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# Parental Media Mediation Roles: An Examination in Terms of Parental and Child-Related Variables

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## Abstract

This study aimed to investigate the media mediation roles of parents in relation to parental variables (gender, age, education status and number of children) and child-related variables (gender and birth order). The sample consisted of 596 parents of preschool children. The study employed a quantitative research method using survey model. The data were obtained through the application of the 'Early Childhood Parental Media Mediation Scale' and 'Demographic Information Form'. The data analysis involved independent samples t-test and one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA). The findings revealed a significant difference in media mediation roles across all variables. Young, highly educated mothers often adopt a restrictive-supportive role, whereas firstborn children, families that have fewer-children, and highly educated mothers exhibit an active-supportive role. Low-educated and multi-child mothers are more likely to exhibit a restrictive-limitative role, whereas mothers with fewer children are more likely to adopt an active-interpretive role. With regard to boys, the active-limitative role has prevaled. The findings have been discussed in light of the current literature.

**Keywords:** Early childhood education, media mediation, parental media role, parental mediation role

# Ebeveyn Medya Aracılık Rolleri: Ebeveyn ve Çocukla İlgili Değişkenler Açısından Bir İnceleme

## Öz

Bu çalışmanın amacı, ebeveynlerin medya aracılık rollerini ebeveyn değişkenleri (cinsiyet, yaş, eğitim durumu ve çocuk sayısı) ve çocukla ilgili değişkenler (cinsiyet ve doğum sırası) ile ilişkili olarak araştırmaktır. Örneklem, okul öncesi çağda çocuğu olan 596 ebeveynden oluşmaktadır. Çalışmada tarama modeli kullanılarak nicel bir araştırma yöntemi kullanılmıştır. Veriler, 'Erken Çocukluk Dönemi Ebeveyn Medya Aracılığı Ölçeği' ve 'Demografik Bilgi Formu' uygulanarak elde edilmiştir. Verilerin analizinde bağımsız örneklemler için t-testi ve tek yönlü varyans analizi (ANOVA) kullanılmıştır. Bulgular, tüm değişkenler arasında medya aracılık rollerinde anlamlı bir farklılık olduğunu ortaya koymuştur. Genç ve yüksek eğitimli anneler genellikle kısıtlayıcı-destekleyici bir rol benimserken, ilk doğan çocuklar, az çocuklu aileler ve yüksek eğitimli anneler aktif-destekleyici bir rol sergilemektedir. Düşük eğitimli ve çok çocuklu annelerin kısıtlayıcı-sınırlayıcı bir rol sergileme olasılığı daha yüksekken, daha az çocuklu annelerin aktif-yorumlayıcı bir rol benimseme olasılığı daha yüksektir. Erkek çocuklar söz konusu olduğunda ise aktif-sınırlayıcı rol ağır basmaktadır. Bulgular mevcut literatür ışığında tartışılmıştır.

**Anahtar Sözcükler:** Erken çocukluk eğitimi, medya aracılığı, ebeveynin medya rolü, ebeveynin aracılık rolü

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## INTRODUCTION

In contemporary society, media technologies serve various functions for both children and adults in several aspects; including access to information, content creation, communication, sharing, and entertainment. A significant number of these digital interactions and screen time, especially among the youngest members of our communities, occur within the family environment. Therefore, adults play a crucial role in facilitating children's safe access to media technologies that have potential to possess both beneficial and detrimental impacts (Lauricella et al., 2015; Nikken & Schols, 2015). 'Media mediation' refers to the parental practices and strategies employed to reflect the positive effects of media on children while mitigating its adverse impacts (Clark, 2011). The phrase 'parental media mediation' has so far evolved over three decades into a variety of concepts, including parental guidance, parental control, parental mediation role, and parental mediation (Şen et al., 2020). The notion of parental media mediation has been analyzed so far with many perspectives for a better understanding of the concept (Livingstone & Helsper, 2008; Nathanson, 1999; Nikken & Jansz, 2014; Valkenburg et al., 1999). Parental mediation is a dynamic process in which new concepts continue to develop over time.

This study was based on the parental media mediation roles defined by Şen et al. (2020) in two main dimensions: Active and restrictive mediation, each studied in three sub-dimensions. Active-supportive mediation role, which encompasses parental actions like discussing media content, posing inquiries, preparing for the content the child will encounter, and subsequently elucidating the content to mitigate potential harm and transform media experiences into advantages. Active-limitative mediation is another active mediation role that entails collaboratively making decisions on media content and length, while also such as smart signs related to the media content. In active-interpretive mediation role, the parent's actions are significant as they engage with their child's media experience by comparing and critiquing real-life situations and media content. Restricted mediation role has also been divided into three dimensions. Restrictive-limitative mediation is a form of media mediation in which parents limit their children's access to media content considered improper (such as substance use, violence, vulgarity and sexual content) without informing them. involves parents enforcing established norms by using media as a tool for reward and punishment, anticipating that their children will comply with these standards. In contrast, restrictive-supportive mediation not only limits media use—such as by scheduling specific times to deactivate devices—but also considers the child's developmental needs, ensuring that restrictions are applied in a supportive way.

The ubiqutous presence of media in children's daily lives has turned media mediation into a major problem for contemporary society. A variety of child development theories address the multifaceted nature of parental mediation and its essential role in assisting children in establishing a balanced relationship with technology in the digital era (Merdin, 2025). The effect of various media mediation approaches on child development and family relationships is discussed in the current literature. International reports (Helsper et al., 2013) and studies (Livingstone & Duerager, 2012) indicate that parents in Türkiye seek to protect their children from media risks by imposing restrictions The study conducted by Livingstone and Duerager in 2012 shows that restrictive mediation reduces online risks but also hinders access to online opportunities. Furthermore, the restrictive role adopted by parents is associated with poor self-regulation skills later on in addition to resulting in more parent-child conflicts compared to active mediation role (Beyens & Beullens, 2017; Van den Bulck & Van den Bergh, 2000). On the other hand, parents who employ effective media mediation strategies help their children to be protected from the adverse media effects (Collier et al., 2016; Nathanson, 1999), benefit from the content (Nathanson, 2001), and enhance their critical thinking skills and become more skeptical (Nathanson, 2001; Mendoza, 2009). Beyens and Beullens (2017) state that when parents engage in active mediation, they help foster their children's autonomy and decrease conflicts around media use. Therefore, it is important to understand the parental and child-related factors that influence media mediation roles.

