different leisure activities, appears to be a question of class and resources, but in relation to digital parenting it also seemingly follows the rationale of diverting activities. More time spent on other activities, such as leisure activities, time with family and friends, and activities in relation to school, are better than time spent on screen activities (Stefanson, Smette & Strandbu, 2018, Azam, 2023). As informant 8 puts it:

[There is] More use of digital media during the weekends. He starts from the moment he wakes up for a few hours, and if we don't have any plans on a Saturday for example it's like I don't dare to say it [laughs], well altogether easily 8-10 hours screen time.

Some other fathers' statements which indicate the same idea, that activities beyond screen use are preferable, is described accordingly:

My biggest concern currently is to have my daughters participate in some sort of leisure activity. I would feel much more at ease, as opposed to what I do when they are mostly engaged with their phones or digital devices. It can expand their base of friends, which results in a good balance, and I would not have to constantly monitor what they do on the internet, limit screen time etc. Informant 9

I would say that we might be on the plus side on screen time, and we have few restrictions, but they also have a lot of leisure activities. If they didn't have any leisure activities and only been in the house watching a screen, the rules had been different. Informant 10

Besides established norms and general discourse in relation to what is considered good parenting practises, and how these translate to the omniscient landscape of digital parenting, it may nevertheless be a source of frustration for many parents. The frustration and complexity of how to handle one's own children's use of digital media is one thing, however, how to handle it in relation to one's children's peer's use, can be another. The

following quote illustrates the social context of digital parenting as informant 6 describes how he is confronted with what he deems to be the right decision in mediating his child's use of screen time compared to other parents' decisions. He explains:

I know we are the strictest in the class. It happens that she says that "everyone else is allowed so and so much screen time". She is very restricted. I know I am a little overprotective, and I do reflect upon that to see if there is anything I can change.

Two things are noticeable in this quote. Firstly, the father is aware that his mediating of his daughter's screen time is strict in comparison to what other parents' mediation practises in the class may be. Secondly, the father mentions that he is worried about being too strict and overprotective. He further elaborates and says that he tries to trust his daughter to judge for herself about why he is so restrictive. He also mentions that he discusses it with her, but he is concerned that it might be a little too much for a nine-year-old to handle. However, it may perhaps be normal practice for children to compare what they are allowed to do, to that of their peers, and subsequently voicing that to their parents to have them change certain regulations to be more in their favour. Thus, parents may sometimes struggle with their decisions in relation to how much screen time they allow their children, especially when confronted with how other parents decide things on the matter. The quote points towards the insecurity of knowing if one does it right or wrong in relation to children's use of digital media (Lieberoth & Fiskaali, 2021). What is the right amount of screen time, and what is the wrong content? To navigate parental mediation of digital media is a balancing act and needs to be put in the context of each individual child and their specific conditions.

4.2.1 Main takeaways from the overarching theme “Screen time in relation to the notion of good parenting”:

- Fathers typically convey a general uneasiness around the topic of their children’s amount of screen time. It is also noted in the literature that it is an area of concern.
- The single fathers in the sample express resources (amount of time, energy, space) to be variables that affect how much or little screen time their children are permitted.
- Several fathers stress that leisure activities are preferable, as a means of being occupied with other activities beyond digital media.

4.3 Mediation of children’s digital media

A third theme emerging from the data concerned paternal mediation practises. I noticed that some of the answers in the sample concerning the way informants describe mediation of their children’s use of digital media seem to coincide with the attitude they have in general about technology. The concepts, which I intend to use are, “Balancing and resisting technology” as suggested by Livingstone and Blum-Ross in their study of different families in London in relation to digital parenting (2020). The sample of the informants’ current type of mediation (at the time of the interviews) seem to lean more towards a balancing type of attitude and type of mediation. However, there is also a couple of fathers expressing a quite restrictive approach.

In one of the interviews, the father signals a balancing method when mediating the child’s use of digital media. Reasoning around how one wishes to regulate internet use can be permeated by parental style, values, and opinions on the matter. Additionally, depending on a father’s socioeconomic status, educational and cultural background, nationality and more, it may also influence how he chooses to mediate his child/children’s use of digital media. However, some of the above-mentioned variables have not been measured in this study, only considered. As informant 2 puts it:

My wish is to use common sense when regulating her use of the internet.

However, common sense is subjective. I try to find a balance – I can

understand that a day at school is as energy-consuming as a day at work for an adult, therefore I understand that there is a need to unwind afterwards, and that should be permitted [unwinding with digital device]. We try not to use [verbal] force, instead have her understand certain things – practise what you preach and the other way around as well.

Inviting a child to understand one's argument and being transparent about why one makes a certain decision can be an indication of a certain type of parental style. This father's way of regulating his daughter's use of digital media seems arguably democratic and pedagogical, based on what he says during the interview. He describes that he, himself needs to unwind with digital devices after work, so therefore he can appreciate that his daughter might share the same need after school. However, the father may not so much assess risks and opportunities in the present and the future in that he allows her to unwind, which may be more to boost emotional well-being and restitution after school as he does after work. However, he seemingly describes some sort of habit in relation to the use of digital media, both for himself and his daughter. Therefore, it would be reasonable to suggest that the father's parental style is also influenced by his attitude towards technology, and predictably his mediating of digital media.

Another example illustrating a balanced approach to mediation of children's use of digital media is how informant 3 explains it:

Being able to recognise individual needs and differences in each child and what that means when using digital media is important [to me]. If they need to unwind by playing online and rather do that than hang out physically with friends, I feel that this is ok, they still socialise with those they play together with.

From the description of how he reflects on the importance of recognising the individual needs in his children, it so seems likely that there is a reasoning behind his regulation of his children's use of digital media, in this case, gaming online. What I can gather from the information is that at least one of his children might many times prefer to socialise while gaming online with his friends, as opposed to spending physical time with them, so therefore it resembles a sort of risk versus opportunities situation. Some parents might think it is a risk to let the child spend time gaming, especially in relation to screen time

and the lack of other activities, but also not spending time with friends in person. However, for some individuals, it might be more of an opportunity in the way they socialise, they may find it easier to do so while spending time with peers online. This type of situation seems like a frequent one, and therefore it comes down to the retaining of the use of digital media in relation to socialising with peers. One set of rules, or framework might not fit everyone. The father seems confident in how he mediates his children's use because of acknowledging their needs as well as possible challenges.

One participant has previously, during the interview, expressed his views in the collective, using the pronoun "we" when given answers to questions. This statement may imply that he and his wife make decisions together in relation to mediation of digital media. In addition, I interpret his general statements being of a less worried kind as opposed to some of the other fathers in this study. As informant 10 puts it:

I have, or we have thought about it. We gave them mobile phones relatively early. Partly because we did not have a landline, and we wanted to be able to get in contact [with them]. When they first were given mobile phones, they were also given access to other digital devices such as iPads. Our mindset is that if you are exposed to something quite early, like them both having Snapchat accounts, however limited to our family account, it may not be as exciting as you had thought. Therefore, the use might not be as excessive as it would have been if you were not allowed to use it. Say that you give the children a soft drink or two during the week, and then they might not binge it during the weekend.

This reasoning recalls the quote "everything in moderation". It seems plausible that the informant along with his wife has assessed both risks and opportunities at present as well as in the future by letting the children get accustomed to, in this case, mobile phones early (as he puts it). As earlier stated, parents may oscillate between resisting, balancing, and embracing technology. The informant further mentions that perhaps his daughters may keep secrets around their use of digital media as they grow older, and that can possibly change his attitude towards technology, and approach to mediation strategies.

Furthermore, some parents are perhaps content with the implementation of digital media in schools. Others may feel that their children are exposed to screen time in school on top

of how they try to regulate the amount of time spent with digital media at home. There is currently a debate in Norway around the digital implementation in schools. Different consequences are highlighted, both positive and negative. The positives pertain to digital literacy, as well as multimodal methods to present one's accumulated knowledge (Heie, 2021). The negatives concern other practical areas of learning which may be impeded, such as reading on paper, writing with a pen, and inevitably screen use/screen time (Becker Aarseth, 2023; Brochmann, 2023). In my discussion, I will return to the essentials on the debate of the digital implementation in schools. Moreover, for parents who may be struggling to regulate screen use at home, it is understandable that it can be frustrating knowing, if one solely counts screen time, that during a child's day, most is spent in front of a screen. As informant 1 explains:

It becomes a problem when the use of digital media undermines other activities. [...] I have been in contact with the municipality to express worry because of too early of an implementation of digital media (iPad) in school, already in first grade. [...] I wish they would not have employed it until third grade.

The informant clearly expresses a wish for later rather than sooner digital exposure in school for children starting first grade. The other activities that might be undermined are as the informant elaborates later on during the interview, joint activities with family and friends, much similar to the discussion about leisure activities beyond screen activities. The father describes his everyday as a parent as someone who constantly regulates a lot of use of digital media, and he is in fact frustrated. He, therefore, seems to have a sceptical approach towards technology, but more specifically children's use of it. He also describes occasional attempts of regulating the inevitable digital penetration into family life, thus his mediating of his children's digital media is considered to be (at the moment) quite restrictive.

The following example also illustrates a father who is described to be restrictive towards technology, specifically children's use of it, as well as his approach when mediating his daughter's use of digital media. However, he does not describe a general scepticism against technology as he himself has always had an interest in it, for example building his own computer when he was younger, amongst other interests within technology. Further, the

statement demonstrates the inevitable everyday regulation of digital media, and how this father arranges family life around it. Informant 6 explains:

We have restrictions for internet use, 30-45 min/day and it doesn't matter what device. If she does not stop when we ask, she loses 30 min the next day. We don't allow screen time after 7 PM. She gets to watch documentaries in her native language; this is an exception because it is important to me, and for her native language learning. We try to restrict it because she is not going to use it as much as she wants.