International literature over a decade highlights several factors on parental mediation concerning early childhood. The gender of the parents plays a significant role, with mothers typically adopting more protective and guiding approaches, while fathers tend to technical mediation (Duek & Moguillansky, 2020; Ferreira et al., 2017; Livingstone et al., 2017; Nikken & de Haan, 2015). Higher levels of parental education are associated with more informed and structured mediation practices regarding children's media use (Barkin et al., 2006; Livingstone et al., 2015; Nikken & Opree, 2018). As children grow older, active and explanatory forms of mediation become more prevalent (Beyens et al., 2019; Nikken & Schols, 2015). Additionally, the child's gender influences parental strategies, with girls often subject to more restrictive practices (Duek & Moguillansky, 2020; Piotrowski, 2017). The concept of parental mediation has been studied in Türkiye recently, with studies having developed culturally sensitive scales to understand media mediation in early childhood (Budak & Işıkoğlu, 2022; Gözüm & Kandır,

2020; Şen et al., 2020), employing qualitative (Aslan & Turgut, 2023), quantitative (Bostancı & Çakır, 2022; Çalhan & Göksu, 2024; Gözüm & Kandır, 2021; Gürler & Ömeroğlu, 2023), and systematic review (Alkan et al., 2021) methodologies. This study aims to investigate the relationship between parental media mediation strategies and demographic characteristics of both parents and children with a sample from southeastern Türkiye. The findings offer insights for parents and educators, with insights into factors influencing parental media mediation, and recommendations for educators and policymakers to develop family support interventions tailred for the nees of certain demographic groups.

As mentioned above, the study aims to investigate the relationship between the demographic attributes of parents with children aged 60 to 72 months and the parental media mediation roles they adopt. Accordingly, the problem statement of the current research has been formulated as "Do parental media mediation roles significantly differ according to parental demographic attributes (gender, age, education status, and number of children) and children's characteristics (gender and birth order)? It is hypothesized that media mediation roles vary in accordance with demographic characteristics of both parents and children. In the light of the problem statetement, the following research questions (RQs) have been formulated to guide this research study:

RQ 1: Do parental media mediation roles significantly differ according to parental demographic attributes?

- 1.1 Do parental media mediation roles significantly differ according to gender of parents?
- 1.2 Do parental media mediation roles significantly differ according to age of parents?
- 1.3 Do parental media mediation roles significantly differ according to education status of parents?
- 1.4 Do parental media mediation roles significantly differ according to number of children?

RQ 2: Do parental media mediation roles significantly differ according to child-related characteristics?

- 2.1 Do parental media mediation roles significantly differ according to gender of children?
- 2.2 Do parental media mediation roles significantly differ according to birth order of children?

## METHOD

### Research Model

This study employed a quantitative research methodology and a survey model to investigate the parental media mediation roles in relation to various parental and child-related factors. The survey model is a quantitative research strategy that collects data through a survey distributed to a sample group or the entire population in order to discover the attitudes, opinions, behaviors, or characteristics of that population (Creswell, 2017).

### Sample Group

This study involved 596 parents of children attending 19 public and private kindergartens across two regions of Şanlıurfa. Participants were selected through convenience sampling. Initially, volunteer teachers distributed the research questionnaires to the parents of 2000 children aged 60–72 months, and 808 parents completed the questionnaire voluntarily. After eliminating 212 responses that responded to fewer than five questions (less than 0.5% of the questionnaire), the final sample consisted of 596 parents. Based on the guidelines of Tabachnick, Fidell, and Ullman (2007), the sample size is statistically adequate for the 43 scale items included in the study. The demographic characteristics of the parents are presented in Table 1.

Table 1.
*Distribution of the Study Group According to Demographic Characteristics*

| Characteristics | Dimensions | *f* | % |
|---|---|---|---|
| Parental role | Mother | 422 | 70.8 |
| | Father | 174 | 29.2 |
| Age | 22-30 years | 151 | 25.3 |
| | 31-39 years | 330 | 55.4 |
| | Age 40 and over | 115 | 19.3 |
| Education status | Illiterature | 6 | 1.0 |
| | Primary school graduate | 58 | 9.7 |
| | Secondary school graduate | 69 | 11.6 |
| | High school graduate | 158 | 26.5 |
| | Bachelor's degree | 260 | 43.6 |
| | Postgraduate degree | 45 | 7.6 |
| Number of children | Only child | 56 | 9.4 |
| | One sibling | 269 | 45.1 |
| | Two or more siblings | 271 | 45.5 |
| Total | | 596 | 100.00 |

Table 1 shows that 70.8% of the 596 surveyed parents were women (n=422), while 27.2% were men (n=174). The parents' ages ranged from 22 to 65 years, with the largest group (55.4%, n=330) aged between 31 and 39 years. Approximately half of the parents held a bachelor's degree (n=260). Regarding educational background, 1% (n=6) had never attended school, 9.7% (n=58) had completed primary education, 11.6% (n=69) had completed secondary education, and 26.5% (n=158) had completed high school. Additionally, 7.6% (n=45) held graduate degrees. In terms of family size, 9.4% (n=56) had one child, 45.1% (n=269) had two children, and 45.5% (n=271) had three or more children. The demographic characteristics of the children are presented in Table 2.

Table 2
*Distribution of Demographic Characteristics of Children*

| Characteristics | Dimensions | *f* | % |
|---|---|---|---|
| Gender | Girl | 284 | 47.7 |
| | Boy | 312 | 52.3 |
| Birth Order | First born | 247 | 41.4 |
| | Second born | 193 | 32.4 |
| | Third and later born | 156 | 26.2 |
| Total | | 596 | 100.00 |

Table 2 shows that among the children, 47.7% are girls (n=284) and 52.3% are boys (n=312). In terms of birth order, 41.4% are first-born (n=247), 32.4% are second-born (n=193), and 26.2% are third-born or later (n=156). The children who participated in this study were between 60 and 72 months old and were enrolled in preschool education.

**Data Collection Instruments**

The main data collection instruments of the study were the Demographic Information Form and the Early Childhood Parental Media Mediation Scale. The Demographic Information Form, developed by the authors, had two sections. The first section of the form was designed to collect demographic data about parents, with items about the parental role, age, educational status and number of children. The second section included items regarding the child's gender and birth order.

Data regarding the parental media mediation roles was gathered utilizing the 'Early Childhood Parental Media Mediation Scale' developed by Şen et al. (2020). This scale addresses attributes specific to Turkish culture and, in addition to previous scales in the literature, it incorporates the use of common media devices such as smartphones, tablets, laptops, desktop computers, and televisions (Nevski & Siibak, 2016). The scale has 43 five-point Likert-type items. Responses to items are formulated as 'Never', 'Rarely', 'Sometimes', 'Mostly', 'Always'. The score range on the scale extends from 43 to 215. The results of the DFA suggest that the scale features a structure exhibiting a good degree of model-data fit ($\chi 2/sd= 2.23$, RMSEA=0.043, RMR=0.044, CFI=0.98, NNFI= 0.98, NFI =0.97, AGFI= 0.87, GFI=0.89, RFI=0.96). The Cronbach Alpha coefficients for the scale's dimensions were found as follows: 0.92 for active-supportive

dimension, 0.86 for restrictive-supportive dimension, 0.61 for restrictive-limitative dimension, 0.83 for active-interpretive dimension, 0.84 for restrictive-obstructive dimension, 0.59 for active-limitative dimension, and 0.91 for the overall scale. The results suggeste that the scale is a reliable and valid measurement instrument (Şen et al., 2020).

**Research Ethics**

Ethics committee approval for this study was received from Ankara University (Approval Number: 85434274-050.04.04/33408). Participation in the study was solely based on a voluntary basis, and no identity information was obtained from the participants.

**Data Collection**

Upon the receipt of the ethical committee and MONE's approval, the first author visited more than 20 private and public preschools selected through convenience sampling. Preliminary interviews were conducted with school administrators and preschool teachers, during which the study's objectives were explained. Data were subsequently collected with the help of volunteer teachers and parents, whose children attended preschool.

**Data Analysis**

Data obtained from parents were digitized and evaluated. Before beginning the main analyses, missing data were imputed using the mean method because each item had a missing data rate below 0.5%, resulting in complete datasets. Descriptive statistics were calculated using percentages and frequency counts. Normality checks were conducted for each variable, with all skewness and kurtosis values falling within the acceptable range of -1 to +1 (Morgan et al., 2004). Q-Q plots and histograms further confirmed the normal distribution of the data, justifying the use of parametric tests.

For the first research question, a t-test was used to examine the relationship between the parental media mediation role, parental role, and the child's gender. To investigate the relationship between the parental media mediation role and variables such as parent age, education status, number of children, and child's birth order, One-Way ANOVA for independent samples was conducted. To determine the source of any differences identified by the ANOVA, the homogeneity of variances was first assessed using Levene's test. When variances were homogeneous ($p > 0.05$), the LSD test was applied for multiple comparisons, a preferred method for studies with uneven group sizes (Kayri, 2009). If the assumption of homogeneity was violated ($p < 0.05$), the Tamhane test was used instead.

## RESULTS

**Results related to the first question**

The first research question of the study was formulated as 'Do parental media mediation roles significantly differ according to parental demographic attributes: gender, age, education status, and number of children?'. In this section, the first question is presented under four sub-headings.

**Results related to the first sub-question**

Table 3 presents the independent samples t-test results used to examine whether significant differences in media mediation roles exist according to parental role.

*Table 3*
*T-test Results of Early Childhood Parental Media Mediation Scale Score Regarding Parental Role Variable*

| Media Mediation Dimensions | Parental Role | *N* | $\bar{X}$ | *ss* | *sd* | *t* | *p* | *η2* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Active-supportive dimension | Mother | 422 | 47.79 | 10.36 | 594 | 3.45 | 0.00* | 0.31 |
| | Father | 174 | 44.61 | 9.78 | | | | |
| Restrictive-supportive dimension | Mother | 422 | 44.39 | 6.65 | 594 | 4.21 | 0.00* | 0.39 |
| | Father | 174 | 41.64 | 7.47 | | | | |
| Restrictive-limitative dimension | Mother | 422 | 27.01 | 3.03 | 594 | 1.10 | 0.26 | |
| | Father | 174 | 26.67 | 3.53 | | | | |
| Active-interpretive dimension | Mother | 422 | 16.59 | 3.04 | 594 | 2.60 | 0.00* | 0.23 |
| | Father | 174 | 15.89 | 2.93 | | | | |
| Restrictive- obstructive dimension | Mother | 422 | 12.96 | 2.68 | 594 | -0.43 | 0.66 | |
| | Father | 174 | 13.06 | 2.30 | | | | |
| Active-limitative dimension | Mother | 422 | 13.64 | 3.06 | 594 | 1.19 | 0.23 | |
| | Father | 174 | 13.31 | 3.03 | | | | |

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Total score | Mother | 422 | 162.4 | 19.7 | 594 | 3.93 | 0.00* | 0.35 |
| | Father | 174 | 155.2 | 21.5 | | | | |

**p<0.05*

Table 3 shows that the arithmetic mean of mothers' overall scores ($\bar{x}$ = 162.4) were higher than those of father' scores ($\bar{x}$ = 155.2). Specifically, significant differences emerged in the adoption of active-supportive mediation (t = 3.45, p < .05), restrictive-supportive mediation (t = 4.21, p < .05), and active-interpretive mediation (t = 2.60, p < .05), with mothers scoring higher in all categories.