The way the regulations around the use of digital media is described is noticeably restrictive. The rules are also clear, and the purpose of the exception is educational in relation to language learning. The informant elaborates on why it is important to him to regulate in such a way. He previously noted a difference in his daughter's behaviour when she was not allowed to use digital devices at all. He found her to become more creative in other activities such as drawing or doing gymnastics in the house. He reads a lot of research on children's use of screens and finds it more negative than positive, that is one of the reasons why he mediates his daughter's use in such a way.

4.3.1 Main takeaways from the overarching theme "Mediation of digital media":

- A few fathers in the current sample can be categorised as belonging to the balancing type in relation to technology and their approach towards their mediation of their children's digital media. It is however essential to remember that parents can waver between different types of mediation over time.
- It seems that the fathers who are described as being within the balancing type, also describe their children's needs and ways to address that.
- A couple of fathers are described as being within the type to resist technology, not in general, but the technology they deal with when mediating their child's use of it. It seems that the overall opinion is that technology penetrates family life and so inhibits other activities or the children's capacities within other areas.

4.4 Hopes

The next theme encapsulates general hope for how the informants described their children's current capabilities concerning digital media, their own general knowledge about the contemporary digital environment, and their wish and expectation for what that may render in the future. Several fathers had hopes around digital literacy, language learning and digital creative abilities for their children. There were a couple of the informants who did not necessarily mention much positive regard on hopes for the future of their children's use of digital media, but still worth mentioning and discuss in relation to the rest of their interviews, the other informants and literature which I will set aside to do in the discussion section of the thesis.

As with some of the other informants, I experienced this father being less optimistic about the future of his children's use of digital media and what that may afford them. However, informant 1 describes hope regarding the development of his children's digital literacy. He also sees a greater critical mindset in children when they consume media because of comparing it to the information he felt he had access to when he was younger. He also comments on observing older generations exhibiting less digital literacy on social media platforms. In reference to this father's previous statement, in which he expressed regret that the school introduced iPads already in first grade because of the collective amount of screen time. The participant therefore feels that their well-being is put at risk because the overall usage of digital media in school as well as at home becomes excessive. It is therefore understandable that he does not seem overall enthusiastic about the future, but he still puts emphasis on the positive about developing a critical mindset.

On the contrary to some of the other fathers, the interview with another informant is understood as optimistic in general. Referring to other fathers in this study who have expressed that they have similar interests within certain areas of their children's use of digital media, such as gaming, as mentioned previously, this father appears to have an interest in contemporary as well as future digital literacy. He also uses the word resilience; meaning being exposed to both risks and opportunities on the internet to learn how to handle these experiences. He also differentiates between the digital tool and the digital content. The way in which he seems to mediate his daughter's use is by teaching her about the positive and negative aspects of it, and in turn she might well come out of equipped

for life in the future digital world. As noted earlier, digital inequalities exist within a country as well as compared to other countries on a global scale (Helsper, 2021). It appears that the causes and consequences of digital inequalities do not only exist when it comes to access to the internet but also suggested by informant 4, in terms of knowledge and interest: “Digital literacy in relation to how we will be working in the future. Developing that, cannot be considered a downfall. Developing resilience, being aware of the tool itself and not just the content”.

Moreover, one father expresses gratitude in what his children achieve in relation to language learning and what a privilege that may be for future use. He also enjoys the creativity he observes in his children when they have access to the internet, he watches them create things by watching instruction videos on for example YouTube. He also describes the social interaction between him and his children when they play online or offline games together, he feels they “have a moment” which to him is interpreted as important and memorable. Interestingly the blurring of lines in the parent-child relationship is commented on overall, he feels that they have established a type of equality as individuals and this is due to his daughters’ newly developed digital skills, and therefore he sees hope in a digital future for his children. Informant 9 explains it accordingly: “Language learning. They watch things and become inspired to create stuff. We play games together online; the dynamics change between me and my daughters when we get to work together. We become equals; they can help me with things etc”.

Clark discusses the theory and concept of participatory learning, stemming from that of social constructivist theories (2011). It offers the altering of models of learning from top-down, which may benefit the educator’s intent, in this case being the parent, to a more open familiar model that benefits the learner, being the child, and facilitates negotiation from the child’s perspective. Clark further poses a few questions in relation to participatory learning, for example, how often do parents spend time learning from and playing with their children in mediated environments? In what context and social family setting are children allowed to choose what digital activities along with purchases the family is to take part in? In what situations do parents learn from their children about digital media and different websites and their affordances — and do children perceive their parents’ authority differently when the parents take an interest and participate in their digital environment? (2011, p. 334).

The current example describes parts of participatory learning, and it also seems beneficial for the parent in this case, as he puts emotional emphasis on both the time spent together, the ways in which they become equal, as well as his daughters' time to shine in a learning process which he gets to take part in. The daughters' attitudes towards their father may become one which facilitate other areas in his upbringing of them. By interpretation, it seems that this is a frequent and democratic activity in this family setting, and it appears overall favourable.

It is evident that when one shares digital interests, there is a chance of bonding for both parties. Interestingly, in relation to gaming as a joint activity for children and parents, there may also be mothers who enjoy this type of activity with their children. A study showed decreased levels of internalizing and aggressive behaviour, and increased levels of pro-social behaviour in adolescent girls co-playing video games with their parents, and as a result better family behavioural outcome (Coyne et al., 2011). However, this can also be a social cause or consequence of digital inequalities amongst children. With that in mind, perhaps parents also experience pressure to make time to play together with their children and engage in their digital interests. This results in different evolving westernised parenting practises which may so set the contemporary norms for parenting. Moreover, resources can be described as time, knowledge as well as financial means to maintain the current digital devices which supports such activities.

Additionally, one father expresses a humble approach to both the positive and negative outcomes of his children's use of digital media. Similarly, to the other fathers, informant 10 is optimistic yet realistic about his children's contemporary and future use of digital media. It seems beneficial, as earlier noticed, that the parent has general interest, or has fundamental digital knowledge to navigate the digital penetration of everyday family life. Informant 10 explains:

I might have a naïve but positive perspective on digital media and the internet. It brings lots of opportunities, of course, children may become exposed to less favourable things. However, it is great to be exposed to digital media early, and learn how to use them, as this is how we will work on an even greater scale in the future.

The father in this example lives with his wife and two daughters. Besides parents' digital literacy and general access to digital media, it seems that beneficial socio-economic family circumstances, which then may improve socio-emotional conditions in families, may advance the chances of creating less strained, and more child-centred mediation practises. These factors also contribute to benefit all family members (Livingstone et al., 2015; Paus-Hasebrink, 2018). Likewise, it seems that nuclear families have an advantage in that they put sufficient focus on what is needed to work towards the resources needed to concentrate on their children's pursuits and requirements. An Austrian longitudinal study showed that the type of mediation practices which focuses on the child and his/her perspective seems more beneficial for all family members. However, it is almost only in nuclear families one can maintain child-centred mediation practises. These families had accomplished better financial means over time through a new workplace, a better-paid job, or double income (Paus-Hasebrink, 2018, p. 57). Thus, better socio-economic conditions benefit child-centred mediation practises. The father in this case is part of a nuclear family and this is perhaps why he finds the future more hopeful than not.

Moreover, the social aspect of a digital world and its future is commented on by informant 3. "Being able to be social globally." He talks about his children having got acquainted with his brother, their uncle in Australia, and how they have established a friendship over gaming. As discussed by Azam, among boys, gaming serves to facilitate socialising (2023, p. 22). He has hopes that they will continue to do so as they do not get to see each other in person that often. He finds it very positive.

4.4.1 Main takeaways from the overarching theme “Hopes”:

- A few fathers expressed hopes around the prospect of developing digital literacy, language learning, digital creative abilities for their children and the facilitation of maintaining social relationships.
- Some fathers have not expressively mentioned as much hope concerning their children’s future use of digital media, more so wishing for a balance in the use between school and home environment.
- Participatory learning was evident with one of the fathers who communicated high hopes for his daughters’ use of digital media, in which he himself could see how it benefits the parent-child relationship.

4.5 Fears

In the interviews the informants discussed their children’s use in relation to both risks and opportunities. As a result, the final theme “Fears” appeared. It also appears reasonable to analyse the theme in the relation to the report on digital parenting in Norway (Elvestad, Staksrud, & Ólafsson, 2021), which is based on data from the EU kids online research in 2018 and interviews with families in Norway. The report shows that parents are to a lesser degree worried about their children’s own risk behaviour as opposed to others’, and that the others, in turn, will take advantage or hurt their children when they are online. It seems that quite a few of the fathers in this investigation share some similar risk assessments regarding their children’s daily use of digital media. They discuss concerns about what others might expose their children to, such as adult online users impersonating themselves as peers with the ulterior motive to groom their children. In addition, the participants are afraid that their children might get bullied by peers on social media, and that their children being exposed to misinformation. Furthermore, there are also general fears, anxieties concerning the exposure to media and what habits children’s use of digital media may impede in their general social and cognitive development. For example, becoming “too passive” when consuming media, not taking enough initiative in relation to other activities outside of media use.