Green and Salkind (2005) reported that an effect size of 0.2 indicates a small effect, 0.5 a medium effect, and 0.8 a large effect. The calculated effect size indicates that the parental role variable has a "small" effect size on the total score ($\eta^2$ = 0.35). It is also observed that the variable has a "small" effect size on the subdimensions of parental mediation: Active-supportive ($\eta^2$ = 0.31), restrictive-supportive ($\eta^2$ = 0.39), and active interpretive ($\eta^2$ = 0.23).

**Results related to the second sub-question**

Table 4 presents the ANOVA results used to examine whether there was a significant difference in the media mediation roles according to parental age.

Table 4.
*ANOVA Results Regarding Early Childhood Parental Media Mediation Scale Score and Parent Age Variable*

| Media Mediation Dimensions | Age | *N* | $\overline{X}$ | *Ss* | *sd* | *F* | *P* | *Difference* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Active-supportive dimension | 22-30 | 151 | 47.30 | 10.89 | 2-593 | 2.09 | 0.12 | |
| | 31-39 | 330 | 47.27 | 10.23 | | | | |
| | 40 + | 115 | 45.10 | 9.51 | | | | |
| Restrictive-supportive dimension | 22-30 | 151 | 44.88 | 6.93 | 2-593 | 8.90 | 0.00* | 1>3 |
| | 31-39 | 330 | 43.79 | 6.73 | | | | 2>3 |
| | 40+ | 115 | 41.33 | 7.39 | | | | |
| Restrictive-limitative dimension | 22-30 | 151 | 26.78 | 3.15 | 2-593 | 1.14 | 0.31 | |
| | 31-39 | 330 | 27.08 | 3.15 | | | | |
| | 40 + | 115 | 26.60 | 3.31 | | | | |
| Active-interpretive dimension | 22-30 | 151 | 16.41 | 3.13 | 2-593 | 1.37 | 0.25 | |
| | 31-39 | 330 | 16.52 | 2.93 | | | | |
| | 40 + | 115 | 15.98 | 3.16 | | | | |
| Restrictive- obstructive dimension | 22-30 | 151 | 13.03 | 2.66 | 2-593 | 0.04 | 0.95 | |
| | 31-39 | 330 | 12.96 | 2.59 | | | | |
| | 40 + | 115 | 13.01 | 2.44 | | | | |
| Active-limitative dimension | 22-30 | 151 | 13.98 | 3.12 | 2-593 | 2.29 | 0.10 | |
| | 31-39 | 330 | 13.45 | 3.01 | | | | |
| | 40 + | 115 | 13.24 | 3.03 | | | | |
| Total score | 22-30 | 151 | 162.4 | 21.3 | 2-593 | 4.53 | 0.01* | 1>3 |
| | 31-39 | 330 | 161.1 | 19.8 | | | | 2>3 |
| | 40+ | 115 | 155.2 | 20.8 | | | | |

**p<0.05*

According to Table 4, there is a significant difference between the total scores of parents on the media mediation roles regarding the parents's age [$F_{(2\text{-}593)}$=4.53, $p$<0.05). Scheffe multiple comparison tests were conducted to determine which age groups accounted for these differences. Significant differences emerged between parents aged 22–30 ($\bar{x}$ = 162.4) and those aged 40+ ($\bar{x}$ = 155.2), as well as between parents aged 31–39 ($\bar{x}$ = 161.1) and those aged 40+, with younger parents reporting higher overall scores. A similar pattern was observed in the restrictive-supportive mediation dimension, where significant differences were found between parents aged 22–30 ($\bar{x}$ = 44.88) and 40+ ($\bar{x}$ = 41.33), and between parents aged 31–39 ($\bar{x}$ = 43.79) and 40+, again favoring the younger groups.

**Results related to the third sub-question**

Table 5 presents the ANOVA results used to examine whether there was a significant difference in the media mediation roles according to parental education status.

Table 5.
*Early Childhood Parental Media Mediation Scale Score ANOVA Results Regarding Parent Education Status*

| Media Mediation Dimensions | Education Status | *N* | $\overline{X}$ | *ss* | *sd* | *F* | *p* | *Difference* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Active-supportive dimension | Elementary | 133 | 42.51 | 10.32 | 2-593 | 16.76 | 0.00* | 2>1 |
| | High School | 158 | 47.37 | 10.00 | | | | 3>1 |
| | Undergrad.+ | 305 | 48.49 | 9.91 | | | | |
| Restrictive-supportive dimension | Elementary | 133 | 41.72 | 7.68 | 2-593 | 6.31 | 0.00* | 2>1 |
| | High School | 158 | 44.36 | 7.09 | | | | 3>1 |
| | Undergrad.+ | 305 | 44.00 | 6.52 | | | | |
| Restrictive-obstructive dimension | Elementary | 133 | 26.34 | 3.62 | 2-593 | 2.84 | 0.06 | |
| | High School | 158 | 27.00 | 3.12 | | | | |
| | Undergrad.+ | 305 | 27.12 | 2.99 | | | | |
| Active-interpretive dimension | Elementary | 133 | 16.14 | 3.46 | 2-593 | 0.98 | 0.37 | |
| | High School | 158 | 16.63 | 2.76 | | | | |
| | Undergrad.+ | 305 | 16.37 | 2.95 | | | | |
| Restrictive-obstructive dimension | Elementary | 133 | 13.32 | 2.82 | 2-593 | 2.94 | 0.05** | 1>3 |
| | High School | 158 | 13.19 | 2.55 | | | | |
| | Undergrad.+ | 305 | 12.75 | 2.46 | | | | |
| Active-limitative dimension | Elementary | 133 | 13.33 | 2.98 | 2-593 | 2.02 | 0.13 | |
| | High School | 158 | 13.96 | 3.17 | | | | |
| | Undergrad.+ | 305 | 13.42 | 3.00 | | | | |
| Total | Elementary | 133 | 153.38 | 22.33 | 2-593 | 10.06 | 0.00* | 2>1 |
| | High School | 158 | 162.55 | 20.85 | | | | 3>1 |
| | Undergrad.+ | 305 | 162.18 | 18.91 | | | | |

*p<0.*05* ***p=0.05*

Table 5 shows significant differences in parental education status across media mediation role dimensions. Specifically, active-supportive mediation (F(2,593)=16.76, p<0.05), restrictive-supportive mediation (F(2,593)=6.31, p<0.05), and restrictive-obstructive mediation (F(2,593)=2.94, p=0.05) all showed significant differences. For active-supportive mediation, the LSD test indicated that parents with elementary education ($\overline{X}$=42.51) scored significantly lower than those with a high school education ($\overline{X}$=47.37), favoring the latter. Additionally, a significant difference was observed between parents with elementary education ($\overline{X}$=42.51) and those with an undergraduate degree or higher ($\overline{X}$=48.49), again favoring the more educated group. In the restrictive-supportive mediation dimension, parents with elementary education ($\overline{X}$=41.72) scored lower than those who graduated high school ($\overline{X}$=44.36) and those with an undergraduate degree or higher ($\overline{X}$=44.00), with both comparisons favoring the higher-educated groups. Conversely, for restrictive-obstructive mediation, a significant difference emerged between parents with elementary education ($\overline{X}$=13.32) and those with an undergraduate degree or higher ($\overline{X}$=12.75), favoring parents with elementary education.

**Results related to the fourth sub-question**

Table 6 presents the ANOVA results used to examine whether there was a significant difference in the media mediation roles according to number of child.

Table 6.
*ANOVA Test Results Regarding the Number of Children Variable in Early Childhood Parental Media Mediation Scale Score*

| Media Mediation Dimensions | Number of Children | *N* | $\overline{X}$ | *ss* | *sd* | *F* | *p* | *Difference* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Active-supportive dimension | One child | 56 | 51.21 | 9.70 | 2-593 | 19.22 | 0.00* | 1>3 |
| | Two children | 269 | 48.64 | 9.90 | | | | 2>3 |
| | Three and + | 271 | 44.19 | 10.13 | | | | |
| | One child | 56 | 44.33 | 7.69 | 2-593 | 10.17 | 0.00* | 1>3 |

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Restrictive-supportive dimension | Two children | 269 | 44.84 | 6.47 | | | | 2>3 |
| | Three and + | 271 | 42.20 | 7.14 | | | | |
| Restrictive-limitative dimension | One child | 56 | 27.21 | 2.78 | 2-593 | 0.56 | 0.57 | |
| | Two children | 269 | 26.99 | 3.25 | | | | |
| | Three and + | 271 | 26.78 | 3.20 | | | | |
| Active-interpretive dimension | One child | 56 | 16.03 | 3.04 | 2-593 | 3.91 | 0.02* | 2>3 |
| | Two children | 269 | 16.77 | 2.81 | | | | |
| | Three and + | 271 | 16.08 | 3.19 | | | | |
| Restrictive-obstructive dimension | One child | 56 | 12.28 | 2.95 | 2-593 | 4.20 | 0.01* | 2>1 |
| | Two children | 269 | 13.28 | 2.49 | | | | |
| | Three and + | 271 | 12.85 | 2.55 | | | | |
| Active-limitative dimension | One child | 56 | 13.96 | 2.74 | 2-593 | 2.94 | 0.05** | 2>3 |
| | Two children | 269 | 13.79 | 3.13 | | | | |
| | Three and + | 271 | 13.22 | 3.00 | | | | |
| Total | One child | 56 | 165.05 | 20.63 | 2-593 | 15.20 | 0.00* | 1>3 |
| | Two children | 269 | 164.32 | 19.26 | | | | 2>3 |
| | Three and + | 271 | 155.35 | 20.72 | | | | |

*p<0.*05* ***p=0.05*

According to Table 6, significant differences emerged in parental media mediation dimensions based on the number of children. The following dimensions showed statistically significant differences: active-supportive (F(2-593)=19.22, p<0.05), restrictive-supportive (F(2-593)=10.17, p<0.05), active-interpretive (F(2-593)=3. 91, p<0.05), restrictive-obstructive (F(2-593)=4.20, p<0.05) and active-limitative (F(2-593)=2.94, p=0.05) mediation dimensions. According to the results of the LSD test, the first difference for active-supportive mediation is between parents with one child ( $\bar{X}$=51.21) and parents with three or more children ( $\bar{X}$=44.19). This difference is in favour of parents with one child. The other difference is between parents with two children ( $\bar{X}$=41.72) and parents with three or more children ( $\bar{X}$=44.19). This difference is in favour of parents with two children.

According to the restrictive-supportive mediation results, the difference is between parents with one child ( $\bar{X}$=44.33) and parents with three or more children ( $\bar{X}$=42.20). This difference is in favour of parents with one child. The other difference is between parents with two children ( $\bar{X}$=41.72) and parents with three or more children ( $\bar{X}$=42.20) This difference is in favour of parents with two children. For active-interpretive mediation dimention, the difference is between parents with two children ( $\bar{X}$=16.77) and parents with three or more children ( $\bar{X}$=16.08). This difference is in favour of parents with two children. For restrictive barrier mediation, the difference is between parents with one child ( $\bar{X}$=12.28) and parents with two children ( $\bar{X}$=13.28). This difference is in favour of parents with two children. For active-limitative mediation, the difference is between parents with two children ( $\bar{X}$=13.79) and parents with three or more children ( $\bar{X}$=13.22). This difference is in favour of parents with two children.

A significant difference (F(2-593)=15.20, p<0.05) was also found between the number of children and the total score of parental media mediation. According to the results of the LSD test, the first difference for the total score of parental media mediation is between parents with one child ( $\bar{X}$=165.05) and parents with three or more children ( $\bar{X}$=155.35). This difference is in favour of parents with one child. The other difference is between parents with two children ( $\bar{X}$=164.32) and parents with three or more children ( $\bar{X}$=155.35). This difference is in favour of parents with two children.

**Results related to the second question**

The second research question of the study was formulated as ‘Do parental media mediation roles significantly differ according to demographic attributes: gender and birth order?’. In this section, second question is presented under two sub-headings.