One father communicates the fear that his children make themselves alone, when, in fact they have the possibility to be together in a family setting. Much like the idea posed by Sherry Turkle (2011), that technology has become the designer of our relationships, it is therefore an illusion of genuine relations and leaves authentic communication redundant. On the other hand, children as they grow older, may seek more privacy, and especially if the bigger portion of social activity happens online with existing friends, exchanging chats, voice recordings etc. A few of the informants have also mentioned the risk of irritability in their children which, according to one informant leads to a lot of negative energy. Depending on the type of mediation practises and parental style, the way in which a parent expects the digital activity to be paused or terminated may have something to do with a child's level of frustration or irritability. Studies on children and adolescent's irritability as an effect of increased screen time seems generally confirmed (Priyanka et al 2020; Marques et al., 2015). On the other hand, becoming irritated because one needs to stop something one finds interesting, and not wanting to stop doing it, appears different from being unable to regulate emotion or attention. Individual differences are important to highlight, some children may perhaps have more "screen stamina" than others.

Furthermore, one of the fathers expresses concern that educational institutions do not have teachers who are digitally literate enough. He mentions that since technological innovations are constantly evolving it may be challenging to keep up with. His concerns coincide with the current debate on the digital implementation in Norwegian schools. The digital literacy of a teacher can be dependent on what access and further schooling the educational institution provides. In addition, there is an immense number of digital platforms to keep track of, therefore as a teacher, one must constantly be on the lookout for relevant educational examples to provide one's students with to be able to achieve all aspects of digital literacy according to the current curriculum. As informant 1 puts it:

I feel general anxiety, people contacting the children in relation to online gaming, who may be someone else than they say they are. Too much time spent alone [with digital media] although being in a family setting. Too much time [with digital media] leads to a lot of negative energy. Teachers are not always equipped with enough digital literacy which may impede the intended learning outcome for students.

Being afraid of social exclusion leads me to think about other types of rules parents may exercise on their children, for example, evening/late-night curfews. Some children/teenagers may be allowed more screen time than others, some may be permitted to stay out longer in the evening. It seems like a general fear amongst parents that their children risk becoming socially excluded, and the concern may exist not just within the digital domain, but also in many other areas of childhood. The extensive EU-kids online network of studies over several European countries show that many children risk digital social exclusion/bullying because of also experiencing it at school, it follows them home. Therefore, the EU Kids online network of researchers have analysed and concluded that social well-being (both at school and at home) in general for a child, minimises the risk of digital social exclusion (Staksrud & Ólafsson, 2019). Besides teachers' level of digital literacy and how that may affect the general outcome of children's learning, informant 3 shares his worries around both social exclusion and what the digitalisation may impede in learning fundamental abilities in school, such as writing with a pen, the ability to read longer texts, and simply not being exposed to enough books.

[I'm afraid that my children can] be socially excluded because of different mediation practises around screen time by different parents. If someone wants to play after dinner, and another one is not allowed – [there's a] risk. Digital media [was] perhaps implemented too early in school, [there is] not enough "ordinary" practise.

Digital literacy is a topic that permeates several interviews. One father emphasises the need for it in, not just his way of mediating his daughter's use of digital media, but also within educational institutions. He talks about the difference between consuming and producing digital content. He wants his daughter to become digitally literate because he worries about misinformation and cyber criminality. I interpret his digital literacy and knowledge to be quite high, which may in turn have a positive impact on the means of his mediation of his child's use of digital media. Again, it is vital to discuss digital inequalities because of different socio-economic conditions, even though the variables are not measured in this study. Together with access to the internet, digitally literate parents, and an educational system with an up-to-date curriculum that focuses on digital literacy (and is equipped to deliver it), children may become more resilient towards

different online risks. As a result, they can also reap the benefits that come with everyday use of digital media. As explained by informant 4:

[I fear the risk of] being only a consumer as opposed to a producer [of digital content]. [I fear] cyber criminality and misinformation. [I] hope that the educational system will be able to keep up to date on it. However, they seem to be on par with quite a few things.

Moreover, scepticism concerning the current digital reality in relation to mediating children's use of digital media is quite evident in more than one account. One of the fathers, with a different national identity than Norwegian, conveys a personal perspective based on his experience. It appears to have evolved through reading of research in the field of children and the effects of the internet. His family has also lived in other countries than Norway. Informant 6 explains:

I trust research and I base my decisions on that. Research dictates that it is not healthy for kids, same thing with TV. [There are] different perspectives in Norway vs the country where I am from. I think it is more an adult perspective in Norway on children's internet use. I believe it is much better in Switzerland, they use didactical methods, and they evaluate and take the perspective of the child first. I don't trust the Norwegian way.

Perhaps the research informant 6 has focused on appears to also confirms his own attitude, and therefore he envisions a quite gloomy future. Thus, it is important to note that children's accounts on their use of digital media differ between countries as well as within cultures. The EU kids online network confirms that children in Norway spend more time on the internet and feel the most content compared to children in many other European countries (Smahel et al., 2020). Therefore, it may be a complex task to mediate one's child's use of digital media, given that the new country one inhabits has another set of norms around digital media as opposed to one's country of origin. The possible parental style also has a basis in the cultural context. However, it seems that active mediation has increased between 2010-2018 in several European countries (Smahel et al., 2020), and restrictive mediation has decreased, using rules and regulations, which in turn indicates that more parents mediate their children's use through discussion and guidance in how to navigate the internet (Kalmus, Sukk & Soo, 2022). This is the more common approach in

Norway and other northern European countries (Livingstone & Helsper, 2013; Kirwil, 2009).

A general worry among the fathers is that children become “too passive”, a phrase used by some of the informants. One father uses the Swedish word “stagnerar”, which I decided to translate to the English word stagnates, meaning that something that stops flowing. I interpret that he is afraid that his daughter’s use of digital media may impede other areas in life that promotes social and cognitive development. The general feeling of there being a lack of initiative in other areas of childhood appears omniscient. Referring to informant 4 who discusses the difference between consuming and producing digital content comes to mind and the notion of children using digital media and being either active or passive. Furthermore, as previously stated, the anxiety relating to one’s children experiencing “mean” people on social media is a general concern among parents. Interestingly, informant 9 also brings forth the concern around “likes” which he is afraid will have a negative impact on his daughters:

I fear for my oldest daughter, that she stagnates, I think it has to do with her phone. I’m afraid that someone at some point will be mean towards my daughters on social media. I fear the concept of “likes” [on social media leads to] instant gratification, what if someone writes something mean?

“Likes” function like a numeric evaluative feedback system on social media. Studies suggest that the social reward system of “likes” affects the reward circuitry of the brain, and there is a link between problematic use and the moderating role of self-esteem (Martinez-Pecino, & Garcia-Gavilán, 2019; Sánchez-Hernández, Herrera, & Expósito, 2022). George Herbert Mead posed that the self generates and adopts its own self-image from the feedback of others (Bröckling, 2016). Thus, children and adolescents being exposed to numeric evaluative feedback on social media can pose a problem concerning self-esteem. It may perhaps imply that the locus of value is more focused on extrinsic values of the self as opposed to intrinsic values.

4.5.1 Main takeaways from the overarching theme “Fears”:

- A few fathers discuss concerns on what other users online might expose their children to, such as adult people impersonating themselves as peers with the ulterior motives to groom them, that their children might get bullied by peers on social media, and their children being exposed to misinformation.
- Some fathers communicate general fears, and anxieties concerning the exposure to media and what habits their children’s use of digital media may impede or hinder in their general social and cognitive development. They may become “too passive” when consuming media, not taking enough initiative in relation to other activities outside of media use.
- A few fathers question educational institutions in relation to the digital implementation. Are teachers digitally literate enough to teach their children about the topic itself. It appears to coincide with the current debate on the digital implementation in schools.

5. Discussion

There are ongoing public debates, not only in Norway but globally, concerning the digital environment children inhabit. What does it afford as well as impede in areas of education and domestic life for children, and how does it affect the way in which parents make decisions on how to mediate children’s use of digital media? It also seems that the public discourse on the concept of screen time captures most of how parents decide how to mediate their children’s use of digital media. The following discussion will focus on the findings of the previous analysis of paternal narratives on what guides the decision-making processes behind the mediation practises of their children’s use of digital media. The different areas of findings pertain to perceived responsibilities in decision-making concerning children’s use of digital media, screen time in relation to good parenting, mediation practises regarding one’s own digital background and competence, and the intricacies of paternal hopes and fears for children in a digital future. Lastly, I will return

to the public debate on screen time and the digital implementation in schools. All matters considered can let us know how the participants may interpret their world as digital parents, how this applies to previous and current research, and in turn how it may be useful for future investigations.

5.1 Perceived responsibility in a digital environment

In the realm of different parenting approaches, parental styles, and mediating a digital environment daily and the prospect of the future, parents may sometimes feel at loss. There are undeniably many different causes why parents, more specifically fathers, may feel either confident or less confident in relation to the above-mentioned factors. One of the reasons seems to include the continual exposure to general information regarding aspects of parenting, such as digital parenting, and the type of mediation practises of children's use of digital media that are preferable. These can at the same time seem unreachable to many because of the intricacies in life as well as individual backgrounds. Additionally, it seems that the general discourse on digital parenting involves mostly the debate on screen time (Livingstone, Blum-Ross, 2020). In addition, the exposure to other people's opinions, friends, and family, peers, but also from parental forums online, in which one may find discussions on specifics around mediation practises can prove to be even more confusing. Also, these different opinions may not always be based on current research or facts, and they make parents more visible to each other as well as visible to the critical gaze of society. In effect, it can increase parents' sense of opposition and uncertainty (Livingstone & Blum-Ross, 2020, p. 38), and perhaps lead to opportunities to blame and shame not only others, but ultimately oneself.