**Results related to the first sub-question**

Table 7 presents the t-test results used to examine whether there was a significant difference in the media mediation roles according to the gender of children.

Table *7.*
*T-test Results of Early Childhood Parental Media Mediation Scale Score in Relation to Child Gender Variable*

| Media Mediation Dimensions | Gender | *N* | $\bar{X}$ | *ss* | *sd* | *t* | *p* | *η2* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Active-supportive dimension | Girl | 284 | 46.26 | 10.08 | 594 | -1.35 | 0.17 | |
| | Boy | 312 | 47.41 | 10.46 | | | | |
| Restrictive-supportive dimension | Girl | 284 | 43.32 | 6.53 | 594 | -0.92 | 0.35 | |
| | Boy | 312 | 43.84 | 7.41 | | | | |
| Restrictive-limitative dimension | Girl | 284 | 26.76 | 3.25 | 594 | -1.12 | 0.26 | |
| | Boy | 312 | 27.05 | 3.12 | | | | |
| Active-interpretive dimension | Girl | 284 | 16.17 | 3.11 | 594 | -1.64 | 0.10 | |
| | Boy | 312 | 16.58 | 2.94 | | | | |
| Restrictive-obstructive dimension | Girl | 284 | 13.09 | 2.47 | 594 | 0.88 | 0.10 | |
| | Boy | 312 | 12.90 | 2.67 | | | | |
| Active-limitative dimension | Girl | 284 | 13.17 | 2.97 | 594 | -2.88 | 0.00* | -0.23 |
| | Boy | 312 | 13.89 | 3.09 | | | | |
| Total | Girl | 284 | 158.7 | 19.9 | 594 | -1.72 | 0.08 | |
| | Boy | 312 | 161.6 | 20.9 | | | | |

**p<0.05*

Table 7 indicates a significant difference in the active-limitative mediation dimension based on the gender variable (t(594)=-2.88, p< 0.05). This difference is in favor of boys. Measured effect size value (η2=0.23) indicates that the gender variable exerts a "small" influence on active-limitative dimension. The data indicate that parents are more likely to exhibit behaviors associated with the active-limitative dimension towards boys.

**Results related to the second sub-question**

Table 8 presents the ANOVA results used to examine whether there was a significant difference in the media mediation roles according to the birth order of child.

Table *8*
*ANOVA Test Results Regarding Early Childhood Parental Media Mediation Scale Score Child Birth Order Variable*

| Media Mediation Dimensions | Birth Order | *N* | $\bar{X}$ | *ss* | *sd* | *F* | *p* | *Difference* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Active-supportive dimension | First born | 247 | 48.06 | 10.43 | 2-593 | 9.47 | 0.00* | 1>3 |
| | Second born | 193 | 47.77 | 9.98 | | | | 2>3 |
| | Third and + | 156 | 43.83 | 9.88 | | | | |
| Restrictive-supportive dimension | First born | 247 | 44.03 | 6.88 | 2-593 | 6.47 | 0.02* | 1>3 |
| | Second born | 193 | 44.40 | 6.69 | | | | 2>3 |
| | Third and + | 156 | 41.89 | 7.34 | | | | |
| Restrictive-limitative dimension | First born | 247 | 27.10 | 3.06 | 2-593 | 2.43 | 0.08 | |
| | Second born | 193 | 27.06 | 3.11 | | | | |
| | Third and + | 156 | 26.43 | 3.43 | | | | |
| Active-interpretive dimension | First born | 247 | 16.38 | 3.02 | 2-593 | 2.61 | 0.07 | |
| | Second born | 193 | 16.73 | 2.68 | | | | |
| | Third and + | 156 | 15.98 | 3.39 | | | | |
| Restrictive-obstructive dimension | First born | 247 | 12.79 | 2.62 | 2-593 | 1.41 | 0.24 | |
| | Second born | 193 | 13.19 | 2.50 | | | | |
| | Third and + | 156 | 13.07 | 2.59 | | | | |
| Active-limitative dimension | First born | 247 | 13.61 | 3.14 | 2-593 | 0.52 | 0.59 | |
| | Second born | 193 | 12.63 | 2.91 | | | | |
| | Third and + | 156 | 13.33 | 3.08 | | | | |
| Total | First born | 247 | 162.00 | 20.29 | 2-593 | 8.60 | 0.00* | 1>3 |
| | Second born | 193 | 162.81 | 19.14 | | | | 2>3 |
| | Third and + | 156 | 154.55 | 21.59 | | | | |

Table 8 indicates a statistically significant difference in active-supportive mediation ($F(2\text{-}593)=9.47$, $p<0.05$) and restrictive-supportive mediation ($F(2\text{-}593)=6.47$, $p<0.05$) dimensions. The LSD test results indicated a significant difference in active-supportive mediation between parents of first-born children ($\bar{X}=48.06$) and parents of children born third or later ($\bar{X}=43.83$). This difference favors parents of first-born children. Another difference is related to parents of second-born children ($\bar{X}=47.77$) compared to those with third-born or later children ($\bar{X}=43.83$). This difference is in favor of parents with a second-born child.

Regarding restrictive-supportive mediation, the initial comparison revealed a significant difference between parents of first-born children ($\bar{X}$ = 44.03) and those with children born third or later ($\bar{X}$ = 41.89), favoring parents of first-born children. A similar distinction was observed between parents of second-born children ($\bar{X}$ = 44.40) and those with children born third or later ($\bar{X}$ = 41.89), favoring parents of second-born children. Furthermore, a significant overall difference was identified between birth order groups and the total parental media mediation score ($F(2,593) = 8.60$, $p < 0.05$). LSD tests showed that parents of first-born children ($\bar{X}$ = 162.00) scored significantly higher than parents of children born third or later ($\bar{X}$ = 154.55), and similarly, parents of second-born children ($\bar{X}$ = 162.81) scored higher than those with third-born or later children ($\bar{X}$ = 154.55). These results indicate that parents of earlier-born children tend to have higher overall media mediation scores.

## FINDINGS & DISCUSSION

This study explored the relationship between parental media mediation strategies and demographic characteristics of both parents and children. The findings indicate that the active-supportive mediation dimension is more prevalent among mothers who are highly educated, have fewer children, and have a first-born child. In contrast, restrictive-supportive mediation is more common among young, highly educated mothers, especially those who are first-time parents with fewer children. The restrictive-obstructive dimension was primarily observed among mothers with lower educational status and multiple children. Additionally, the active-interpretive mediation strategy was more prominent among mothers with fewer offspring, while the active-limitative approach was more frequently employed in households with fewer children, particularly for boys. Overall, these results underscore that demographic factors play a significant role in shaping parental media mediation practices.

**Parental Role**

The findings suggest that parental media mediation roles vary according to the parent's gender. Mothers assume the roles of active supporting, restrictive supportive, and active interpretive more frequently than fathers. Active-supportive mediation role involves activities that facilitate the child's growth, including parental discussions regarding media before and after exposure, posing questions, and engaging in dialogue. Restrictive-supportive mediation role includes parental practices that restrict the child's media exposure concerning both content and duration. The role of active-interpretive mediation refers to a parental mediation activity that contrasts real-life experiences with media information, fostering an environment conducive to the development of the child's critical thinking abilities. Research indicates that highly educated mothers prioritize their children's self-confidence and independent behavior (Yağmurlu et al., 2009). Active-interpretive mediation serves as a requirement for young children to develop autonomy by promoting critical thinking. Mothers exhibit a tendency for restrictive-supportive mediation behaviors, including regulating a child's media consumption, imposing limits, and controlling time, which correlates with the imposition of more rules than fathers (Brito et al., 2017) and a higher frequency of supervision compared to fathers (Nikken & Schols, 2015). Valkenburg et al. (1999) assert that mothers exhibit a stronger inclination towards pedagogical and restricting mediation compared to fathers.

Duek and Moguillansky (2020) found in their study conducted in Argentina that mothers predominantly undertake parental media mediation roles. Mothers engage in active internet mediation (discussing, guiding, conversing), address internet safety issues through active mediation, implement restrictive mediation, and engage in co-viewing, whereas fathers focus on technical mediation and contribute to rule-setting, a crucial element of restrictive mediation. The technological mediation of fathers is also highlighted in the research of Ferreira et al. (2017) and others. In research on media mediation involving parents of preschool children in Türkiye, Çalhan and Göksu (2024) found that mothers exhibited the dimensions of active-supportive, restrictive-supportive, and active-interpretive more frequently than fathers, based on the analysis of data gathered from 433 parents across 55 provinces in Turkey. A study including 457 parents in the

provinces of Çorum and Samsun revealed no differences between mothers and fathers in the dimensions (Bostancı & Çakır, 2022). This research highlights cultural differences.

**Parental Age**

The findings of the present study demonstrate that the role of parental media mediation is related to parental age, revealing a negative correlation between increasing parental age and restrictive-supporting mediation. Restrictive-supportive mediation practices denote parental regulation of a child's media exposures concerning both content and duration. This dimension of mediation indicates that parents are responsible for regulating the child's media content and time spent consuming it. The child is anticipated to adhere to the limitations imposed by the parent. Studies indicate that parents aware of the adverse impacts of media and worried about these consequences are more inclined to intervene (Barkin et al., 2006), and that younger parents, who utilize technology more often, are inclined towards mediation. Talves and Kalmus (2015), who studied the media mediation roles of parents with children aged 9-16 in European countries, identified parental age as a pivotal factor. A comparable outcome was noted in another research study by Condeza et al. (2019). The researchers highlighted that the communication gap between children and parents has diminished thanks to the technological engagement of young parents. This research indicates that younger parents, being more involved with technology, are more aware about hazards and thus exhibit more restrictive-supportive mediation behaviors to protect their children.

**Education Status**

The results of the study show that the parental media mediation role differ according to the variable of parental education status, and as the education status of parents increases, behaviors related to the active-supportive and restrictive-supportive dimensions are adopted more frequently compared to parents with lower education status. For restrictive-obstructive mediation, the opposite is true. Active-supportive mediation involves behaviors that contribute to the child's development, such as the parent talking with the child about media before and after, asking questions, and discussing. Restrictive-supportive mediation, on the other hand, includes behaviors related to the parent regulating the child's media experiences in terms of content and time. Both active-supportive and restrictive-supportive mediation are characterized by parental behaviors that support the child's media use while taking into account the child's developmental needs. The findings indicate that as parents' education levels increase, they tend to adopt these supportive mediation roles more consistently.

The education level of parents is considered a factor affecting parental mediation because it is related to the use of information and communication technologies (ICT). Çalhan and Göksu (2024), studied parental media mediation roles according to three different educational levels and found significant differences in all dimensions. There are studies indicating that parents prefer different mediation strategies according to their education levels. Studies conducted in Brazil (Cabello-Hutt et al., 2018) and in 25 European countries (Hasebrink et al., 2011) for children aged 9-17 years produced similar results. As the education level of parents decreases, their tendency to use mediation strategies also decreases (Katz et al., 2018). Bastırmacı (2022) suggests that higher levels of education and media literacy are associated with an increased engagement in parental media mediation roles. This finding implies that as parents become more educated and media-savvy, they are more likely to actively manage and guide their children's media consumption.

The findings of the current study, aligning with the mentioned literature, indicate that parents with higher education levels tend to provide more active-supportive mediation and restrictive-supportive mediation in their children's media interactions, while less educated parents are associated with more restrictive-obstructive mediation behaviors. A study (Erşahin, 2019) revealed a significant difference between parents' education levels and their attitudes of overprotection and punitive discipline, indicating that parents with lower education levels exhibit more protective and punitive attitudes towards their children.