The fathers of the current study typically emphasise that their children's emotional and social well-being is important which leads many of them to acknowledge their responsibility in teaching their children digital literacy, which involves a constant assessment of risks as well as opportunities. In relation to perceived responsibilities and a decision-making process of mediation, it seems that some fathers describe the rationale behind their decisions, but often emphasise mutual decision-making if they live with a partner. Therefore, one can argue that decision-making is guided by what seems to be the father's confidence in his logic and commitment as a father.

Since much of the literature on the mediation practice of children's use of digital media lean on the accounts of mothers, yet seemingly presented as the collective accounts by parents, it is difficult to decide exactly what guides fathers' decision-making processes. Conversely, in the current dataset of paternal accounts, it may be sensible to believe that some of the fathers are generally happy to rely on their "common sense" (Shirani et al., 2012, Lee et al., 2014, p. 197).

Also, within the discourse of intensive parenting, fathers are not considered to be "naturally" organised for parenting (Lee et al., 2014, p. 184). This may consequently be one of the many reasons why some of the fathers of this study make a point by using the collective pronoun "We", when describing that they make decisions together with their respective partners.

Research indicates that when interviewing parents individually, the presence and arguments of the other parent can still affect the responses given. This could be because when couples are interviewed together, it provides an opportunity for them to discuss and define parental and marital roles as a unit (Balleys, 2022). This can cause them to separate themselves from other parental styles they do not regard as authentic.

Parental mediation is a complex task that involves "individual, conjugal, parental, and familial challenges" (Balleys, 2022, p.1573), and is possibly about declaring individual values as well as asserting one's identity as a parent, spouse and individual. Studies show that being a good parent is closely linked to being a good digital mediator (Livingstone et al., 2015; Livingstone & Blum-Ross, 2020; Balleys, 2022). I

Interestingly, as described by earlier results from the EU Kids Online survey, taking place between 2009-2011, one can find matched comparison questions about parental digital mediation. The child was asked which parent who they deemed most involved in their internet use, as well as the parents, who they in turn evaluated to be most involved in their child's use of the internet. In all countries that participated in the survey, mothers or female caregivers were reported to be the ones most involved. It is suggested that the overwhelming distribution is due to a general normative deduction throughout European countries and culture that women manage most of the weight of familial and caregiving responsibilities. The share of fathers or male caregivers who were described to be most involved in their child's use of the internet has a wide variety, depending on country.

Germany for example reported a lower number than Norway (Livingstone et al., 2011; Kalmus and Roosalu, 2012). This may further indicate that mothers, because of their more dominant involvement in their children's use of digital media, put more emphasis on fulfilling the demands of "good parenting".

5.2 Good parenting, less screen time?

As current research suggests, as well as the informants in the present investigation describe, there is an experience of growing concern about children's well-being and safety, and parents' apprehension about their own capabilities to take on the role of a "good" and "responsible" parent (Burns, & Gottschalk, 2019, p.103). To always be consistent, involved, and focused when bringing up the younger child, demands plenty of resources from a parent, especially since there are many different layers to contemporary parenting, including the digital domain. As the child grows older, the "good parent" is supposed to be flexible, available, and focused on letting the child be free to be able to deal with both opportunities and risks as well as taking the responsibility for handling their own mistakes (Clark, 2011, p. 330).

What can be read from today's societal normative values on parenting and further projected onto digital parenting appear unrealistic. Similarly, it has been interpreted to be problematic in how some of the fathers in the study perceive their responsibilities to mediate their children's use of digital media, screen time explicitly. The fathers typically convey a general uneasiness around the topic of screen time, which in turn can be understandable, since both the screen time debate and discourse about "good parenting" appear to coincide and result in fuelling the current media panics.

The report on digital parenting in Norway found that 73% of parents express concern in relation to their children's amount of screen time. 77% of parents also worry about their own total sum in screen time (Elvestad et al., 2021). Previous literature on screen time has not necessarily confirmed the media panics of today, conversely, it has been suggested by scholars that there is a discrepancy in the way screen time has been measured so far. It needs to be addressed over time and in different contexts as it is not simply a matter of passive minutes or hours, it requires to be placed within different goal-orientated

behaviours, such as communication, information seeking and entertainment (Kaye et al., 2020, p.9).

The overabundance and focus on screen time by the public, politicians as well as some scholars, affords further critique as it simply inhibits proactive approaches and policies that may alleviate the pressure which parents ostensibly experience. The ongoing discussion on screen time is too simple. The concept should not be used without the different context children use digital media, both at home and in school. Parents need more concise information and support to be able to tailor the specific needs of their children. Livingstone and Blum-Ross suggest that parents tend to highlight screen time instead of discovering and taking an interest in the actual activities that children engage in when using digital media (2020, p. 43). Albeit the concerns are usually covered by problems around sleep and behaviour which ultimately is a big concern for parents. Research indicates however that screen time on its own has little effect on children's sleep, it points more towards the overall context which surrounds screen time as opposed to screen time itself (Pryzbylski, 2020). This results in the wish to reconsider the literature on parental mediation because it places parents as the governing force in managing their children's use of digital media. It condenses effective parental mediation simply to strategies to decrease the amount of screen time. In turn, it does not increase the opportunities children may encounter, nor does it help to maintain a safe digital environment they ultimately are supposed to inhabit (Blum-Ross & Livingstone, 2018, p. 185).

Similarly, as some of the fathers seem hijacked by the discourse around screen time, there is reason to interpret some of the accounts as guilt-ridden. Ways in which the reasoning behind often evolves is that they express concern that the child may, on many occasions, choose digital time unless they have something else to do. This in turn confirms that it is less about what the children engage in as opposed to the time spent with the screen.

Alike other studies, in which it has been noted that parents criticise themselves using words like "lazy" or "crap" (Livingstone & Blum-Ross, 2020, p. 190), the current inquiry found some fathers describing themselves as "being a bad parent" concerning the child's amount of screen time, which may also result in stressing nondigital family activities. This leads to the idea of diversionary mediation of digital media (Jiow et al., 2017). The

type of mediation which refers to parents' active efforts to direct their children from screen use to activities such as sports or other. Besides, it appears preferable to parents since the screen time then becomes reduced, but as mentioned earlier, it does not necessarily keep the children safe nor help them towards opportunities.

More specifically, in the context of parents' involvement in children's sports activities, Stefansen and colleagues (2018) indicate that parents from all social classes see participation in sports as normal. It is a possibility to connect to the child emotionally, to be there, in case they need any assistance as well as to further his/her development (2018, p. 168). One of the reasons why some of the fathers in the current study, who reside in predominantly middle-class areas, express an uneasiness in relation to screen time, can indicate that they also take part in the tensions embedded in a new form of parenthood, also defined as "deep involvement" (Stefansen, et al., 2018, p. 168). It is an increased form of parental involvement with youth sports specifically, which is practised primarily by fathers in the economic section of the middle class (Stefansen, et al., 2018, p. 171).

It appears that parental involvement in children's screen-based activities has not yet reached the same level as the level of engagement in children's physical leisure activities. Many parents may disregard their children's hobbies to merely screen use or screen time. As a result, it may contribute to possible tensions in the relationship between parents and children. Those parents who have time and resources on their side may have more opportunity to engage in their children's interests overall, which may also be dependent on the division of tasks in the context of the family. Furthermore, as Stefansen and colleagues suggest (2018), the deep involvement in children's sport leisure activities may more so belong to the middle class. Therefore, it is reasonable to presume that those parents do not consider screen-based activities as important, and by extension might not consider it even to be an interest worth entertaining. One participant of the current study explains that he enjoys playing online games with his daughters, and thus he recognises an opportunity to emotionally connect with them. Going back yet again to the context, content and connection screen-based activities may facilitate for children, it can also contribute to the relationship between children and parents. Consequently, parents' responsibilities lie within the well-being of their children, and it may therefore involve taking an interest in children's hobbies, whether they are screen-based activities or not.

Similarly, as noted by Spigel (1992) the adoption of the TV as a space of “family togetherness”, appears to echo in digital activities that are conscious child-centred practises, such as co-viewing/co-active meditation, watching films or playing interactive video games together. It can make screen time less anxious for parents as it is then transformed into quality time together (Livingstone & Blum-Ross, 2020, p.40), which in turn can take the pressure off good parenting. At the same time, popular media, historically as well as currently is seen to represent this “new machine as a kind of modern Frankenstein that threatened to turn against its creator and disrupt traditional patterns of family life” (Spigel, 1992, p. 9). Thus, other types of activities beyond the screen appear to be more desirable by several of the fathers of this investigation. Even so, there seems to be an understanding among some of the participants, that the way children communicate in the contemporary digital environment is through goal-orientated behaviours such as social media or simply text messages. Albeit leaving some fathers ostensibly anxious because of the amount of screen time it implies.

Research indicates that the discourse around good parenting may affect mothers differently from fathers. This may be because it involves mothers’ perceived expectations concerning their responsibilities as parents, and by extension presumably also parental digital responsibilities. Additionally, mothers feel the moral responsibility of parenting to a greater extent than fathers do (Lee et al., 2014, p. 197, Livingstone Blum-Ross, 2020, p. 175). Balleys suggests that paternal use of screens destabilises digital mediation within the family and that the mediation practises are at the end of the day maternal anxiety and responsibility (2022, p. 1559). Mothers and fathers do not employ the same responsibilities, the same positions, and nor do they end up with the same mental liability (Balleys, 2022, p. 1572). Research has also found that, in a familial context, plenty of fathers take responsibility for caring for their children, but not to the same extent as mothers (Livingstone, Blum-Ross, 2020, p. 52). Contradictory to that, the single fathers of the current study express resources, such as time, energy and living space being variables that affect how much or little screen time they allow their children, which may so indicate that the traditional responsibilities ascribed to mothers within a household, along with “the mental burden” (Balleys, 2022, p. 1572) is something that single fathers also experience in the context of current normative values, and as a result, affects their ways of mediating their children’s use of digital media.

5.3 Mediation of digital media: Balancing and Resisting Technology

Digital media may afford families potentially useful opportunities in relation to everyday family life in which planning, and logistics make up a significant part, but also to new ways for parents to enable their children's prospects in a constantly evolving digital reality. It seems that the task of digital mediation, as mentioned earlier, with all its intricacies in relation to good parenting, is complicated, and there is no quick fix to adopt. Parents ostensibly feel the weight of responsibility in relation to their children's digital future. The perceived sense of responsibility is said to be linked to normative pressures. In turn, these norms dictate how parents should behave to further maximise their children's accomplishments. However, it comes at the cost of taxing domestic negotiations, meanwhile effortlessly making room for leisure activities which are also supposed to fit neatly into one's private life (Livingstone & Blum-Ross, 2020, p. 81). The intricate combination of these matters can consequently put stress on the relationships at hand.

Parents so seem to embrace, resist, and balance their relationship towards technologies which are entrenched in daily life. Many times, it is a matter of going back, and forth and between these types of mediation, which are related to time and social context. A few fathers in the current sample can be categorised as belonging to the balancing type in relation to technology and their approach towards their parental digital mediation. It seems that the fathers who are described as being within the balancing type, also describe their children's needs and ways to address that. In addition, some digital practices are maintained, others are not, this is often formulated by assessing risks and opportunities in the present or the future. Therefore, it may indicate that they employ an authoritative parental style, as they are sensitive towards their children's needs and behaviours in relation to digital mediation, but they also convey expectations of what they deem to be necessary strategies to achieve certain outcomes.

Given that authoritative parenting leaves children with higher levels of self-esteem, higher levels of academic accomplishment, and greater perceived capabilities for learning and performing at designated levels (Burns and Gottschalk, 2019, p. 78), and is so presumably preferable and infused in digital mediation practises by parents who in turn have the means to do so. Yet, as there are many possible aspects of inequalities in the mix

to consider, it may come as no surprise that parents with different backgrounds have different attitudes and values which affect parental style, and by extension mediation practises.

Nordic countries have historically had relatively small differences between groups and individuals which are rooted in policies regulating family and work life, in which emphasis is put on social democratic values such as solidarity (Aarseth, 2018). However, the emerging neoliberal social and political tendencies of child-rearing in relation to digital parenting only seems to produce a deeper divide between those parents with resources and those without. Resources being of socio-economic, educational as well as a culture kind.

A couple of participants in this study can be described as the type to resist technology, not in general, but the technology they deal with concerning their child's use of it. The overall opinion is that technology creeps into family life and inhibits other activities or the children's capacities within other areas. It appears that these fathers put emphasis on risks more so than the opportunities that the digital environment may pose. Thus, there are more concerns expressed about the negative effects of screen time. They experience their children becoming less focused, irritable, and missing opportunities in other nondigital activities. Therefore, their digital mediation practises appear stricter as opposed to the other participants'. This can in turn perhaps imply an authoritarian parenting style. One of the participants explicitly stated that it was important to him to restrict his daughter's screen time, however which parenting style this father in particular adheres to can only be based on my interpretation. It is, nonetheless, reasonable to further stress the importance of educating parents about the relationship between parental style and ways of mediating children's use of digital media (Kalmus et al., 2015; Livingstone et al., 2015).

5.4 Hopes concerning a digital future

In relation to what parents in general seem to think about technology is primarily the importance for children to understand how to use technology (Livingstone & Blum-Ross, 2020, p. 174). However, this is also partly dependent on digital knowledge of the parent. The report on Norwegian digital parenting can highlight parallels between the current

investigation and the accounts given by a larger population, yet it is noted that it cannot be applied to the general population (Elvestad et al., 2021, p. 19). It can however imply what parents perceive and experience as challenging within digital parenting.

The report shows that most parents, 73% perceive themselves to be able to use the internet, and there is no difference between mothers or fathers. Parents from high-income, and educational backgrounds perceive themselves more knowledgeable of the internet as opposed to parents who are older as well as parents with the lowest incomes (Elvestad et al., 2021, p. 33). Interestingly, concerning critical reasoning/discernment, only 55% of parents think it is easy to check if the information given on the internet is true. Also, 94% of the parents report to know what information they can share and the information they should not share on the internet. Parents from high-educational backgrounds as well as having high family income, perceive themselves to have social digital competence to a greater extent than those parents of lower educational backgrounds and income (Elvestad et al., 2021, p. 34-35). What seems striking at the same time is that the children in the report say that they to a lesser extent talk to their parents about their own use of the internet. Only one in five children (21%) say that their parents have spoken to them about what they do online (2021, p. 35), while 46% say that the parents have helped them if they have felt bothered by something online. Only 19% of the children have told their parents if something has bothered them online, and just 13% have asked for their parents' help in a situation they felt they could not handle on their own (Staksrud & Ólafsson, 2019, p. 67).

Several of the participants in the current study convey hopes for their children to develop digital literacy, and some express positive experience in the school's effort to do so as well. The reasoning seems based in general anxieties around what the children can be exposed to online, being able to differentiate false information from true information, and not becoming only a passive consumer. Also, digital mediation practises may be connected to the level of parental digital literacy. Judging from the Norwegian report on digital parenting, it appears that many parents deem themselves to be knowledgeable about the use of internet. However, there is a lower number of parents who do not know how to check if information is true on the internet, which is possibly one of the pivotal points of digital literacy. This leaves a gap in what means they have when teaching their children digital literacy. Nevertheless, this can also be a reason why parents need

assistance to educate their children, yet they doubt the school's ability because the increasing implementation of digital media in schools. One of many concerns has to do with the implication on fundamental skills such as ability to read and write. Thus, it is complicated to cross the digital terrain unless you are equipped with significant digital literacy. It needs to be based in social, creative, and critical skills; therefore, it appears clear why parents hope for their children to develop robust digital literacy to become resilient in a digital future. Some fathers did not strongly emphasise much hope concerning their children's future use of digital media, more so wishing for a balance in the use between school and home environment. In any case it seems reasonable to believe that assistance is however needed.

Some participants report that they see a positive impact in their children's acquisition of additional language learning. The need for the parent to translate is many times no longer needed when, for example co-viewing films in English because of it being the overall language of the content they consume. On the one hand, within the public debate on screen time there may be people who hypothesise that it impedes the preservation of the Norwegian language in the long run. On the other hand, language is nonetheless a living organism which evolves alongside societal and culture development.

Alongside consuming digital content in yet another language, it is also expressed that some participants are generally hopeful around the evolving digital creative abilities of their children and envision the opportunities this may facilitate. Children's interest in creating through the means of, for example digital games, can enable abilities in computational thinking (Lin et al., 2020). Acknowledging that screen time is not unidimensional, but goal-orientated behaviour, as mentioned earlier, is noticeable among some informants. There are those who recognise that using digital media is also a way of maintaining social relationships, however, this is recognised with some apprehension.

As previously remarked, the concept of participatory learning (Clark, 2011) seems evident with one of the fathers who communicated high hopes for his daughters' use of digital media, in which he himself could see how it benefits the parent-child relationship. It is apparent that when one shares digital interests, there is a chance of bonding for both parties, in turn, his daughters' attitudes towards their father may become one which enable other areas in his upbringing of them. It is nevertheless important to note that 13% of the

parents in the Norwegian report are worried about not having sufficient financial means to take care of their child, “to take care of one’s child can also pertain to giving them access to digital technology” (Elvestad et al., 2021, p. 32). This means that despite high level of access to the internet among both parents and children, parents are all the same confronted with different possibilities in providing the actual digital media devices children need to connect to the internet.

5.5 Anxiety and worry concerning children’s digital environment

It seems that both paternal concerns, worries and anxieties are interconnected with their hopes and wishes for their children in developing digital literacy as well as resilience to render future opportunities in an omniscient competitive digital environment. Thus, it may uncover reasons behind certain decisions and practises in digital mediation.

The Norwegian report on digital parenting shows that parents express general anxieties concerning their child, such as the child being hit in traffic. Among parents with high level of education and parents in families with high income there is a significantly lower number who report general worries about their children, as opposed to parents with low level of education (Elvestad et al., 2021, p. 22). Concerning a child’s use of digital media, the report also serves to facilitate discussion on the accounts of the current inquiry.

A few participants discuss concerns on what other users online might expose their children to, such as adult people impersonating themselves as peers with the ulterior motives to groom them. In addition, that their children might get bullied by peers on social media, and that their children will be exposed to misinformation. The report confirms that parents worry in the event of potential psychological or physical harm from others online, more specifically, 57% worry that the child experiences something that makes him/her develop bad feelings about him/herself. 48% are anxious about other children treating the child in a hurtful or nasty way online. 51% are worried that a stranger will contact their child on the internet (Elvestad et al., 2021, p. 24). Interestingly, those parents who respond in relation to their daughter are more worried as opposed to parents who respond in relation to their son (Elvestad et al., 2021, p. 25). This is also a common response among father in the current sample of participants. This indicates that there are different conditions as well as reasons depending on the gender of one’s child to take into

consideration when making decisions on how to mediate their use of digital media. It poses yet another complicated layer to that of digital parenting.