**Number of Children**

The results of the research indicate that the role of parental media mediation differ according to variable of the number of children, showing that as the number of children increases, parents' tendency to exhibit active-supportive and restrictive-supportive, active-interpretive mediation, and active-limitative mediation behaviors decreases. In restrictive-obstructive mediation, it has been concluded that parents with two children exhibit more restrictive-obstructive mediation behaviors than parents with one child. Research on media mediation and the number of children indicates that parents with one child are generally more frequently involved in their children's digital activities through active mediation (Zaman et al., 2016) and that in families with more children, the time and resources parents spent with their children are limited compared to families with fewer children (Black et al., 2005). Başaran (2004) reports that parents with fewer children communicate more with their children compared to families with many children. The findings of this study suggest that as

the number of children decreases, there is an increase in parents' behaviors indicating active mediation, such as asking questions about media content, talking, and guiding critical thinking. As the number of children increases, parents may show a decrease in both the duration and quality of activities with their children.

The results for restrictive-obstructive mediation appear to be different from other types of mediation. Parents with two children have been found to exhibit more behaviors related to a restrictive-obstructive role than parents with one child. It is known that the punitive behavior is most commonly used by mothers with low education status living in rural areas (Nacak et al., 2011). It can be thought that the number of children is higher among this group compared to highly educated mothers living in the metropolis. It is estimated that these parents living in rural areas and having many children do not have sufficient knowledge about child development. On the other hand, it can be considered that as the number of children in the household increases, the amount of accessible media decreases, and therefore, a reward-punishment mechanism may emerge to decide which child will have access to the media. The increased recourse to restrictive-obstructive mediation behaviors by parents with a larger number of children can be explained by these factors.

**Child Gender**

The fndings suggest that the parental media mediation role differ according to the variable of child's gender. Parents tend to exhibit more active-limitative mediation behaviors with boys. This mediation approach involves collaboratively setting screen time limits, choosing content together, and monitoring usage through smart indicators. A thesis study on parental attitudes toward preschool and primary school children in Turkey found that parents tend to adopt a more democratic approach with girls, whereas they are more controlling and disciplinary with boys (Erşahin, 2019). Furthermore, research indicates that parents express greater concern about the potential health impacts of media use on their male children (Kucirkova et al., 2018).

Unlike the findings of the presen study, Çalhan and Göksu (2024) found a significant difference in favor of girls only in the restrictive-obstructive dimension based on the children's gender. In this study, the tendency for digital game addiction among boys was found to be higher than that of girls. Parents' more restrictive and prohibitive behavior towards girls limits their interaction with digital games and reduces their tendency towards addiction. On the other hand, Ferreira et al. (2017) found that technical restrictions imposed by fathers on boys were more common. It is suggested that this is related to the perception that boys are more independent and more inclined towards technology. However, such restrictions may highlight boys' use of technology while hindering girls from developing their technological skills and reinforcing gender inequalities. In this context, the impact of parental attitudes on children's digital literacy through media and how these attitudes shape gender roles should be addressed more comprehensively.

**Birth Order**

The results of the study show that the parental media mediation role differ according to the child's birth order variable. The results of the research indicate that if the firstborn child of the parents is in the age range of 60-72 months, this child receives more active-supportive and restrictive-supportive mediation compared to the secondborn, and the secondborn receives more active supportive and restrictive supportive mediation compared to the thirdborn and later. Active-supportive mediation refers to behaviors that require parents to be active in the process, such as talking and discussing the content of their children's media interactions and evaluating whether the media content is suitable for child development. Restrictive-supportive mediation, on the other hand, involves mediation behaviors where the parent sets rules with the child's development and benefit in mind. In this study, children reported as firstborns are either only children or older siblings, and when they are second or third born, they take on the role of younger siblings at home. Plowman et al., (2008) have pointed out some limitations related to the mediation of siblings in children's technology use, suggesting that older siblings use parent-related strategies by controlling younger children's access to technologies. It is considered that when they are the second or third child, the role of media mediation by the parents is transferred to the older sibling.

## CONCLUSION

Parenting is a dynamic process influenced by technological advancements.The growth of technology in digital media has created several challenges and altered the dynamics of parenting. The present study found that there was a significant relation between parental mediation role and parental-child related variables. The active-supportive dimension has a higher prevalence among mothers with higher level of education, fewer kids, and first-born children. The restrictive-supportive dimension behavior was identified as a prevalent characteristic among mothers who are young, highly educated, have few children, and are first-time mothers.

It was found that the restrictive-obstructive dimension was predominantly observed among mothers with low status of education and multiple children. Among mothers with fewer children, the active-interpretive mediation approach emerged as particularly significant. In contrast, the active-sestrictive mediation dimension was more frequently observed in boys from smaller families. Overall, these findings indicate that demographic factors have significant impact on parental mediation strategies.

**Contribution, Implications, and Future Research**

This study contributes to the literature in several ways. Firstly, it addresses a significant gap by exploring parental media mediation in the Southeastern region, where no prior research has been conducted. Secondly, this research, informed by the region's characteristics, has reached out to families with multiple children and those with diverse parental education status. This is the first study to examine the influence of the number of children and birth order on media in our country.

The findings of this research has the potential to inform policymakers to develop family support interventions tailored for the needs of certain demographic groups. This research highlights the need to support specific groups—fathers, older parents, parents with lower educational attainment, and those with many children—in managing their children's media use. Based on these findings, we propose two main recommendations. The first recommendation is that family programs can be developed to improve parents' use of technology and media mediation skills. Such programs can also encourage parents to discuss technology-related problems they encounter with other parents. Second one is about professional development programs for teachers to get information about media mediation strategies to quide parents. For children who continue education, the preschool education serves as the primary resource for parents seeking guidance when they feel insufficient. We advise preschool psychological counselors and preschool educators who recognize the significance of media mediation and possess adequate expertise in the area to conduct studies aimed at enhancing the skills of parents, particularly fathers who often struggle with mediation, as well as older parents with numerous children and lower educational status.

Examining and defining parental mediation strategies is challenging because the factors influencing both parents and children are deeply interrelated within the family. Consequently, there is a need for nationwide studies to explore the media mediation roles adopted by parents. Moreover, experimental intervention studies—where parent groups are formed based on different mediation strategies—could provide valuable insights and further contribute to the field.

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