Moreover, some fathers also communicate worries concerning the exposure to media and what habits their children's use of digital media may impede or hinder in their general social and cognitive development. Some participants worry that their children might become "too passive" and do not take enough initiative in relation to other activities outside of the use of digital media. One participant in particular express worry that his children will become socially isolated because of their use of digital technology. It is also echoed in the Norwegian report, 26% of the parents state the same (Elvestad et al., 2021, p. 25). As previously noted, the context, the content, and the connections of children's use of digital media is important to consider (Livingstone & Blum-Ross, 2020). It can otherwise feed into the general anxieties of the concept of screen time, which in turn should rather be nuanced by terms of goal-orientated behaviours. Some children may feel an immense relief in not having to contact and engage with peers at school, they may feel more comfortable to do so over the internet, others may not. The point is that there are always individual differences to consider when discussing a certain phenomenon. Digital media use may affect children and teenagers differently in different contexts, albeit it does not take away a parent's general concern for their child's well-being.

5.6 The Public debates on Screen time and the Digital implementation in schools

In my returning to the introductory account concerning the public debate on screen time, I would also like to highlight the ongoing public examination about the digital implementation in Norwegian schools. A few participants of the study question whether teachers bestow enough digitally literacy and competence to teach children about the topic itself. Thus, it coincides with the current debate on the digital implementation in schools, which may partly be seen as belonging to the current media panics concerning aspects of digital parenting.

The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training (Utdanningsdirektoratet - UDIR), provides a digitalisation strategy for primary and secondary education and training purposes to ensure pedagogical use of Information Communication Technology (ICT) in Norwegian schools. Another important goal of the strategy is for students to develop

digital skills. Such skills are essential to the curriculum, and they are emphasised as one out of five basic skills students are to develop during their time in school (2021). Moreover, according to UDIR, the digital implementation in schools provides room for new ways of learning and new assessment practises. This means that the potential for personal and inclusive education is increasing. At the same time, there are new demands on increasing teachers' digital competence, the infrastructure and safeguarding students' and teachers' privacy (UDIR, 2021). These are some of the pivotal points encompassing the current debate on the digital implementation in schools regarding children's well-being in a digital future.

Furthermore, Professor Staksrud described on “debatten” that Norwegian children who report a higher state of well-being, also report a higher amount of screen time than those who report less screen time. In addition, Norwegian children are the ones, out of 19 countries, who feel the safest when using the internet. They spend the most time on the internet compared to the other countries of the study (Smahel et al., 2020). It has been argued that the whole debate may be centred around just another moral panic (Gedde-Dahl, 2023). However, in the backdrop of the public discussion on screen time and screen use, there is an increasing occurrence of mental health problems and disorders with particularly teenage girls, and it has been noticed for the past 10-12 years. There are different opinions about if, in fact, this increase is because children are suffering from mental health problems, or if we simply uncover more in Norway. Such tendencies are however apparent in other countries as well (2023, p. 4). One of the participants of the current study specifically comments on his nine-year old daughter's use of social media. He worries that the idea of “likes” operates as instant gratification and may have an impact on her self-image. Research on the effects of screen time also suggests that girls are more susceptible to the exposure of social media in early adolescence and may therefore report less life satisfaction as opposed to what they would if they reported less use of social media (Orben et al., 2022). Perhaps this can also indicate why some fathers may mediate their daughters use of digital media differently to that of boys' use.

The implications for researcher are then to reframe the concept of screen use and screen time and ask questions concerning what harmful screen use looks like, and for whom, and how precisely it can be harmful (Gedde-Dahl, 2023, p. 4). Hence, there is a need for a more nuanced picture to be painted within research, which also more easily can resonate

with the public, and especially parents. Children are inevitably the ones who will inhabit the digital future to come, and they in turn need guidance by their parents as well as other significant adults to do so.

Because children and teenagers generally use digital media in Norwegian education, they so have access to internet unless the school they attend have other rules and regulations. Some schools are clear about their rules on internet use concerning educational information seeking and any digital activities which pertain to the given subject of the curriculum. Besides the immense opportunities the internet affords, older students may also carry their private smart phones which facilitate both entertainment and communication possibilities. The teacher may ultimately find it difficult to manage, because they in turn have the intention to accomplish the lesson plan of the day. Becker Aarseth reports that, the launch of a new digital strategy in schools, led by Tonje Brenna, the Minister of Education in Norway, promises to raise awareness around the digital implementation in schools, and provide communal privacy support services. Brenna also states that the earlier government was too eager to implement digital media in schools. Simultaneously, teachers have reported that in response to increasing digital media presence, students' level of attention span is low, and they therefore need predictability and something else than a screen to facilitate their learning. The school can offer this but needs politicians and the Board of Education on their side, yet it is not the reality of today (2023).

Besides, safeguarding students' and teachers' privacy, the solution now is to let individual schools make the decision themselves to what extent they want to purchase books as opposed to digital solutions. The digital solution being the less costly option, and so it seems to be dependent on the economy of the given municipality the school belongs to. Conversely, in Sweden the Minister of Education, Mats Persson, wants to implement books to a greater degree, one for each student in at least each subject to counteract the illiteracy of Swedish students (Becker Aarseth, 2023; Brochmann, 2023). This may indicate that, that even amongst Scandinavian countries, the challenge of educating children in a digital era is being approached differently. By extension, it can also explain why some of the fathers with different nationalities than Norwegian view the current digital climate in schools as challenging.

Moreover, as the concept of children's screen use and screen time is many times decontextualised, it seems that it is also an argument which those in favour of the digital implementation in schools utilise. Morten Sjøby, who introduced the concept "digital competence/literacy" in Norwegian school politics, believes that Brenna uses middle class parents' anxieties to her advantage in the debate on ICT in education (Time, 2023). He further fears that the discourse on screen use and screen time by middle class parents come to dictate how politicians will listen or not to professionals of the ICT environment and educational technology.

A risk society as described by Beck (1992) is defined as the systematic way of analysing and dealing with threats and uncertainties encouraged and familiarised by modern society itself (p. 21; Livingstone & Sefton-Green, 2016; Livingstone & Blum-Ross, 2020, p. 18). Not only middle-class parents' anxieties on screen time and screen use can be placed within the risk society, but the discourse utilised by Sjøby himself can likewise be positioned within the same concept. Middle-class parents perhaps bestow parental anxieties because of having the opportunity to be more outspoken about them, but because parents hold themselves responsible for their children's future opportunities, the individualisation of parenting in a risk society also has an impact on underprivileged families (Livingstone & Blum-Ross, 2020, p. 19). These families in turn, may not have the resources to engage as much in the educational activities of their children, such as homework. It can therefore leave these children with both a lack of knowledge, as well as digital literacy. Equally, the parents may blame themselves for not having enough knowledge and means to keep up with the current public demands regarding children's digital media use. The notion of good parenting as well as digital inequalities are yet again visible in such circumstances. Society carries the responsibility in relation to technological innovations and developments which eventually have an impact on children and family life.

Additionally, the curriculum may intend to cover what is needed to acquire digital literacy, but besides a teacher's knowledge of the topic and his/her way to deliver it, books vs digital media aside, it can also be dependent on the child's domestic context. Thus, one of the aspects of parental mediation practises to consider, is the parents' ability and resources to establish social, critical, and creative judgement in their children. If parents have the means to do so, it can ensure favourable conditions in developing skills which

facilitate resilience in a future digital environment. One may further necessitate that the parent's ability to do so, can be dependent on their parenting style. It seems that the authoritative kind can enable children to acquire digital literacy along with resilience to manage risks online (Livingstone et al., 2015). However, the noticeable parental frustration within the public discourse around screen use and screen time possibly stems from the vast invasion of digital media, not only in the home, but also in schools. Moreover, the values and opinions concerning family life parents want to infuse in their children, can be experienced as not enough. Therefore, the parallel debate on the digital implementation in schools and how that is managed, can be perceived to be a responsibility which belongs to society as a whole.

In relation to what educational policies are based on when delivering a framework to implement digital literacy in schools, it is vital to consider the diverse domestic context children may live in as well as their individual differences and abilities. Furthermore, to secure that the curriculum is accurately delivered to children, education of digital literacy is important for those who aim to teach it. According to UDIR, there is however a need for further education in digital competence among teachers, especially among experienced teachers (UDIR, 2021). The digital implementation in schools usually encompass different digital technologies, and these in turn are also crucial to take into consideration when deciding what they enable as well as hinder in children's acquiring of knowledge and practical abilities. Research also suggests that reading comprehension increases when children practise reading on paper, and it correlates with the amount of time spent doing so. In addition, amount of time spent reading on paper increases the chances to become a skilled reader when practising reading off the screen (Delgado et al., 2018). However, 36% of union representatives report that teachers have little freedom to make decisions on whether to use analogue or digital teaching materials (UDIR, 2021). Therefore, it seems likely that children may continue to read off the screen to a greater degree as opposed to reading on paper in the near digital future.

Moreover, the public debate and parallel discourse on children's screen time at home and in school, should signal to politicians that the need to establish wider studies is crucial. Research should therefore be granted in which both children and parents partake in a digital context, as opposed to repeating policy reports that perhaps only restate previous little knowledge of the area. It can in turn be rendered more thorough strategies for

effective parenting concerning children's use of digital media. However, scholars have yet to find more ways to cautiously contextualise children's use of digital media. There is need to take individual differences into consideration to ensure that findings are not necessarily generalisable, but applicable to the wider variety of families of a given population. Parents, in turn, should attempt to firstly disregard tabloid media accounts, but more importantly receive guidance through the appreciation and practise of the relationship between parental style and mediation practises.

6. Conclusion

In the analyses of the data collected, I have presented themes which encompass what guides fathers' decision-making processes concerning the mediation of their children's use of digital media. The themes are: "Perceived responsibilities and decision-making concerning digital parenting", "Screen time in relation to the notion of good parenting", "Mediation of children's digital media", "Hopes", and "Fears".

The first theme indicated that some fathers present a personal rationale behind their decision-making on how they mediate their children's use of digital media, however they tend to emphasise that the actual decision-making is mutual if they live with a partner. As studies suggest, it can be argued that they rely more on their common sense as opposed to mothers who feel more moral responsibility in their decision-making when child-rearing. Yet, research also predicts that fathers are not seen as natural parents as opposed to mothers, and that may be the reason behind the participants' emphasis on mutual decision-making.

Concerning good parenting and screen time, studies have shown that "good parenting" is closely and socially associated with "good" digital mediation which is also echoed in the current study (Livingstone et al., 2015; Balleys 2022). The fathers typically convey a general uneasiness around the topic of screen time, since both the public debate on screen time and the discourse about "good parenting" appear to coincide which results in fuelling the current media panics. The ways in which the participants' reasoning behind often evolves, is that they appear concerned that the child may, on many occasions, choose

digital time unless they are involved in other activities. This highlights that it is less about what the children engage in as opposed to the time spent with the screen.

Similarly, to other studies, in which it has been noted that parents criticise themselves in relation to amount of screen time, the present study also found some fathers describing themselves as “being a bad parent” concerning the amount of the child’s screen time. It also results in them stressing nondigital family activities. In addition, the single fathers of the current study express resources, such as time, energy and living space being variables that affect how much or little screen time they allow their children. This is perhaps an indication that the traditional domestic duties recognised by mothers, along with the mental strain it includes, is something that single fathers also experience in the context of current normative values, and in turn, it affects their approach to mediate their children’s use of digital media.

Most participants are interpreted to belong to a balancing type regarding their approach towards digital mediation. It seems that the fathers who are described as being within the balancing type, also describe their children’s needs and ways to address that. Those participants who are categorised within the type to resist technology when mediating their children’s use, emphasise risks more so than opportunities.

Furthermore, it is apparent that when a father shares their child’s digital interests, there is a chance of bonding for both parties. In turn, the child’s attitude towards their father may become one which enable other areas in his upbringing of them. There are nevertheless different conditions because of resources to parent in a digital environment.

It seems that both paternal concerns, worries and anxieties are interconnected with their hopes and wishes for their children in developing digital literacy as well as resilience to render future opportunities in a competitive digital environment. It is also visible that fathers in the current sample who respond in relation to their daughters are more worried as opposed to fathers who respond in relation to their sons. Previous studies show that girls particularly appear to be more vulnerable in the beginning of adolescence to the exposure of social media. This indicates that there are different conditions as well as reasons depending on the gender of one’s child to take into consideration when making decisions on how to mediate children’s use of digital media. In effect, it poses yet another challenging layer to that of digital parenting.

A few participants question the implementation of digital media in schools and its ubiquity. It also coincides with the current debate on the digital implementation in Norwegian schools, which in turn may be seen as belonging to the current media panics in relation to aspects of digital parenting as well as mediation practises. However, the debate is perhaps best placed within the concept of a risk society, in which people handle the fears and uncertainties which modern society ultimately has produced itself. It therefore appears that the parental frustrations pertain to where the responsibility lies in securing a safe digital future for children. Therefore, it would be reasonable to suggest that further research is favourable to untangle the intricacies concerning children's digital media use, in the perspective of the family, as well as regarding educational purposes to alleviate public concerns.

To summarise, there are several aspects to consider when establishing a framework as to what guides fathers decision-making processes on how to mediate their children's digital media. The different narratives of the present study encompass much of what previous research has established on parental mediation. The chosen strategies are affected by the parent's evaluation of their own digital literacy, their parental style, the child's vulnerability, the gender of the child, and the risk the child is exposed to by engaging in different online activities and their frequencies. Even though there is an overrepresentation of accounts on mothers' mediation practises in research, the participants also reflect on themselves as fathers in relation to the notion of good parenting, because of how they mediate their children. As previously suggested in research, considerations should therefore be made towards the developing of an understanding and guidance for parents of the relationship between mediation practises and parental style.

Lastly, there are several limitations to the premise of this investigation. The participants were recruited in predominantly middle-class areas in Norway. Equally, the accounts of the fathers will therefore correspond with a certain demographic of fathers in Norwegian society. Even so the explanations of these accounts are important in trying to understand what guides some fathers' decision-making processes concerning the mediation of their children's use of digital media. The number of participants in this study are also few, therefore the findings are not applicable to the general population of fathers in Norway. Suggestions for future research are to conduct more gender-equal studies of parental

mediation, to find out differences in mothers' and fathers' decision-making processes on how to mediate their children's use of digital media. Additionally, studies which investigate the relationship between parents' mediation practices and their parenting style are needed. By conducting studies in such manner, it can highlight areas which enable further comprehension and practice concerning the intricacies of the relationship between styles of parenting and parental digital mediation practices. In doing so it may perhaps pacify some of the current, as well as future public anxieties regarding children's use of digital media.

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8. Appendices

Appendix 1: Interview guide (in Norwegian)

Intervjuguide: *Hvilke typer strategier benytter fedre når de skal håndtere/regulere sine barns nettbruk / bruk av digitale verktøy.* (November 2022)

1. Alder på far.
2. Alder på barn og kjønn.
3. Hvordan ser hverdagen ut til barnet? Bor sammen med begge foreldre? Venner/venner på nett, fritidsaktiviteter?

TEMA MULIGHETER / TEMA RISIKO

De følgende spørsmål vil bli stilt i lys av tema muligheter og risiko.

4. Hvilke typer av aktiviteter driver barnet/barnene som regel med når de bruker nett/digitale verktøy?
5. I hvilken forbindelse benytter barnet nett/digitale verktøy?
6. Hvor mye tid, foruten skolearbeid, bruker barnet/barnene vanligvis på nett/med digitale verktøy?
7. Kan du fortelle meg om en situasjon der du har regulert/justert barnets nettbruk/bruk av digitale verktøy?
8. Hva styrer måten du ønsker å håndtere barnets nettbruk/bruk av digitale verktøy?
9. Føler du deg kompetent til å styre disse situasjoner når det gjelder å regulere/justere barnets nettbruk/bruk av digitale verktøy?
 - a. Hvorfor/Hvorfor ikke?
10. Hvor finner du informasjon når det gjelder å regulere barnets sitt bruk av internett?
11. Kan du fortelle om en situasjon der du brukt informasjon, fra enten et sted som tilbyr akkurat sånn type av informasjon, eller fra et annet menneske – hvordan gikk det?
12. Vi er på slutten av samtalen nå, er det andre forhold du tenker på i denne forbindelse?

Spørsmål 1-3 er alle oppvarmingsspørsmål som legger grunn for refleksjonsdelen av intervjuet. Spørsmål 4-11 handler om hvordan informanten føler/tenker rundt tema, regulering/håndtering av sine barns nettbruk/digitale verktøy i lys av to temaer, MULIGHETER og RISIKO. Ved hjelp av noen mer åpne spørsmål inviterer jeg informanten til å reflektere rundt sine erfaringer av tema. Spørsmål 11 er kort overgang til småprat for å avslutte intervjuet.

Referanser: Tjora. (2021). Kvalitative forskningsmetoder i praksis (4. utgave.). Gyldendal.

Appendix 2: First page of Letter of Approval from the Norwegian Centre for Research Data (NSD)



[Meldeskjema](#) / [What type of challenges do fathers experience in relation to how they...](#) / Vurdering

Vurdering av behandling av personopplysninger

Referansenummer

661844

Vurderingstype

Standard

Dato

15.12.2022

Prosjekttittel

What type of challenges do fathers experience in relation to how they mediate their children's use of the internet/digital devices?

Behandlingsansvarlig institusjon

Universitetet i Oslo / Det humanistiske fakultet / Institutt for medier og kommunikasjon

Prosjektansvarlig

Taina Bucher

Student

M. Therese E. Stensland

Prosjektperiode

15.12.2022 - 01.09.2023

Kategorier personopplysninger

Alminnelige

Lovlig grunnlag

Samtykke (Personvernforordningen art. 6 nr. 1 bokstav a)

Behandlingen av personopplysningene er lovlig så fremt den gjennomføres som oppgitt i meldeskjemaet. Det lovlige grunnlaget gjelder til 01.09.2023.

[Meldeskjema](#)

Kommentar

OM VURDERINGEN

Personverntjenester har en avtale med institusjonen du forsker eller studerer ved. Denne avtalen innebærer at vi skal gi deg råd slik at behandlingen av personopplysninger i prosjektet ditt er lovlig etter personvernregelverket.

Personverntjenester har nå vurdert den planlagte behandlingen av personopplysninger. Vår vurdering er at behandlingen er lovlig, hvis den gjennomføres slik den er beskrevet i meldeskjemaet med dialog og vedlegg.

VIKTIG INFORMASJON TIL DEG

Du må lagre, sende og sikre dataene i tråd med retningslinjene til din institusjon. Dette betyr at du må bruke leverandører for spørreskjema, skylagring, videosamtale o.l. som institusjonen din har avtale med. Vi gir generelle råd rundt dette, men det er institusjonens egne retningslinjer for informasjonssikkerhet som gjelder.

DEL PROSJEKTET MED PROSJEKTANSVARLIG

Det er obligatorisk for studenter å dele meldeskjemaet med prosjektansvarlig (veileder). Det gjøres ved å trykke på "Del prosjekt" i meldeskjemaet. Om prosjektansvarlig ikke svarer på invitasjonen innen en uke må han/hun inviteres på nytt.

TYPE OPPLYSNINGER OG VARIGHET

Prosjektet vil behandle alminnelige kategorier av personopplysninger frem til 01.09.2023.

LOVLIG GRUNNLAG

Prosjektet vil innhente samtykke fra de registrerte til behandlingen av personopplysninger. Vår vurdering er at prosjektet legger opp til et samtykke i samsvar med kravene i art. 4 og 7, ved at det er en frivillig, spesifikk, informert og utvetydig bekreftelse som kan dokumenteres, og som den registrerte kan trekke tilbake. Lovlig grunnlag for behandlingen vil dermed være den registrertes samtykke, jf. personvernforordningen art. 6 nr. 1 bokstav a.

LOVLIG GRUNNLAG TREDJEPERSONER (samtykke fra foreldre)

Prosjektet vil innhente samtykke fra foresatte til behandlingen av personopplysninger om barna. Vår vurdering er at prosjektet legger opp til et samtykke i samsvar med kravene i art. 4 nr. 11 og 7, ved at det er en frivillig, spesifikk, informert og utvetydig bekreftelse, som

Appendix 3: Information and Consent form

Vil du delta i forskningsprosjektet

Hvilke typer av utfordringer opplever fedre i forhold til håndtering/regulering av sine barns nettbruk / bruk av digitale verktøy?

Dette er et spørsmål til deg om å delta i et forskningsprosjekt hvor formålet er å **foreldres håndtering/regulering av sine barns nettbruk / bruk av digitale verktøy og hva som ligger til grunn for det**. I dette skrevet gir jeg deg informasjon om målene for prosjektet og hva deltakelse vil innebære for deg.

Formål

Formålet er å foreldres håndtering/regulering av sine barns nettbruk / bruk av digitale verktøy og hva som ligger til grunn for det. En del litteratur viser at kvinner og menn kan bruke forskjellige metoder. I denne masteroppgave vil jeg studere hvilke typer av utfordringer fedre opplever når de skal håndtere/regulere sine barns nettbruk / bruk av digitale verktøy og hvordan det kan se ut i hverdagen. Studien vil ta seg for dybdeintervjuer med 7-10 fedre. Hvert intervju vil vare ca 1 time.

Hvem er ansvarlig for forskningsprosjektet?

Universitetet i Oslo, Instituttet for medier og kommunikasjon er ansvarlig for prosjektet.

Hvorfor får du spørsmål om å delta?

Jeg vil intervju fedre om måten deres å håndtere/regulere sine barns nettbruk/bruk av digitale verktøy. Det har blitt forsket på mødrer og deres måter å håndtere barns nettbruk / bruk av digitale verktøy. Jeg vil derfor forske på fedre sin måte, det er interessant å få forskjellige perspektiver på tema. Jeg ønsker å intervju fedre med barn i alder 8-11 år (med barn på 4-6 trinn).

Hva innebærer det for deg å delta?

Jeg vil bruke intervju som metode. Intervjuet har noen grunnleggende spørsmål så som din alder og barnets/barnenes alder. Videre vil du svare på noen spørsmål der du deler dine erfaringer med å regulere/håndtere barnets/barnas nettbruk/bruk av digitale verktøy. Opplysningene vil bli tatt opp ved hjelp av lydopptak som skal transkriberes og oversettes til engelsk.

Det er frivillig å delta

Det er frivillig å delta i prosjektet. Hvis du velger å delta, kan du når som helst trekke samtykket tilbake uten å oppgi noen grunn. Alle dine personopplysninger vil da bli slettet. Det vil ikke ha noen negative konsekvenser for deg hvis du ikke vil delta eller senere velger å trekke deg.

Det vil ikke påvirke ditt forhold til skolen/lærer.

Ditt personvern – hvordan vi oppbevarer og bruker dine opplysninger

Vi vil bare bruke opplysningene om deg til formålene jeg har fortalt om i dette skrevet. Vi behandler opplysningene konfidensielt og i samsvar med personvernregelverket.

- Jeg, Therese Stensland ved Universitetet i Oslo, Instituttet for medier og kommunikasjon og veileder Taina Bucher, professor ved Universitetet i Oslo, Instituttet for medier og kommunikasjon vil ha tilgang til dine opplysninger.
- Navnet og kontaktopplysningene dine vil jeg erstatte med en kode som lagres på egen navneliste adskilt fra øvrige data, jeg vil også lagre datamaterialet på forskningsserver som er innelåst/kryptert.

Du vil ikke kunne gjenkjennes i publikasjon. De typer opplysninger som vil publiseres vil kun bestå av din alder og alder på barnet/barnene.

Hva skjer med personopplysningene dine når forskningsprosjektet avsluttes?

Prosjektet vil etter planen avsluttes når oppgaven blir godkjent, august 2023. Datamaterialet anonymiseres mens analysen pågår ved hjelp av pseudonymer/koder. Lyddopptak med intervju vil slettes etter transkripsjon og analyse er ferdig.

Hva gir oss rett til å behandle personopplysninger om deg?

Vi behandler opplysninger om deg basert på ditt samtykke.

På oppdrag fra Norsk senter for forskningsdata har Personverntjenester vurdert at behandlingen av personopplysninger i dette prosjektet er i samsvar med personvernregelverket.

Dine rettigheter

Så lenge du kan identifiseres i datamaterialet, har du rett til:

- innsyn i hvilke opplysninger vi behandler om deg, og å få utlevert en kopi av opplysningene
- å få rettet opplysninger om deg som er feil eller misvisende
- å få slettet personopplysninger om deg
- å sende klage til Datatilsynet om behandlingen av dine personopplysninger

Hvis du har spørsmål til studien, eller ønsker å vite mer om eller benytte deg av dine rettigheter, ta kontakt med:

- Therese Stensland ved Universitetet i Oslo, Instituttet for medier og kommunikasjon mtstensl@student.media.uio.no, tel 41293866. Veileder Taina Bucher, professor ved Universitetet i Oslo, Instituttet for medier og kommunikasjon. Taina.bucher@media.uio.no, tel 97617263.
- Vårt personvernombud: Roger Markgraf-Bye, personvernombud@uio.no hos universitetet i Oslo.

Hvis du har spørsmål knyttet til Personverntjenester sin vurdering av prosjektet, kan du ta kontakt med:

- Personverntjenester på epost (personverntjenester@sikt.no) eller på telefon: 53 21 15 00.

Med vennlig hilsen

Therese Stensland

Prosjektansvarlig
Therese Stensland

Samtykkeerklæring

Jeg har mottatt og forstått informasjon om prosjektet [*sett inn tittel*], og har fått anledning til å stille spørsmål. Jeg samtykker til:

- å delta i et kvalitativt intervju for prosjektet «Fedres håndtering/regulering av barns nettbruk / bruk av digitale verktøy»

Jeg samtykker til at mine opplysninger behandles frem til prosjektet er avsluttet

(Signert av prosjektdeltaker, dato)

Appendix 4: Examples of transcription

Informant 8

“Mere bruk i helgene. Da sitter jo han fra han står opp da kan det fort gå en tre fire timer og så blir det jo fort ettermiddag og kveld, da kan det jo bli mange timer på en lørdag hvis vi ikke gjør noe spesielt, det er nesten så jeg ikke tør å si det, det kan jo lett bli en åtte tie timer (småler*)”.

There is a trend of being anxious around screen time in the current sample of fathers. One participant describes his granting of screen time while laughing tentatively.

[There is] More use of digital media during the weekends. He starts from the moment he wakes up for a few hours, and if we don't have any plans on a Saturday for example it's like I don't dare to say it [laughs], well altogether easily 8-10 hours screen time.

Informant 10

“Jeg har, eller vi har tenkt litt. Vi ga de mobiltelefon litt tidlig, dels pga at vi ikke har noen fast telefon så det ble enda settet å få tak i dem. Men så klart når du først får tilgang til telefon så fikk du jo også tilgang til et par til ting som nettbrett. Vi har tenkt at hvis du blir eksponert for ting tidlig og i moderate mengder, som f eksempel at begge to har Snapchat og kun da tilgang til de i familien så blir det jo ikke så spennende den dagen de blir 10 og så skal de ut å prøve etc. Da finner det ut at det var ikke så spennende. Det har vært vår tilnærming til det, eksponert tidlig, men også regulert så kan du handtere det på en annen måte. Hvis du gir barna saft eller brus en gang i uken i tillegg til helg så kanskje de ikke bøtter ned i helgen tenker jeg”.

I have, or we have thought about it. We gave them mobile phones relatively early. Partly because we did not have a landline, and we wanted to be able to get in contact [with them]. When they first were given mobile phones, they were also given access to other digital devices such as iPads. Our mindset is that if you are exposed to something quite early, like them both having Snapchat accounts, however limited to our family account, it may

not be as exciting as you had thought. Therefore, the use might not be as excessive as it would have been if you were not allowed to use it. Say that you give the children a soft drink or two during the week, and then they might not binge it during the weekend.

This reasoning recalls the quote “everything in moderation”. It seems plausible that the informant along with his wife has assessed both risks and opportunities at present as well as in the future by letting the children get accustomed to, in this case, mobile phones early (as he puts it).